Two of three wells poisoned with arsenic — Armona, Kings County

Armona, an unincorporated community of about 4,100 people in Kings County, lost two of its three municipal wells to arsenic contamination. For years the town ran on a single well — one failure away from losing its water supply entirely — until a new well and treatment plant finally came online.

4100

Armona's population, served until recently by a single working well after arsenic took the other two offline.

600

Additional homes the new well and treatment plant can support — the district lifted a 10-year moratorium on new connections once it came online.

What happened

Two of Armona Community Services District's three wells were taken offline due to arsenic contamination, leaving the district reliant on a single operating well; a federal funding request later warned that if that remaining well failed, the system could not meet community demand. Residents described a visible tint to their water and said the arsenic contamination was noticeable enough that, as one district board member put it, students' hygiene had been affected. A multi-million-dollar new well and treatment plant resolved the immediate problem: residents reported the tint and the arsenic were both gone, water quality improved sharply, and the district lifted a ten-year moratorium on new water-service connections — clearing the way for over 600 additional homes, including new development on the town's east side. The district is now seeking Fiscal Year 2027 federal funding, under Section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act, to build a new groundwater well and water-service main specifically to protect against the single-point-of-failure risk that defined the crisis in the first place.

Impact — what we know, and what we don't

- **Resolved:** Arsenic contamination and the single-well vulnerability that followed it — the new well and treatment plant are operating, and water quality has reportedly improved.
- **Not yet resolved:** System-wide redundancy. The district's own 2027 federal funding request describes the system as still vulnerable if its current primary well fails.
- **Funding amount for the completed well/treatment plant:** Not specified in the sources reviewed.
- **Farm-labor share of Armona's population:** Not captured in this pass — Armona is a designated disadvantaged community in a rural Kings County farm economy, but we don't have an occupation-level figure specific to the town.

Part of a larger pattern

Armona is this project's clearest "the fix worked, mostly" story — unlike **Stratford**, where the underlying fragility is still open, or **Corcoran**, where the lawsuit remains unresolved, Armona's arsenic crisis has a documented resolution, even as the town continues seeking funding against the next failure. It's also the smallest Kings County community in this record with a state-designated disadvantaged-community status directly cited in federal funding paperwork, the same designation that runs through nearly every other town in this county-level pass.

Sources

- ABC30, "Armona looks to grow with new and improved water system." Access: not-captured — a public URL exists for this source and this project has not recorded it.
- Armona Water Supply Reliability Project, Federal Nexus letter to the House Appropriations Committee (Rep. David Valadao's office), citing Section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. §300j-12). Access: not-captured — a public URL exists for this source and this project has not recorded it.

Full citation detail and source archive: **Data**. Back to **water insecurity in the Central Valley**.