Role Of The Media

Group 5
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As the population increases, water supply decreases. Water is a very important component of survival and it has always been a big issue that's been debated over a long time. It is a big problem that places a high priority on providing water for any uses. Some of the most important priorities for water are farms, agriculture, protecting the environment, homes, residents, and many more.

The media helps define the water problems and brings new to the people by television, newspaper, magazine, and radio. By using its own procedures, the media makes society aware of what is going on with the public's water quality and how the political figures are going to solve the problems.

The media helps define the water problem. When there is news on water concerning farmers, people, and live stocks, reporters 1,0 to the source of the problem and report back to the public to keep them informed. The reporters keep the citizens updated on the current issue of water through television, radio, magazine, internet, or newspaper. The news reported that California's increasing population has taken the flexibility out of the water system. The people's major concerns on water is that along with the inherent growth problem, cities face a serious water shortage because government is trying to cut farm water supplies to save fish and electricity. Water sources are becoming scarce. Developers are interfering to make an impact on the agricultural water supplies. Water suppliers sometimes persuade farmers to sell their land to developers. Another concern is that the water pollution in the San Joaquin Valley is getting worse. The Valley's most polluted waterways include every stream and river in the San Joaquin-
Sacramento Delta region. Every stream in San Joaquin County has more than one pollutant, such as mercury to household, insecticides, and it poses health threats to humans and wildlife. In the Sacramento Bee News, the article titled “Capitol Alert” says, “Blackouts may create shortage of water: State officials warn that supplies for drinking and fire hydrants are vulnerable because pumps can fall during power outages.” State officials said that the loss of pressure could introduce bacterial contamination into the drinking-water supply. Water pipes inevitably leak and the leakage that mixes with the soil can get sucked back into the system through cracks in the underground delivery network. The effect, called back-siphonage, is similar to sipping water through a straw. The article also said that changes in water pressure can also churn up sediment settled in pipes, causing tap water to turn brown or cloudy. The article also made the story of blackouts a problem for water because the water supply or sewage treatment systems rely on electric pumps to keep raw wastewater from spilling out of utility holes. Small community water systems are greater at risk because they lack adequate water storage. Herb Niederberger, the Citizens operations manager, expressed that, “farmers fear that diversion of water to cities would weaken their increasingly tenuous grip on the land. They are suspicious, if not down right hostile, about any development projects that could reduce agriculture’s water supply. Air conditioning season threatens to drain California’s power short supplies on hot days. Water supply systems are at risk, even for fire fighting agencies, which are exempt from the blackouts. If the black out occurs during peak hours of energy use and many customers are using their sprinklers, we’ll
lose pressure immediately." These problems brought attention to the people when they are watching, reading or listening to the media. The media brings the news to the people, but they also allow people to express their ideas through polls and surveys.

One way the media gets the water issue to the public is by using opinion polls. The Opinion poll is like a survey. It poses questions about an issue. Here is an example of an opinion poll taken on March 29, 2001: a Water Quality/Land Use Linkage question was posted. The first question asks what methods do you favor to promote clean, safe, creeks? (Vote for tops three.)

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(A) Limit growth in region.
(B) Support riparian setbacks to reduce potential for erosion and debris accumulation.
(C) Minimize impervious surfaces.
(D) Increase street sweeping programs.
(E) Provide runoff detention facilities.
(F) Build storm water treatment systems.
(G) Implement policies to preserve natural and compatible uses of floodplains.
4.6% = Strong oppose 1% Oppose 1% Neutral 4% Favor 22% Strong Favor 72%

2. Which of the following processes do you feel would strengthen the coordination between the Santa Clara Valley Water District and land use agencies on water quality matters?

(A) Develop manuals and brochures on water issues for project applicants. 2%
(B) Schedule periodic training for governing bodies, planning commissioners, and professional staff of land use agencies. 19%
(C) Place Santa Clara Valley Water District staff at local permit counters to advise project applicants. 5%
(D) Continue Santa Clara Valley Water District commenting on CEQA documents and project reports in a timely manner. 3%
(E) Increase land use agency partnership in the Watershed Management Initiative and Urban Runoff Program activities. 11%
(F) All of the Above. 61%

