**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CLEANER WATER FOR SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY COMMUNITY**

**ARVIN TO RECEIVE $2.5 MILLION TO BUILD NEW WELL**

ARVIN, CA –The Arvin Community Services District has finalized an agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency for $2.5 million to replace an at-risk well that serves Arvin residents. The existing well sits just 1700 feet from the Brown & Bryant Superfund site, where chemicals from a former pesticide manufacturing plant have leeched into shallow groundwater and threatened the City’s drinking water supply.

This funding is a huge victory for Arvin residents, where the Brown and Bryant chemical distribution facility operated between 1960-1980. EPA **initially discovered the contamination in 1981, and in 1989 formally placed the site on the Superfund National Priority List**, a list reserved for the most polluted sites across the United States. Some of the toxic chemicals stored included herbicide dinoseb, and pesticides D-D and Nemagon. The EPA website reports that both groundwater and soils of the site are polluted by hazardous chemicals that threaten public health and the environment. “Soil contains numerous pesticides such as dinoseb, ethylene dibromide and other fumigants. The groundwater also is contaminated with pesticides. People who accidentally ingest or come into direct contact with contaminated groundwater or soil may be at public health risk.”

The Committee for a Better Arvin and the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment advocated for this funding since 2008, when local residents discovered that the site remained contaminated and that the chemicals had seeped off-site, threatening the City’s drinking water. Pressure from local residents was key to achieving this long overdue agreement.

“The Cooperative Agreement to replace the well is a huge victory for the people of Arvin, that don’t have to pay for that 2.5 million, and comes just in the nick of time. Committee for a Better Arvin has been organizing residents to attend local Water Board meetings since 2008 to keep this issue at the forefront. The drinking water of the entire city has been at risk. We are ecstatic that after decades, the people of Arvin are getting the attention and funds they need from the EPA to clean up this mess.” – Salvador Partida, Committee for a Better Arvin.

“CRPE has worked with local residents and groups like CBA, to keep the pressure on the EPA and the Arvin Community Services District. It has taken nearly a decade of organizing and negotiating to reach this agreement. Clean and safe drinking water is a human right, no matter a person’s race, occupation or geography. We are excited that the EPA has agreed to take this large step in rectifying this toxic situation.” – Gustavo Aguirre, CRPE

The Cooperative Agreement between Arvin Community Services District and the EPA will provide $2.5 million construct a new well. Recent monitoring indicates that previous remedies by the EPA to clean up the contamination of the groundwater are not preventing the migration of the contamination, as chemical concentrations are increasing offsite and approaching the at-risk city well. Shutting down and replacing the compromised well will reduce risk of further groundwater contamination greatly. Albeit quite large, this is just the first step in mitigating the ongoing impacts of the Brown and Bryant superfund site.

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About Committee for a Better Arvin

The Committee for a Better Arvin is a non-profit grassroots organization dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of Arvin residents. The committee formed in 2007 to address the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) failure to clean an abandoned pesticide manufacturing plant for over two decades while the chemicals seeped into soils and groundwater below the site. The Committee has since continued to work to protect Arvin’s residents.

About Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment

The Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment is deeply rooted in California’s rural communities, where we have worked for decades to build trust and power that leads to lasting change. Through grassroots organizing, strategic partnerships, legal expertise, and policy advocacy, we build power that drives systemic change in communities, in our state, and throughout the country. The biggest environmental challenges of our day are felt most deeply in low-income communities and communities of color—like those in California's San Joaquin Valley where more than half of our nation's produce is grown in a region where residents lack access to clean air, water, and often basic infrastructure, such as sidewalks and public parks. Learn more at crpe-ej.org. Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CRPE.EJ/?fref=ts) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/CRPE_EJ).