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9 **BEFORE THE**
10 **CALIFORNIA STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD**

11 HEARING IN THE MATTER OF
12 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER
13 RESOURCES AND UNITED STATES
14 BUREAU OF RECLAMATION REQUEST
15 FOR A CHANGE IN POINT OF DIVERSION
16 FOR CALIFORNIA WATERFIX

17 TESTIMONY OF MARK WILSON

1 I, Mark Wilson, do hereby declare as follows:

2 **I. INTRODUCTION.**

3 My name is Mark Wilson. I am a third-generation farmer and I currently reside in
4 Clarksburg. Together with other family members, I am the owner and operator of Wilson
5 Vineyards.

6 Wilson Vineyards includes about 1,650 acres of owned and leased land throughout the
7 Clarksburg area. Of the 1,650 acres, 1,150 are in vineyards. Farmed lands are located in the
8 northern part of the region between Babel Slough Road and State Route 84 (Jefferson Boulevard),
9 further south along State Route 84, Clarksburg Road, and South River Road, and in the very
10 southern part of Yolo County on the north side of the intersection of Courtland Road and South
11 River Road (with some additional fields just south of Courtland Road, along Morse Road). Wine
12 grapes account for most of this acreage, with many different varieties—including Pinot Grigio,
13 Riesling, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer, Chenin Blanc, Gamay, Petite Sirah, Cabernet
14 Sauvignon, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, and Viognier—under cultivation.¹

15 Wilson Vineyards also operates an event center located at 50878 Babel Slough Road in
16 Clarksburg. The event center provides a venue for weddings, private parties, corporate events, and
17 meetings and seminars. Events are held indoors and outdoors during 8 months of the year. Each
18 year we host between 30 and 40 events as well as numerous other informal tours for industry
19 groups, media, wine tastings, and similar opportunities for the public to experience our facility and
20 vineyards and to enjoy the rural Delta setting. We produce wine under the Wilson Vineyards label.

21 I am a Member of the Clarksburg Winegrape Growers and Vintners Association, the Yolo
22 County and Sacramento County Farm Bureau Associations, and the California Cattlemen's
23 Association. Activities in recent years include Chair of the Clarksburg General Plan Advisory
24 Committee, Stakeholder Advisor to the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force, President of The
25 Amador, El Dorado, Sacramento Counties Cattlemen's Association, Commissioner for Agriculture
26 for the Delta Protection Commission, Delta Protection Commission liaison to the Delta
27 Conservancy, Yolo County advisor to the Farm Bureau Delta Caucus, stakeholder advisor to Local

28 ¹ Throughout the Clarksburg appellation, wine grapes are planted on about 13,000 acres.

1 Agencies of the North Delta (LAND), member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee for the 3rd
2 Congressional District, and a current Director of the Omochumne-Hartnell Water District.

3 **II. OVERVIEW OF TESTIMONY**

4 My testimony focuses on describing how Delta Tunnels (known formally as the California
5 WaterFix) construction traffic would affect agricultural operations, as well as the operations of our
6 event center and the many other event venues and tasting rooms in the Clarksburg District.² In
7 preparing this testimony, I was apprised of the following facts from the Final EIR/EIS certified by
8 the California Department of Water Resources (“DWR”) for the Delta Tunnels:

- 9 • Chapter 19 of the Final EIR/EIS describes a significant increase in traffic and pavement
10 deterioration on three of the four local road segments studied therein;
- 11 • In the Clarksburg area, four road segments were studied in the Final EIR/EIS: one state
12 highway (SR 84) and three County Road segments (two segments of South River Road,
13 and Courtland Road). I reviewed a map from the Final EIR/EIS depicting those four
14 segments (SWRCB Exhibit 102, Ch. 19, Fig. 19-2a) and I am personally familiar with
15 each road;
- 16 • I also reviewed graphics included in Appendix 19A to the Final EIR/EIS (*Id.* at Att. E)
17 that illustrate the project-related increase in traffic on each of the four road segments
18 relative to existing conditions;
- 19 • The Final EIR/EIS explains that State Route 84 (usually referred to as Jefferson
20 Boulevard both inside and outside of West Sacramento) would be heavily impacted by
21 Delta Tunnels construction traffic. The graphics mentioned in the preceding bullet
22 indicate a potential increase in vehicles from 50-150/hour to 700-800/hour between 6:00
23 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. On average, this represents a vehicle every four seconds during the
24 13-hour period analyzed in the Final EIR/EIS;
- 25 • The Final EIR/EIS indicates Courtland Road and South River Road (from its junction
26 with Courtland Road south) would receive essentially the same increase in traffic as SR

27 _____
28 ² In my testimony I refer at times to the Clarksburg District, which refers to the town of Clarksburg
and surrounding farmlands and open space south of West Sacramento.

1 84 of about 600 vehicles/hour above existing traffic levels during the 13-hour period
 2 analyzed. I understand this level of traffic may be overstated, but it is nonetheless the
 3 information provided to the public and thus I am relying on it herein;

- 4 • South River Road north of the Courtland Road intersection is not expected (per the Final
 5 EIR/EIS) to see a significant increase in traffic;
- 6 • The pavement of each of these road segments is identified as deficient in the Final
 7 EIR/EIS, with limited exceptions for portions of SR 84. The Final EIR/EIS also
 8 explains that construction traffic could exacerbate pavement deterioration and trigger
 9 road repairs, reconstruction, and/or the use of alternative routes in the Clarksburg
 10 District for construction traffic; and
- 11 • DWR has indicated it will repair or reconstruct roads as needed to accommodate project
 12 construction traffic.

