

Farmersville DAC Water-Energy Initiative ATTACHMENT 7 DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY



CALENVIROSCREEN 2.0 Map

The entire 2.2 square mile city limits and 100% of the surrounding urban area boundary of the City of Farmersville is contained in the “red zone” or top 25% of Cal EnviroScreen 2.0. The City of Farmersville is comprised of two census tracts both of which are in the top 25%. The southernmost census tract, which comprises the majority of the City’s population is in the State’s top 5% of economically disadvantaged communities facing significant environmental challenges.

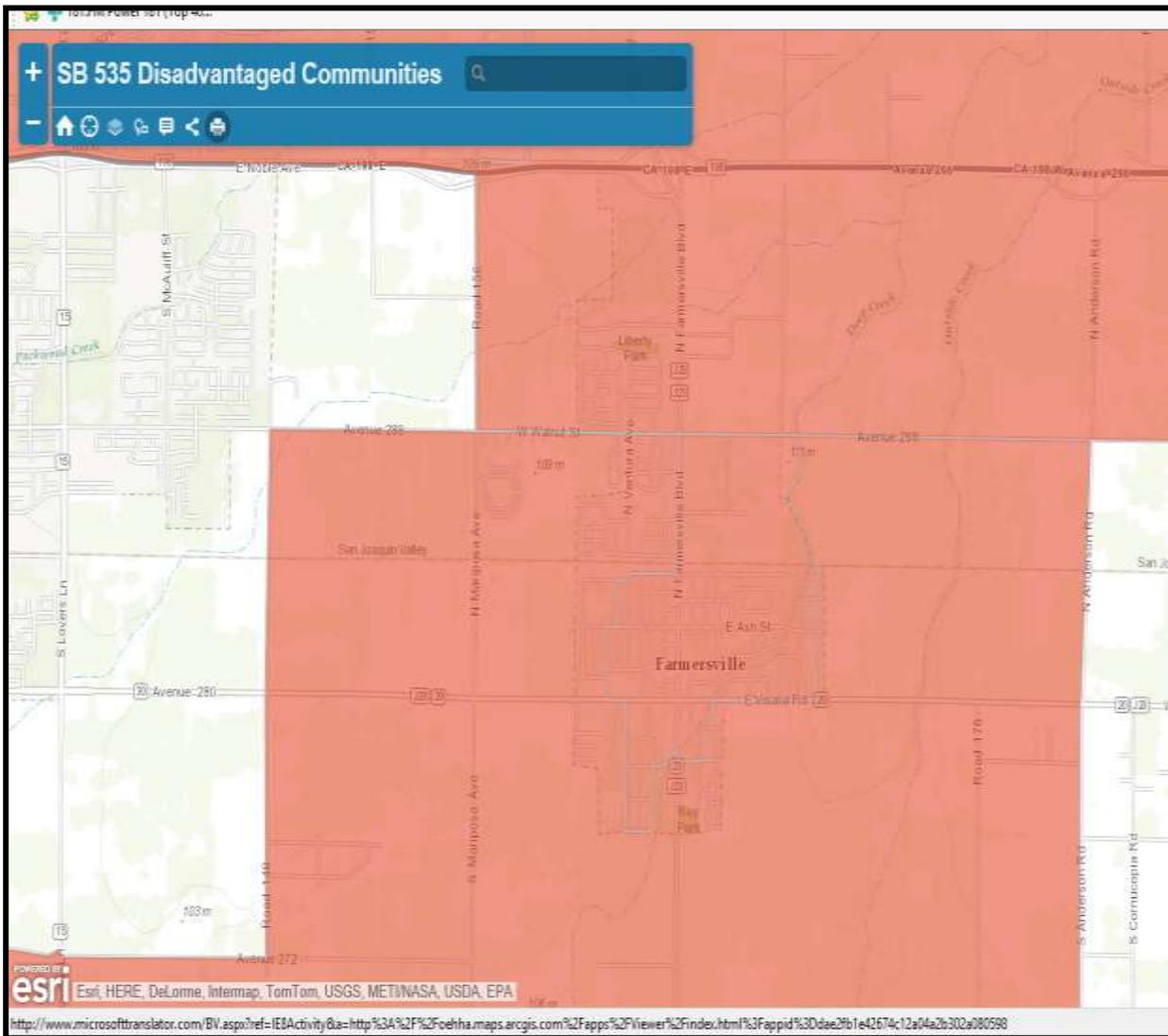


Figure 1: Screenshot from CalEnviroScreen 2.0 red shading shows the top 25% of California communities facing significant economic and environmental challenges.

