

Obama pledges millions to help drought-stricken Calif.

By Norimitsu Onishi and Coral Davenport, New York Times

FRESNO – President Obama arrived in the heart of California’s parched farmland on Friday afternoon to offer tens of millions of dollars in federal assistance to the state, where the lack of rain and snow this winter has led to the severest drought in its modern history.

Meeting with farmers and ranchers around Fresno – where electronic signs along highways flash entreatingly to drivers, “Serious drought. Help save water” – Obama pledged \$183 million from existing federal funds for drought relief programs in California. Though the announcement won cautious support in this region, Obama also pressed ahead with the more difficult task of enlisting rural America in his campaign on climate change by linking it to the drought.

Obama also spoke of climate change, drawing links to the drought as well as hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean. Mr. Obama announced that he would ask Congress for \$1 billion in new funding for a “climate resiliency” program to help communities invest in research, development and new infrastructure to prepare for climate disasters.

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