

HERE'S WHY CENTRAL VALLEY FARMERS SHOULD CHAMPION THIS CALIFORNIA CLIMATE PROPOSITION | OPINION

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If California voters pass Proposition 4, we can secure a sustainable, prosperous future for our state's agriculture sector while safeguarding the natural resources we all depend on. I'm calling on farmers to lead the way in this effort, ensuring that both the land and the livelihoods we support are protected for generations to come.

The future of California's agriculture depends not just on the health of our crops, but also on the health of our environment. Farmers have long known that the two are inseparable, and many of us have already experienced the challenges of cultivating crops in a changing climate. This November, Prop. 4 offers an opportunity to ensure the future of both agriculture and the environment by making vital investments in climate resilience. These investments can protect the fields we cultivate as well as help us pursue a future we hope to harvest — where the land, water and communities we depend on can thrive together.



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Prop. 4 is a comprehensive climate bond that addresses California's growing environmental challenges — including wildfires, floods, drought and everything in between — through nature-based solutions. With climate change projected to cost the state billions in damages each year, Prop. 4 provides a proactive, cost-effective approach to prevent disasters instead of paying for them after the fact. These investments will enhance public safety, improve water security and conserve the natural resources that both rural and urban communities rely on, ensuring that every sector of California's population benefits from a more sustainable environment. But those of us in our state's agricultural communities still have the most to gain from these investments.

RECHARGE FOR FARMS AND COMMUNITIES

For Central Valley farmers, who grow 25% of the nation's produce each year through drought and deluge, a vote for Prop. 4 is a vote for helping secure long-term water stability. While California's precipitation totals and patterns can vary dramatically from year to year, the water that crops need is hardly elastic. One of the bond's most significant benefits for agriculture is its funding for groundwater recharge, where excess surface water is diverted to replenish below-ground aquifers. Capturing and storing water during wet years can augment the amount of groundwater that farmers and families can sustainably use during dry years and protect local communities from flooding during extreme weather events.



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HOLISTIC CLIMATE RESILIENCE

While water is the most precious resource for farmers and their communities, a truly resilient agricultural future depends on more than just water: It necessitates healthy topsoil, thriving biodiversity and a commitment to community well-being. Healthy soils are the foundation of productive farmland — they reduce erosion, store carbon and improve water absorption.

Prop. 4 will support practices like cover cropping and low-impact tillage to strengthen soil structure, fertility and micro-biomes. This means growers can invest in their land with more financial and technical assistance than ever before. Furthermore, the proposition's funding for restoring wetlands and rivers will create habitats for pollinators, birds and other wildlife that are crucial to the balance of agricultural ecosystems. By thoughtfully and collaboratively integrating agriculture into California's climate resilience strategy, a 'yes' vote on Prop. 4 will not only sustain farms but also ensure the well-being of the communities that depend on them.



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