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Self proclaimed "Water Expert" suffers series of severe memory lapses!

by Mike Lynch - 209.578.3323 or [email](#)

Republican Congressional candidate Michael Berryhill, a self proclaimed "water expert," recently responded to a questionnaire on water issues. We don't know about his expertise, but his memory is certainly lacking.

Berryhill claimed that Representative Dennis Cardoza created the drought. It's Dennis' fault, with blame to be shared by other Democrats. With all due respect to Mr. Berryhill, the last time we looked, rainfall, snow pack, and weather patterns are still primarily the responsibility of Mother Nature - not either political party. Additionally, bad court decisions and bad legislation have made it much worse. Water Expert Berryhill's memory shouldn't be so selective.

A few key facts about California water have escaped Berryhill:

- In 1973, Republican President Richard M. Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) into law. Little did he or the Congress that passed the measure know that a series of judicial decisions rendered by Judges appointed by Republican Presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan, George Bush and George W. Bush - as well as Democratic Presidents Carter and Clinton would transform the law into the principal weapon utilized by groups to deprive California farmers and residents of water. The most recent court decision favors farmers, but we know it isn't over until it's over.
- The attack on San Joaquin Valley agriculture escalated in 1992 when lame duck Republican President George Bush signed into law the so-called Central Valley Improvement Act (CVPIA). This was the first major blow to the priority position of valley agriculture for federal water. The bill signing occurred after Bush had lost his reelection, an ironic parting gift to an area

that had always stood strongly with him. Most valley Congressmen, Republican and Democrat, had opposed the measure.

- Representative Cardoza has long called for more water storage, reform of the Endangered Species Act, and use of better science in water decisions to keep our agricultural industry viable.

Partisan politics has NEVER been the answer to our water needs. Reps. Pombo, Condit and Radanovich - and now Reps. Cardoza, Radanovich, Nunes, and Costa all have made water supply a priority. In 2005, Reps. Cardoza and Pombo jointly authored legislation to reform the Endangered Species Act, gaining historic passage of the bill in the House. However, the bill subsequently died in the Senate, where the Republicans held the majority.

Since CVPIA passed in 1992, the Democrats have controlled both houses of Congress only four years. The Republicans controlled both for 12 years. Democrats have controlled both houses and the White House for three years - Republicans had complete control for six years. In 1994, the Republican party won majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate. After 12 years of holding both majorities, Republicans produced no reforms in water law or the Endangered Species Act.

Next time Michael Berryhill wants to make water a partisan issue - check the facts. Beating the partisan drum is fun at conventions, but it has never brought a drop of water to the valley. But don't take my word for this, here's what Jim Boren of The Fresno Bee [wrote](#):

"But the Republicans also played a major role in diverting farm water to environmental uses...In 1992, then-President George H.W. Bush signed the Miller-Bradley bill to reform the Central Valley Project. Bush did this even after coming to Fresno and promising farmers that he would veto the bill when it got to his desk." - Fresno Bee; 9/26/2009

One last note: Michael Berryhill closed his questionnaire with an appeal, claiming that most of his money came from "concerned individuals, mostly in agriculture and business." Mr. Berryhill has raised \$376,438.12 for his campaign - of which \$325,000.00 (or 86%) is a personal loan from himself to his campaign committee. According to his campaign reports, he is already paying himself back for the loans.