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Valley farmers' water supply may soon dry up

BY DALE KASLER
dkasler@sacbee.com

Forced to reckon with a worsening drought, California's water regulators are preparing to forbid thousands of farmers from tapping into the state's major rivers and streams.

It's an extraordinary step —

and one that regulators didn't take during the last drought, which was considered one of the worst on record.

The State Water Resources Control Board on Friday released an "emergency curtailment" order that would cut thousands off from rivers and streams in the Sacramento and San Joaquin river watersheds.

The five-person board still has to vote on the order Aug. 3, and it would take effect about two weeks later.

Eileen Sobek, the board's executive director, said the proposed order shows the dire conditions of California's water supply. There "is just not enough to meet all of the legitimate demands," she said.

"We don't take this action lightly; we know that it's going to impose hardships on folks," she said. Exceptions will be made for drinking water and other human needs.

"We're trying to protect drinking water supplies; we're trying to protect endangered fish in the system," she said. State officials have warned that

most winter-run Chinook salmon could die in the Sacramento River this year.

Most farmers who rely on the State Water Project or the federal Central Valley Project are already struggling with dramatically reduced allocations. The proposed order released Friday covers those thousands of farmers with direct legal rights to pull water out of the rivers.

SAVING RIVERS TO PROTECT FISH POPULATIONS

Karen Ross, secretary of state Department of Food and Agriculture, said the cutoff would further weaken farmers' and ranchers' ability to produce this

SEE WATER SUPPLY, 2A

Pfizer to supply US with vaccines for kids

BY RILEY GRIFFIN
Bloomberg

Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE will supply the U.S. with another 200 million doses of their COVID-19 shot, setting up a stream of vaccine deliveries through next April in a push to protect kids and potentially provide boosters.

The White House is setting its sights on immunizing children under the age of 12, who aren't yet eligible, and potentially deploying booster doses if new data show their necessity, according to a Biden administration official familiar with the contract.

Of the new doses, 65 million will be tailored for the pediatric population, should the vaccine be cleared for kids younger than 12, according to the official, who spoke under the condition of anonymity as the contract isn't public. Some of those shots would be immediately available upon authorization.

The U.S. also has the option to acquire an updated version of the vaccine to tackle potential variants if it's available and authorized, Pfizer and BioNTech said Friday in a statement announcing the supply agreement.

Pfizer declined to comment on contract details regarding the pediatric vaccines.

The new U.S. deal coincides with a back-to-school push to get children immunized. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was cleared for those 12 and older in

SEE VACCINES, 4A

Feds drop case against Chinese researcher accused of spying



RENÉE C. BYER rbyer@sacbee.com

Tom Johnson, left, and Malcolm Segal, attorneys for Juan Tang, the visiting Chinese cancer researcher who was accused of lying about her ties to the army in China, hold a smart phone on Friday showing a photo they took of her earlier in the day with her passport before she left the United States to be with her family in China after her case was dismissed.

BY SAM STANTON
sstanton@sacbee.com

In a surprise move days before the trial was to begin in Sacramento for a Chinese researcher accused of lying to gain entry to the United States, federal prosecutors asked a judge late Thursday to dismiss the case.

On Friday, the judge did so, freeing Dr. Juan Tang to leave the country.

The motion filed in federal

court in Sacramento asks U.S. District Judge John A. Mendez to dismiss the remaining count against Tang, a prominent cancer researcher who came to the United States in December 2019 to conduct research at UC Davis.

Her trial was set to begin Monday on a charge of lying on her visa application about whether she had been a mem-



Juan Tang

ber of the Chinese military. Mendez previously had dismissed a separate count charging her with lying to the FBI because agents violate her Miranda rights by not advising her that she did not have to answer their questions.

Her Sacramento-based attorneys, Malcolm Segal and Tom Johnson, had argued that the doctor was not a member of the Chinese military but had worked as a civilian at a Chinese military facility and had done nothing wrong.

They had pressed for the case to go to trial and were preparing for a motion hearing Friday when the government filed its motion to dismiss.

"We are glad that the government decided to dismiss," Segal and Johnson said in a statement released to The Sacramento Bee. "We provided ample reason to do so. It was teetering anyway."

"We hope Dr. Tang is allowed to return to her daughter

SEE RESEARCHER, 2A

The Dixie Fire blazes off of Highway 70 on July 21 in Plumas County. The Dixie Fire ignited last week in the Feather River Canyon.



XAVIER MASCAREÑAS xmascarenas@sacbee.com

Dixie Fire is largest in state this year

BY AMELIA DAVIDSON
adavidson@sacbee.com

As California's fire season rages on and firefighters take on multiple blazes, the Dixie Fire has become the state's largest wildfire this year to date and is driving smoke into the Sacramento Valley.

The Dixie Fire is burning on

the border of Butte and Plumas counties, in the burn scar of the deadly 2018 Camp Fire. It has rapidly expanded to 142,960 acres (223 square miles), growing nearly 40,000 acres since Thursday morning.

Although most of the smoke from the fire has pushed east into Nevada, small amounts drifted south into the Sacramento area Friday afternoon,

affecting capital residents for the first time since the fire began July 14.

Forecasts from the National Weather Service indicated that smoke would linger in Sacramento until about 7 p.m. before flowing east out of the area.

Smoke is heavier in areas north of Sacramento County.

SEE DIXIE, 2A



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