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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814-0100
E-mail: commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov

Re: *Draft Substitute Environmental Document to the Bay-Delta Plan*

Dear Members of the State Water Resources Control Board:

I am a partner with the law firm of Terpstra Henderson located in Ripon, California. I am writing on behalf of a number of my clients, who are primarily family farmers and small business owners throughout San Joaquin, Merced and Stanislaus Counties. My firm also serves as City Attorney for the Cities of Ripon and Atwater and Counsel to a number of special districts located in San Joaquin, Merced and Stanislaus Counties. The purpose of this letter is to voice our significant concerns about how the Draft Substitute Environmental Document ("SED") to the Bay-Delta Plan will impact our agricultural and business communities, as well the smaller Cities and Districts in this region.

My Clients in the agriculture industry have been in the farming business for many decades and have followed in the footsteps of their parents and grandparents, working tirelessly to create stable farming operations that have the ability to provide quality crops for many generations to come. My Clients grow a variety of crops including, but not limited to, grapes, almonds, walnuts, and feed for their dairy cows. They have consciously chosen to remain in the Valley because agriculture is the foundation of our economy and they want to carry on the family traditions and solid business values instilled in them by previous generations. For decades, my Clients have worked to improve their farming operations in innovative ways to make them more efficient and economical for the benefit of their employees, the environment and the community as a whole.

Without question, my Clients care about the environment. They believe solid planning and good stewardship of our precious resources, including water, are necessary to protect the environment and provide for sustainable agriculture in the Valley. Implementation of the SED as currently drafted will have devastating effects on the ability of my Clients to continue to do business in this community and support their families. Moreover, an increase in flows of the magnitude currently proposed will have effects that go beyond just those businesses that are actively engaged in agriculture - it will destabilize our economy as a whole. Reducing the water supply as currently proposed will force many of my Clients to reduce their operations, leading to not only the loss of crops, but also the loss of employees. Without jobs, many of my Clients' employees will not be able to support their families and they will be forced to rely upon governmental resources for survival. My Clients and their employees are hard working, productive citizens, whose lives will be dramatically altered for the worse if the SED is implemented in its current form.

Among other consequences, uncertainty regarding water supplies will lead to reduced property values and loss in property tax revenue. Such revenue losses will make it more difficult for our Cities and Districts to supply our citizens with essential services. Further, Cities in this area largely rely on groundwater for drinking water. It is unclear how our Cities will be able to supply quality drinking water to residents, as the proposed flow increases will lead to an increase in groundwater pumping, increase in the risk of reduced water quality, and reduced potential for groundwater recharge. Given the fact that the SED will result in significant increases in groundwater pumping, yet the SED does not take into account the effects of SGMA, we strongly urge reconsideration of the SED. We understand that Modesto Irrigation District and Turlock Irrigation District have invested more than \$25 million to develop scientifically supported non-flow solutions. We implore you to examine their findings in comparison to the speculative and negligible results anticipated from the current version of the SED.

My Clients are in favor of reasonable solutions that restore the Delta without compromising the future of our businesses and our communities. In the absence of a revised plan that includes non-flow measures and mitigation of the economic impacts for our area, I will urge my Clients to take all necessary action, including legal action, to protect their interests.

Very truly yours,



Stacy L. Henderson
Attorney at Law