



NORTH BAY AGRICULTURE ALLIANCE

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Representing over 30,000 acres of San Pablo Bay shorelands

December 18, 2013

Mr. Eric Oppenheimer
State Water Resources Control Board
PO Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

Dear Mr. Oppenheimer:

Groundwater Workplan Concept Paper

North Bay Agriculture Alliance (NBAA) represents farmers and landowners along the shore of San Pablo Bay. Many of our members practice dry farming, but many others irrigate their land with groundwater and recycled water. For this reason, we have been actively participating in the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Management Program, an AB3030 action with Sonoma County Water Agency as the lead agency.

We are pleased to learn that you are focusing on the groundwater issues from your Board's perspective and jurisdictional authority. In our Groundwater Management Program, water quality has always been addressed, and the criteria are mostly set by your Board. Furthermore, our Program addresses all of your "Key Management Elements," save the last one, "Oversight and Enforcement."

This is because the success of our Program to date was largely based on the fact that it is a voluntary, non-regulatory program. Admittedly, the water quality has always been and will continue to be regulated. But, quantitatively, any hint of the State regulating individual groundwater use will immediately raise a red flag, and the Program would come to a screeching halt.

Many groundwater basins in the State are successfully managing their groundwater, and the Sonoma Valley is one of them. These efforts must continue, and your Board should help the local entities to manage their own groundwater. We believe this is the only way we can successfully safeguard the State's groundwater resources.

Our immediate problem is the funding. You have listed several existing funding activities of your Board. Our Program would benefit most if you further expanded your funding to all aspects of local groundwater management programs. This is definitely the area where your contribution could shine for the brighter future of the State's groundwater.

Sincerely,


Tito Sasaki
President