

AgOrder - Ag Order Comment

From: Craig Reade <craig@bonipak.com>
To: <AgOrder@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: 12/31/2010 4:00 PM
Subject: Ag Order Comment

Jeffery S. Young, Chairman of the Board

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101

San Luis Obispo, Ca 93401

Dear Mr. Young:

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Craig Reade and I am a managing partner with Bettervavia Farms and Bonipak Produce headquartered in Santa Maria California. The purpose of this letter is not to review each and every concern that I have with the new proposed Draft Order rather the "Spirit" of the working arrangement that I thought we had with our Regional Board and their staff members. I have had the opportunity to participate in many of the working groups going back as far as Una Doogan (forgive me if I have misspelled the name) in an effort to minimize runoff and erosion into the Oso Flaco Lake. I have also served as a board member on the CCWQPI since its inception.

We as farmers and the Ag. Industry as a whole want more than anyone to protect our water supply not only for ourselves but also for future generations. You have a captive audience with us and we want to do our part to improve water quality but we are not the only ones using water. To this point it seems as though Agriculture is the only one that has been called to the table and I feel the entire burden and blame is being placed on us.

I have farmed near Santa Maria's sewage treatment plant for many years and have monitored our water wells near this site and can easily say that this facility has negatively affected ground water quality. Now additional acreage has been purchased just east of this plant and acres of additional settling ponds are to be installed for expansion of the sewage treatment facility. Laguna Sanitation just down the road a few miles uses a reverse osmosis process that is much easier on the environment and groundwater due to the fact that the RO treated water can be applied to pastures and other plant life because all the salts and heavy metals are separated and pumped down an injection well. Explain to me in this day and age how we can let facilities like Santa Maria's sewage treatment plant continue to operate this way.

I remember you clearly stating in the December 2009 Regional Board meeting in San Luis Obispo that I attended, telling your staff and those of us in the audience that your board would not move forward with a new draft that did not work for both parties. (both parties being Regional Board and the Ag. Industry). I felt very good hearing this come from the Chairman of

the Board as it gave me the sense that a collective effort to improve water quality was underway. What I am feeling today is very different. I don't feel that our input has been sincerely taken into consideration and the direct and immediate effects of this draft if adopted by your board will jeopardize the future of agriculture.

Much of what we are dealing with today regarding water quality is a result of "everyone's" use of water over the past many years. It is going to take some time to work through this and we all have to do our part. I don't want this to become a battle between water users and a regulatory agency. Nothing good will come out of that!

Sincerely,

Craig Reade