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State Funding to Give Drought-Laden Tulare County Community Clean Water

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The tiny community of Monson in Tulare County received some good news this week. The State Water Resources Control board awarded \$1.2 million to help solve the area's long term water problems. The area's dealt with high levels of nitrates for decades and the drought dried up lots of wells that people depend on for drinking water.

"It took the lack of water to really change the outlook that provided the state funding for the project." - Steve Worthley, Tulare County Supervisor

Tulare County Supervisor Steve Worthley represents the area. He says funding due to the drought is answering the communities longtime water problems.

"There is zero infrastructure in a community like Monson," Worthley says. "We have some of the highest nitrate levels compared to the rest of the county. It took the lack of water to really change the outlook that provided the state funding for the project."

Funding for the Monson Emergency Water Supply Project will be used to set up a system with a well that residents can hook into. The funding will come from the State Water Resources Board's Cleanup and Abatement Account as well as additional funding from the board from previous years and the USDA Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant. It's a total of \$2.11 million. There are around 30 homes in the area.

"It's going to supply them with a reliable supply of water, which will be safe for them to drink," says Worthley. "Historically these people have had individual wells with septic tanks on the lots, which is never a good combination. They've had some real water quality issues."

"We're glad to see that the community of Monson is receiving funding for a long-term solution that will address their water contamination issues." - Maria Herrera, Self-Help Enterprises

If all goes as planned a community of around 800 people a few miles away called Sultana could also link into the system. There's a school there as well a post office and a few gas stations.

"They have a well, but only one well," Worthley says. "This will give them some redundancy because and the new well will provide water for both communities."

The project is slated to start this spring and should be finished within six months. Now that the funds are approved Tulare County, Self Help Enterprises, and the Monson-Sultana communities are working to set up a way for the unincorporated areas to be self-governing.

"After struggling for many years, we're glad to see that the community of Monson is receiving funding for a long-term solution that will address their water contamination issues and supply," says Self-Help Enterprises Community Development Manager Maria Herrera. "We look forward to assisting the residents as they connect their homes to the permanent water lines."