

September 4, 2007

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Ryan Maughan, Division of Water Quality
State Water Resources Control Board
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Re: September 13, 2007 Irrigated Lands Program Joint Workshop

Dear State and Regional Water Board Members:

I recently retired as the Staff Chaplain at Selma Community Hospital, and I feel strong about the quality of the water in the San Joaquin Valley. As a chaplain, I did a lot of listening to the citizens of our rural area. Water toxicity is widely recognized by all. There is no doubt in my mind about the pollution in our ground water here. Our well water was tested by Fresno County and we were advised not to drink it because of the very high levels of nitrates in it.

40,000 people in the Central Valley are exposed to the unsafe and illegal levels of contaminants in their drinking water due to groundwater contamination. We who live in the rural communities must pay for bottled water. There are so many options for correcting this situation, but since there are no regulations nothing is done.

My family has purchased a reverse osmosis system, and we can afford to buy bottled water, as well. But so many of the people who live in the rural areas around us cannot afford to do the same thing. For many years we had no idea that the nitrate levels were getting as high as they had. When we had our well tested is the first time we learned of the contamination. Our children and grandchildren had been drinking that water on a regular basis, as had everyone else around us.

Patients I had listened to over the past few years had often talked about water pollution in our area and adjacent areas. The fear is not unfounded. It is hard to understand how regulations continue to be waived. It is time for this to change. And it can change if we work together.

Sincerely,

Patricia Silva