

SAN JOAQUIN AGRICULTURAL LAW REVIEW

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SYMPOSIUM

INTRODUCTION

In 1992, Congress passed the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, changing the rules for California's largest federal reclamation project. The Project's primary beneficiary—Central Valley agriculture—saw the long-term stability of its water supply evaporate as the Project was restructured to mitigate years of environmental neglect, and to enable urban areas to purchase project water through voluntary transfers by users. The Act was the product of years of wrangling among California's agricultural, urban and environmental interests. Ambiguities in the Act may fuel controversy and litigation for years to come as the three interest groups battle over regulations and implementation.

The San Joaquin Agricultural Law Review is pleased to present a "symposium" on the Central Valley Project Improvement Act. Douglas Noll examines prior reclamation law as it relates to the Project as well as the implications of changes that were created by the Act. Barry Nelson presents the environmental perspective, arguing that restructuring the Project to restore damaged natural resources was long overdue, and that agriculture must modernize to realize opportunities presented by the Act. Daniel Dooley argues that Central Valley communities, which relied on government assurances of long-term water supplies, are threatened directly by agricultural water supply reductions and indirectly by increased costs and uncertainty. Carl Boronkay and Timothy Quinn view the Act as an inevitable result of the state's urban growth and the environmental revolution, and they argue that water markets may better serve the California of today than the prior appropriation doctrine. Finally, the Act is reproduced in its entirety so readers may interpret its provisions for themselves.