On page 9 of the April 2001 issue of California's Farmers discuss the struggle over water rights in the Central Valley. There was a Public Policy Institute survey about the most important priority for water supply. This survey states that four in 10 residents think that providing water for agriculture is most important. One in four chooses environmental protection and another one in four says homes and residents are most important. This article shows that there were regional and group differences because agriculture takes supremacy over other water uses in the South San Joaquin and North Valley regions. Priorities are divided almost equally among Sacramento residents. Latinos choose environmental protection
over agricultural uses (45 to 22%). While non-Hispanic whites choose farm use over environment (48 to 20%). Central Valley residents who think the water supply is a big problem place a high priority on providing water for agricultural uses (52%) rather than for homes and residents (21%) or protecting the environment (21%). The media gets to the problem by asking what the people think about the water issues. This enables the general public to participate in the problem by voicing their conception of the water question through surveys and opinion polls. Another thing the media does, it brings forth issues to the people about solutions that the government will do in order to fix the water crisis. Another way that the media brings issues to the citizens is by covering key political figures on what they intend to do about water issues. Agriculture has been plunging for three years and in this year it will go down as California farming's nastiest year. In the April 2001 magazine issue of California's Farmers, there is an article titled "Gravy train's Golden Gate," which expresses Governor Gray Davis' concerns about the economic disarray in the Silicon Valley. The government cuts farm water supplies to save the fish. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has told farmers not to expect much water, Northern states farmers will be lucky to get 60% of irrigation allotments while West Side farmers will get 40%. When the government cuts back on farm water supply, Davis stopped the use of methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) instead it would be replaced by ethanol, which is an oxygenate similar to MTBE, but cheaper. In a recent news about the water problem appeared in the Modesto Bee newspaper for the Merced County on Wednesday, October 10, 2001. The article is called...
"Builders must show water supply." The issue that it brings to the public is that Governor Davis signed a bill making homebuilders prove a water supply for major subdivisions before bringing in the bulldozers. The legislation promises to make developers prove to water districts and local governments that the builders have long-term water supplies for subdivisions of 500 or more homes. In the same article, it states that Davis also signed a companion bill by Senator Jim Costa, D-Fresno, requiring local planners to study water supplies for all projects under the California Environmental Quality Act. Governor Davis promised his own package of water bills next year to increase water supplies in a state growing by 600,000 people a year. He also promised to improve state water delivery infrastructure. In another article called "Ag industry praises Davis' support of water projects" in the Modesto Bee on Saturday, October 13, 2001, Davis demanded that the state develop a more expansive water storage system. Davis emphasized his commitment by stressing the economic importance of plentiful water. In the letter to the Legislature, the newspaper article quotes Davis when he said, "It is necessary to address our water supply and storage needs to ensure that water is not California's next crisis and guarantee our place in the World economy." The Bee staff writer, Richard T. Estrada gives his comment; by saying that the irony is that California's economy, which Davis notes is reliant on a plentiful supply of water, could make it difficult to follow through on that promise. Then the article has Sandy Harrison who is the assistant director for the Department of Finance saying that water development and storage is high on the list with education and public safety. She also expresses that, "there has been a
lot of talk about improving our water situation, and I don't think we can afford to
wait any longer. We've got to move on it. The energy crisis will look like
nothing compared to the economic damage that will be created by a water crisis in
the state." Then the article has Tess Dunham, director of water resources for the
California Farm Bureau Federation giving his input on Davis 'plan. He says, "I
Think the governor is looking for significant money form the federal government
through CalFed." Dunham believes that the legislature will pursue a water bond.
In Davis' letter to the legislators, he Stated that his priorities are to increase
storage capacity in:

• The Sacramento-San Joaquin delta.
• Lake Shasta.
• Los Vaqueros Reservoir (Contra Costa County) and the proposed Sites
Reservoir (Sacramento Valley).
• The upper San Joaquin River watershed.
• Other projects that use surface and groundwater supplies.

Davis vowed, " I am committed to developing a package of water supply to
provide reliable and affordable water . " On October 11, 2001 the Modesto Bee
titled "Senators hammer out water deal." After months of back and forth,
democratic Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer this week agreed to
legislation aimed at securing the state's water future with a federal price tag
exceeding $2.4 billion. The package is one of the heftiest environmental bills
ever. The article quote Feinstein by saying, "I think it's a step forward, there's no
question about that. Obviously, you're never going to move a bill unless you
have both senators on board." The Cal Fed bill is supposed to protect California's Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta by increasing future water storage and reassures Central Valley farmers, which makes the Westlands Water District to be a loser—at least temporarily. The article has Rep. Cal Dooley, whose district includes Westlands, said that he was "disappointed the bill doesn't give assurances to West Side farmers and communities." This decision to exclude the Westlands made Westlands officials concerned about the omission of assurances. The Senate Agreement creates a streamlined. 180-day procedure for Congress to approve three specific water projects: A delta water storage plan built around flooding some islands, a plan to enlarge Shasta Dam and a plan for a larger Los Vaqueros Reservoir in Contra Costa County. The media shows that there isn't just one person handling the problem with water, but that the government and political figures are doing the best they can to deal with the problem. By having quotations in the articles and interviews with other people who favor or oppose the solution allows the reader to look at the water issue at difference views. The Media allows the citizens to get information by watching television, listening to the radio, reading magazines and newspapers, or browsing through the Internet. The media helps define water as a very important source of human living. The media allows the public to be informed about the issues concerning their water crisis. The problems like water shortage, pollution in the San Joaquin Valley, and how the blackouts can effect the water quality are what the media tries to get out to the public so everyone can understand, not just people who live in California. Then the media allow the public to voice their opinion through surveys and
opinion polls. This permits the people from different parts of California a chance to give their perspective on the issue being discussed. Last the media centers on government solutions to the water dilemma. How Governor Davis and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer tries to come up with a solution for the water problems in California. In every media coverage, there will always be a person who disagrees and a person who favors the idea. The media plays an important role by giving insight information on issues concerning the public and allowing the community to view, not only one idea, but also several ideas. This enables the general people to understand the problem and what government's solutions are.
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