

# ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND

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## Self-Help Enterprises and EDF Partner to Support California Department of Conservation in Coordination and Peer Learning for Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program

May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Self-Help Enterprises and Environmental Defense Fund have been selected by the [California Department of Conservation](#) to coordinate technical assistance and outreach for the state's new Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program.

The [Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program](#) was created by the state last year with an initial \$50 million in funding to help rural communities and the agricultural sector balance groundwater supply and demand, as required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, while creating new benefits for communities and ecosystems.

Working together as co-chairs of the "statewide support entity" for the program, SHE and EDF will provide broad support to groundwater sustainability agencies and other grantees to help achieve program goals. One of the most important goals is meaningful engagement of historically underserved groups — such as small farmers, farmers of color, disadvantaged communities and tribes — to ensure that they have the ability to shape the program and that projects benefit a diverse array of stakeholders.

As part of the \$2 million, four-year grant, SHE and EDF also will facilitate communication, collaboration and learning among grantees and partners; provide guidance, training and technical assistance; support program monitoring and outcomes reporting; and coordinate communication.

"We have a demonstrated commitment to equity and know that meaningful progress comes when all stakeholders are at the table," said **Tom Collishaw, President and CEO of Self-Help Enterprises**. "As a statewide support entity co-chair, we look forward to pursuing a collaborative process to identify and pursue sustainable solutions for the San Joaquin Valley and entire state."

"The new Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program gives rural communities and the agricultural sector a unique opportunity to reshape their landscapes in ways that help achieve groundwater sustainability and build resilience to climate change while creating new benefits, such as groundwater recharge to support agriculture, open space for people and habitat for wildlife," said **Ann Hayden, Associate Vice President, Climate Resilient Water Systems, Environmental Defense Fund**. "To advance the most equitable strategies, EDF and SHE will be laser focused on ensuring historically underserved communities are actively helping to identify and shape land projects, especially those that affect them directly."

SHE and EDF will work with a team of implementing partners to advise grantees on issues related to working lands practices, grower outreach, habitat restoration, and diverse stakeholder engagement. Those advisers will include experts from the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts and CivicWell. An advisory committee also will be created to provide high level policy guidance and connect grantees to other funding opportunities.