Farmersville DAC Water-Energy Initiative

ATTACHMENT 7

DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY



Background: The City of Farmersville is located in California’s fertile South Central San Joaquin Valley. The small city of 10,720 is 2.2 square miles, surrounded by dairy farms, citrus groves, and walnut orchards. Most Farmersville residents earn a living by working in the fields. They can be classified as the “working poor.” Census data indicates 73% of Farmersville residents and 90% of our public school students are of Latino or Hispanic descent. The median household income in Farmersville is \$32,886, well below the statewide average of \$60,883.¹ Farmersville has the unfortunate distinction of being one of the most impoverished places in the State of California. Although this is one of the most productive agricultural regions in the United States, this productivity has *not* translated into health or prosperity locally. Farmersville’s population has high rates of poverty (31.1%) and unemployment (11.5%).² Ninety percent of FUSD students qualify for the Free or Reduced Priced Meal Program because of their families’ disadvantaged income status. Farmersville and the San Joaquin Valley also suffer from high levels of air pollution. The San Joaquin Valley often ranks as one of the worst air quality regions in the United States.

Measureable benefits to the Disadvantaged Community: The proposal provides for two critically important and measurable benefits to the disadvantaged community, Farmersville’s entire service area. The City does not wish to place the financial burden of water meter equipment and installation costs on its customers. The City is not an urban water supplier and therefore is not required to convert to a metered system. However, the City recognizes the extraordinary water savings benefits to be achieved by converting from a flat rate to a volumetric system. The cost to provide and install a water meter to an unmetered home in Farmersville would be approximately \$853 a significant increase over the regular \$14 monthly fee residents currently pay for water. **Farmersville is seeking grant funding to implement the metering project without requiring residents to shoulder the financial burden of the conversion.**

The second and more overarching benefit is a measurable 20% reduction in water use system-wide. This has tremendous implications for **protecting the community’s water supply for the long-term**. Farmersville relies solely on its high quality groundwater for potable water. Farmersville is part of the Kaweah Delta groundwater basin. Our relatively shallow groundwater reserves are more vulnerable to cycles of dryness and drought. The Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District is currently in an “overdraft” situation in which residents, farms and businesses are using approximately 40,000 more acre feet of water annually than we have stored.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2010.

² U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder, 2008-2012.

Farmersville DAC Water-Energy Initiative

ATTACHMENT 7

DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY



An example of the vulnerability of the local groundwater resources is found in an adjacent unincorporated community, Cameron Creek Colony. This 106-home community is also severely disadvantaged and relies on homeowners' private wells for water. During this past year, more than 16 private wells have gone dry. As part of emergency drought provisions from the United States Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Public Health, Farmersville will be constructing new water lines to convey water to Cameron Creek Colony. For the first time ever, these residents will have access to reliable, clean drinking water.

This underscores the pressing need to ensure the groundwater resources are sustainable for the long-term. It is in the community's best interest to conserve its valuable groundwater resources and use water more judiciously. The long-term sustainability of Farmersville and



Figure 2: Private wells are failing in Cameron Creek Colony, an adjacent, unincorporated community (red).

Farmersville DAC Water-Energy Initiative

ATTACHMENT 7

DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY



surrounding communities will hinge on in large part on its continued ability to provide high-quality water for its customers. Other efforts are underway in Farmersville to continually restore and recharge groundwater levels by capturing and infiltrating storm water in bioswales, rain gardens and new retention basins. Farmersville also uses treated wastewater in percolation ponds to naturally restore groundwater resources.

We recognize that conservation efforts are a critical component to sustaining the City's limited water resources. Through this voluntary initiative, the City hopes to educate its residents on ways to use less water. Based upon empirical evidence, converting to a metered volumetric system is estimated to produce a significant water savings of 20% or more. Evidence indicates that when customers realize their actual water use through metered, tiered-rate billing there is a financial incentive to modify behavior and use less water. The project will also include bi-lingual **"Water wise" outreach and incentives**. According to the U.S. Census 69.9% of Farmersville's population speaks a language other English in the home. The City recognizes that the new metered water system has the potential to double or triple residents' water bills. The City wants to ease this burden through water conservation education and providing practical tools and incentives to help residents use less water. That is why the outreach and incentives are such an important part of this proposal. The City will develop and distribute Water Wise bi-lingual literature to all of its customers and provide 1,000 shower/sink flow restrictor kits. The City will also offer 200, \$100 rebates/billing credits to customers who purchase specified low-flush toilets (1.25 gallons per flush). The City will evaluate extending the rebate/credit program based upon the response and additional demand.

And finally, the water savings achieved at City Hall and the Farmersville Community Center by replacing water- intensive landscaping will serve as an example to residents. The signage at the sites will demonstrate to residents the water conservation benefits of alternative landscaping.

This application has received widespread and enthusiastic support for both its merits (significant water/energy and GHG benefits) and also for the provision of significant infrastructure improvements that will allow for long-term sustainability for a severely disadvantaged community. Letters of support are included as a separate attachment and include the following:

- Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District
- State Senator Fuller
- State Senator Vidak
- State Assemblywoman Conway