JIM COSTA
20TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA
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September 14, 2012

Dr. Karl E. Longley
Chairman
State Water Quality Control Board
Central Valley Region
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6114

Re: Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program

Dear Dr. Longley:

As we have discussed many times in recent years, this letter is to touch base with you regarding nitrates in connection with the *Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program*. It was brought to my attention after your latest hearing in Tulare that proposed actions by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Board) have raised serious concerns with many San Joaquin Valley farmers, including those in my District.

The problem of elevated nitrate levels within our underground aquifers and throughout our water systems is obvious to those of us who have been dealing with these issues for a long time. As you well know, the exact causes and the way in which we decide to fix the problem is where the debate lies. The Board staff has presented a path that they feel provides a means to solve the problem. The unfortunate result of this proposal, however, is the opposition it has received from the agricultural community who would be responsible to implement it. I share these same concerns. Clearly the concerns are regarding the costs that cannot be passed on and the implementation timeline.

You know that farms located within the San Joaquin Valley are some of the most efficient and technologically advanced in the United States. Farmers are also currently running their businesses in one of the most difficult economic times in our nation's history. If the Board staff and Valley farmers were able find a way to better collaborate on this, I believe that an agreeable approach towards solving our nitrate problem may ultimately be found.

This issue is important to all of us and the solution to it is one that should not be rushed or made without valuable stakeholder input. Thank you for your commitment to these issues and I look forward to discussing this further with you in person soon.

Sincerely,

JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

Let's go over this!

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