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Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento CA 95814-0100

Friday, December 16, 2016

RE Opposition to Plans to divert irrigation water to instream river flows

Dear Board members:

After years of study (BS UC Davis, MS CSU Fresno) and working in a variety of agricultural jobs I have finally been able to purchase a small piece of land and plant an orchard. I depend on irrigation water from the Merced River and Lake McClure. As a starting farmer I have used all my family's financial resources to purchase and plant my farm, I don't have the money to drill a well. If I did drill a well my small farm could not cover the capital costs of the well. Without Merced River water there will be a huge financial cost to my family. Without Merced River water my orchard will fail, and we will have to sell our property. While we know the advantages of having a functional business to the people and community, I would like to address the environmental impacts of diverting irrigation water to the delta.

First, as a previous planning commissioner, I always consider the land use effects of issues. If I were not farming my 16 acre property it would become a ranchette. A domestic well would be drilled, and significant groundwater would be pumped for landscaping and household use. There would be a significant increase in the use of public facilities (roads, schools, etc) because housing is more intensive use than farming. There would be a significant degradation to the wildlife habitat. Between my farm and the surrounding irrigation canals there are a variety of Birds and Mammals using the property. My small farm hosts Gamebirds, Songbirds, Shorebirds, Raptors, and Foxes. If a house replaced my orchard the biological diversity would be greatly reduced, as the presence of people harassed away the wildlife.

Second, I would be put out of farming. I have invested most of my life into becoming a competent farmer. But I don't have inherited capital. If you divert the water I depend on, farming will become out of reach for even more people. Not only is this a cultural cost, it's also an environmental cost. You will be replacing people with skills to improve our food supply with people who just have money.

Third, removing Merced River water from the people who depend on it, will increase groundwater pumping. The overdraft of groundwater in the central valley is a well-documented environmental catastrophe.

I am writing this letter to you as Sacramento Valley authorities are dealing with recent storms raising streams and rivers threatening the life and safety of people living in low lying areas, that water will flush through the Delta. There is already considerable more water moving through the delta than until recently went of the Delta-Mendota Canal and the California Aqueduct. Taking water to increase already increased flows does not make intuitive sense, and it seems like there is also a lack of scientific evidence.

As a Bass fisherman, I know that non-native black and striped bass are voracious predators. To devastate the impoverished communities of the central valley while black and striped bass are managed as a trophy fishery is immoral.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Wallace', written in a cursive style.

Paul Wallace