



The Struggle for Safe Drinking Water in the San Joaquin Valley

Hundreds of thousands of people in the San Joaquin Valley are served water by public water systems that do not meet federal health standards.

- More than 326,700 valley residents were served water with levels of contamination over a legal limit in 2006, primarily due to bacteria, nitrates, arsenic, and disinfectant byproducts.
- In 2007, 75 percent of all nitrate health standard violations in California were found in the San Joaquin Valley, impacting over 275,000 people.

High rates of poverty and unemployment compound the struggle for safe drinking water.

- 19 percent of San Joaquin Valley residents live in poverty.
- Unemployment rates are 42 percent higher than the state average, with some areas as high as 15 to 30 percent.
- 32 percent of Valley residents are Latino, and one in three foreign-born Latinos live in poverty.

California's most vulnerable and impoverished communities have been receiving contaminated water for years.

- Latino communities are more likely to have contaminated water than non-Latino communities.
- Many low-income, Latino communities, such as Tooleville in Southern San Joaquin Valley, have not had safe water for over a decade.
- Families must choose between buying safe water and other basic necessities.
- Many families are forced to spend up to 10 percent of their income on the combined costs of bottled and tap water. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends no more than 1 percent of a family's income go to water.

Communities need safe water now and funding for permanent solutions to their drinking water crisis!

- Our most impoverished communities need access to emergency supplies of drinking water so families don't have to drink contaminated water at home or in school.
- Funding for water projects needs to be released and directed immediately to fund the preapproved projects for disadvantaged communities that have chronic safe drinking water violations.
- Funding needs to be released for planning initiatives to develop permanent, sustainable and affordable solutions for valley communities without safe drinking water.

