



# ENVIRONMENTAL LAW FOUNDATION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***ENVIRONMENTAL LAW FOUNDATION TO ENFORCE AGRICULTURAL WATER EFFICIENCY MEASURES***

### **22 Agricultural Water Districts Are Violating 2009 Law**

Environmental Law Foundation (“ELF”) today announced its intention to sue 22 agricultural water districts who have failed to comply with the 2009 Water Efficiency Act.

“We believe that in this time of drought, improved water efficiency is the only path toward securing a safe and prosperous future for subsequent generations,” said James Wheaton, President and Legal Director for ELF.

In 2009, the Legislature adopted the Act, which compelled agricultural water districts to take three concrete steps towards water efficiency: measure how much water they deliver to customers, price water based on the volume delivered, and adopt a water management plan.

Astonishingly, despite the drought, many districts do not even know how much water they are delivering to farms. The Act requires that districts take the basic step of measuring water deliveries to each customer. *See* Water Code § 10608.48(b)(1); Cal. Code Regs. §§ 597-597.4

Even more astonishingly, many districts still price water to farmers based simply on the farmer’s acreage – no matter how much water the farmer actually uses. But the Act requires districts to adopt a pricing scheme based at least in part on the volume delivered. Water Code § 10608.48(b)(2). While flat per-acre fees provide no incentive to conserve, pricing by volume rewards efficient water use and makes waste more expensive.

The Act also required districts to adopt Agricultural Water Management Plans. These Plans were due in December, 2012.

According to the Department of Water Resources 22 districts have yet to file their plans. “We cannot let water suppliers continue to ignore the law and waste water,” said Wheaton.

Today, ELF sent a letter to these 22 districts asking them to commit to adopt their Agricultural Water Management Plans and comply with the measurement and pricing requirements within 10 days, or else face legal action.

ELF is a nonprofit environmental organization committed to improving environmental quality in California. For more information about ELF’s long history of enforcing environmental laws, please visit <http://www.envirolaw.org/>

Water District Contact: Earl Danosky is the Manager of Tulelake Irrigation District ((530) 667-2249), which has not filed a plan.