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March 6, 2014

California State Water Resources Control Board:

In regards to the difficult situation that I find myself in concerning the water situation of (CCID) I find a need to express my thoughts and concerns being a grower/farmer in Gustine. Oliveira Farms has seen plenty of diversity and tough times since it was established in 1919. But never in all those years has someone jeopardized the future of my farm like these classless actions of cutting water allocations. By your actions you are putting not only my farm but every farmer in the central valley up for self-destruction. In result not only are people going to lose their jobs but also their livelihoods. Westlands Water District commonly known as one of the biggest agricultural regions in the world has been cut its allocation for years now due to what? If water never was released in an excessive amount through the Delta for the smelt in which was never its natural habitat we would not find our self in this situation today. I farm in the Central California Irrigation District which has the first and last rights to water delivered to the central valley only to be beat down from bureaucratic actions such as these. I should not have to worry about how I am going to try to save my farming operation from going bankrupt. I have five hundred thousand dollars invested into this coming year including labor, tractor work, transplants, seed, and etc. Now somehow that's on me to try to pay bills with no income; these are things that are overseen and will not get compensated. Once you lose a year of farming you can't go back the money is lost and also the jobs. I just do not see a reasonable logic on how cutting our allocation from 40-50% to 5-15% is good for the local economy or ultimately California's economy. If your organization gets its way not only will you see food prices double; but towns like Firebaugh that thrive on labor are going to result into higher unemployment rates and realistically turn into ghost towns. This is a farmers point of view of the current situation that I find myself in not that your organization cares, but what I do want you to know is that you cannot have wool over your eyes forever. This will result in a dramatic food shortage grown from the biggest agriculture region in the world, which produces over half of the world's food supply. The first priority of this situation this state finds its self in should be; what is a viable plan to feed the people of the United States of America. I am a proud American but I find that every regulation and restriction desecrates the meaning of the "land of opportunity."

Dustin Oliveira

Farm Manager