

Dear Ms. Bean,

In his April 1st call for statewide water use reductions and in comments since, Governor Brown stated that the mandatory program of restrictions was not directed at agriculture. It has now been learned the proposed conservation framework considers farming in San Diego County to be part of the urban landscape and subject to the same restrictions designed to curb excessive landscape irrigation. This provision will create undue harm to farmers in San Diego County who are just as important as farmers in other parts of the state. The conservation framework should exclude all agriculture as Governor Brown promised, regardless of location.

All water users in San Diego County have made heavy investments in a system that includes a variety of water sources. That investment has been so high as to force many local farmers out of business and idle thousands of acres of productive farmland. This investment was done intentionally based on lessons from previous droughts with the aim of lessening the impacts of future droughts. This exact strategy was promoted by Governor Brown last year when he called for increased regional self-reliance. San Diego County not only heeded that call, but we were practicing it long before the governor's proclamation. To now say those efforts cannot be used to mitigate the impacts of this drought is a powerful disincentive to make future investments in local water supplies.

Back in 2007 we were told to reduce our usage by 30%. As an Avocado grower you cannot reduce the amount of water you give a tree because it will cause the tree to defoliate and stop all production. So the only option we had was to remove 30% of our trees and pay the 50% increase in the price of water. Now we paying even more for our water and being forced to cut back another 20-35% which means we will be removing a total of 50-60% of our trees. Farmers in San Diego County have already made our reductions and done everything possible to be the most water efficient farmers. This is not fair.

Farmers in San Diego County are no less concerned about the ongoing drought as are other Californians. Please consider and act on these comments as a matter of fairness.

Sincerely,

Burnet Wohlford

HERITAGE RANCH MANAGEMENT INC.