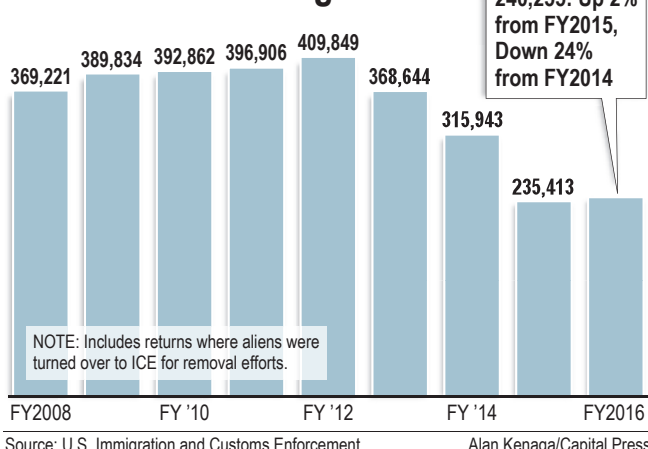


ICE removals of illegal aliens



ICE operation appears routine, but raises ire

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

The action of federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents who detained multiple people after stopping a pair of worker transport vans near Woodburn, Ore., last week may have been a routine operation, but it happened in an acrimonious political atmosphere that had civil rights groups blaming it on the Trump administration's belligerence toward immigrants.

An ICE spokeswoman said agents initially were after two people, both of whom had multiple prior arrests and one of whom had a prior conviction, when they stopped the vehicles on a highway outside Woodburn on Feb. 24. Agents detained 11 people on allegations they were in the country illegally; seven of them remained in custody Feb. 28. Four were let go because an immigration judge had previously released them on bond pending removal proceedings, the ICE spokeswoman said.

As far as ICE was concerned, the action was routine. People who are in the country illegally and have criminal records are among the highest priority for apprehension and removal, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

"Deportation officers conduct enforcement actions every day around the country and in Oregon as part of the agency's ongoing efforts to uphold public safety and border security," an ICE spokeswoman said in a prepared statement. "Our operations are targeted and lead driven, prioritizing individuals who pose a risk to our communities."

But the action comes amid heightened political tension over border security and illegal immigration. Pacific Northwest agriculture has a major stake in the outcome, as many sectors rely on pruning, harvest or processing crews that are heavily immigrant, legal or not.

ICE provided a link to a Homeland Security memorandum that implements Trump's executive order on immigration enforcement. The memo calls for hiring 10,000 more ICE agents and prioritizes enforcement action against aliens who have been convicted of any crime, charged with a crime but not resolved, committed fraud or "willful misrepresentation" with a government agency or abused any program to receive public benefits. It also authorizes removal of anyone who "in the judgment of an immigration officer" poses a risk to public safety or national security.

But the Portland office of American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker group, and the farmworker and forestry labor union Pineros y Compesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN) criticized the action.

Pedro Sosa, spokesman for the American Friends group, said in his opinion ICE has increased its activity and is acting more aggressively since President Trump signed the order. Sosa said that's created "more fear in our community."

The immigrant advocacy groups said they were "deeply concerned" about such stops and arrests and their impact on schools, the local economy and security. The groups denounced the "racist policies" of Trump that "criminalize and scapegoat hardworking immigrants and divide Americans."

Details provided by ICE and by the immigrant advocacy groups varied somewhat.

Many Central Valley farms to get full federal water supplies

By TIM HEARDEN
Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — Full reservoirs and an abundant snowpack have enabled the Central Valley Project to promise full allocations of water to many valley farms, federal officials announced Feb. 28.

Citrus growers in the eastern San Joaquin Valley's Friant division will get 100 percent of their contracted supplies after most went without federal surface water in 2014 and 2015 and received 75 percent last year.

"We are extremely pleased with that announcement," said Laura Brown, director of government affairs for the Exeter-based California Citrus Mutual. "We were expecting it with all the rain we've had."

Among others promised their full supplies are customers of the Central San Joaquin Valley Conservation District and Stockton East Water District and urban customers in the Sacramento area and eastern San Francisco Bay area served by water from the American River.

Settlement contractors on the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers were told in mid-February they would get their full supplies based on the volume of inflow to Shasta Lake, officials said.

The agency will wait until mid-March to determine other allocations, including those for the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, which received only 5 percent last summer despite late-season storms that provided more water elsewhere.

Several factors will determine the remaining allocations, said Ron Milligan, a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation operations manager in Sacramento. They include the state Department of Water Resources third manual snowpack survey, which was set for March 1, as well as reservoir levels and hydrologic conditions, he said.

But Milligan and other federal officials acknowledged in a conference call with reporters that the delay is also partly caused by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's failure to complete its fisheries' temperature management plan for Shasta Lake. The plan could require more water to be kept in the lake this summer to provide cold water for federally protected winter-run chinook salmon.

"Growers are making their



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

Shasta Lake was 85 percent full and at 117 percent of its historical average as of Feb. 27. Full reservoirs and abundant snowpack have enabled the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to give full water allocations to many farmers in California's Central Valley.

planting decisions now," said Ryan Jacobsen, the Fresno County Farm Bureau's chief executive officer. "Farmers cannot make choices on what might be an allocation. ... They need real numbers."

Jacobsen said Westside growers aren't expecting a full allocation, which he said is "unacceptable" considering that snowpack levels in most areas are more than 150 percent of normal and outflow from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta has totaled more than 24 million acre-feet since October. Hundreds of thousands of acres on the Westside have been fallowed in recent years because of a lack of water.

But Pablo Arroyave, Reclamation's acting Mid-Pacific regional director, said the lack of an allocation for the West-

side now doesn't mean the area won't get water. He said the agency will take advantage of the current hydrology to try to get as much water as possible to districts.

A substantial amount of CVP water is already in storage south of the Delta, and federal share of the San Luis Reservoir west of Los Banos, Calif., is expected to be full within the first week of March, officials said.

Given the large snowpack and high river flows this year, much of the water already in storage will be available for delivery to CVP contractors this spring and summer, they said.

For the CVP overall, this was the first year of widespread 100 percent allocations for agriculture since 2006,

officials said. The Friant Division's supply comes as Millerton Lake near Fresno was at 82 percent of capacity and 126 percent of normal as of Feb. 27, prompting dam operators to boost releases to make room for a big anticipated snowmelt.

The full allocation applies to the division's Class 1 customers, or the most senior landowners, while customers may take Class 2 supplies as long as the ramped-up releases from Millerton Lake continue, the bureau noted in a news release.

The bureau typically announces its initial allocations in mid-February, although it waited until April 1 last year to take into account anticipated storms in March while giving informal reports to water districts, spokesman Shane Hunt said at the time.

The 2016-17 water year has been "extreme" so far, prompting Reclamation to take "an approach to the announcement of CVP water allocations this year that differs from our historic practice," Arroyave said. In future years, the agency will strive to release initial allocations for all water users in February, he said.

The State Water Project initially allocated 20 percent of contracted supplies in late November and has so far upped its anticipated deliveries to at least 60 percent of requested supplies. The last time the project's 29 contracting agencies got their full allocations was in 2006.

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