13 With this background in mind, my specific comments and concerns are set forth in the
 14 following section.

15 **III. COMMENTS AND CONCERNS REGARDING DELTA TUNNELS** 16 **CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC.**

17 **A. Agricultural Vehicle Movement.**

18 As mentioned above, many of the fields cultivated by Wilson Vineyards are located on or
 19 near the segments of SR 84, South River Road, and Courtland Road that are identified in the Final
 20 EIR/EIS as potential routes for large volumes of Delta Tunnels construction traffic. Consequently,
 21 a significant concern is the movement of agricultural vehicles on the various road segments studied
 22 in the Final EIR/EIS, as well as other roads (such as Clarksburg Road) that were not studied.

23 For context, between January 1 and November 6, 2017, Wilson Vineyards has recorded
 24 1,298 road trips for tractors with equipment mounted or towed. During the same timeframe, our
 25 operation made 15,507 pickup and other vehicle trips—an average of 3.7 trips each day for each of
 26 our vehicles. Most of our tractor and vehicle trips are five miles or less. At least 80% of these
 27 tractor and vehicle trips included State Route 84 at some point during travel. Our headquarters,
 28 shop, and fueling facility are located just off of State Route 84.

1 Clarksburg has many small fields that necessitate the frequent movement of agricultural
2 equipment. There are only two significant north-south routes in the Clarksburg area: SR 84 and
3 South River Road. These roads are continually used to move both large and small agricultural
4 equipment and agricultural personnel during the growing season (generally, March until mid-
5 November) and to a lesser extent during the other months. SR 84 in particular receives heavy use
6 by agricultural equipment, such as large tractors with implements. Growers in the Clarksburg area
7 move large agricultural equipment on SR 84 and other roads every day during the growing season—
8 often, growers will move equipment several times during a single day.

9 This equipment moves very slowly—speeds of 5-10 miles per hour are typical, with some
10 equipment moving a bit faster (but well below the 55 m.p.h. speed limit for most rural roads). The
11 possibility of hundreds of vehicles each hour on SR 84 is a daunting prospect for local agriculture.
12 With that volume of traffic—an average of a vehicle every four seconds—even turning onto SR 84
13 from a field or adjacent road will be difficult and most certainly dangerous. And even assuming
14 occasional gaps in traffic permit such turns, it is hard to imagine safely moving agricultural
15 equipment on SR 84 on a regular basis as dozens of vehicles follow closely behind or attempt to
16 pass. In most locations, shoulder space is insignificant and does not allow equipment to move much
17 off the traveled way.

18 During harvest, these problems would be even more serious. Harvesting equipment is often
19 larger than the equipment used on a routine basis during the rest of the growing season, and at times
20 we move multiple pieces of equipment at once. Consequently, it is much more challenging to move
21 equipment on roads during the harvest season. Safety issues are also more of a concern because the
22 drivers of other vehicles become impatient and often attempt unsafe passing—a particular concern
23 on the narrow roads in the Clarksburg District.

24 An alternative is to load such equipment and move it from field to field (or field to shop) on
25 truck trailers. This would require all Clarksburg-area farmers to buy multiple large trucks with
26 large equipment trailers and hire drivers to operate them. This is time consuming, exceedingly
27 expensive, and impractical. Trucking will increase costs and operational delays and, as such trucks
28 themselves move quite slowly, it would offer only a partial solution. Numerous pieces of

1 agricultural equipment are wider than half of the road width. Trucking will not entirely solve the
2 congestion and safety problems that would result from moving this equipment in the customary
3 manner on SR 84 during periods of high traffic volumes.

4 The problems that would arise with increased traffic volumes in the Clarksburg area,
5 including on SR 84 and the other road segments slated to receive substantial Delta Tunnels traffic,
6 would be just as serious for growers in adjacent regions of Solano County to the south. Those
7 growers also depend on SR 84, Courtland Road (including Segment CT 34 in the Final EIR/EIS, not
8 otherwise discussed herein), and South River Road to access their fields and move agricultural
9 equipment.

10 B. Farm to Market.

11 SR 84 is a major “farm to market” route used by firms that transport agricultural
12 commodities from the Clarksburg area—including wine grapes, alfalfa, wheat, and fruit—to
13 processing and distribution facilities. Clarksburg competes with other agricultural areas for trucks
14 that transport commodities during the harvest season. For these firms, delays resulting from
15 congestion, road conditions, and repairs or reconstruction would make it more difficult and costly to
16 serve Clarksburg.

17 In a worst-case scenario, if the project moves ahead, delays and related inconveniences from
18 major road repair projects and other congestion arising from Delta Tunnels construction could deter
19 some trucking firms from continuing to serve Clarksburg area growers. State laws regarding driver
20 hours and rest create significant scheduling challenges when long delays and related complications
21 are possible. Trucking costs would rise, perhaps considerably, with decreased competition. Even if
22 the trucking firms that currently serve the area are not deterred by congestion and delays, such
23 higher trucking costs are inevitable. As trucks wait and delivery or service times extend, many
24 costs—driver wages and fuel, for example—increase for trucking firms. Delays also increase the
25 number of trucks needed to provide services during harvest and otherwise. These factors result in
26 higher prices for growers in affected areas.

27 With wine grapes, there is an additional complication arising from the need to deliver
28 harvested grapes to processing facilities within very specific delivery windows that are established

1 in advance of harvest. Particularly important in the context of transportation, the wineries have full
2 authority over scheduling, delivery locations, and the timing of harvest relative to delivery (i.e., the
3 limited number of hours that may pass between harvest and delivery). Timing is critical, as each
4 contract also allows the purchasing winery to reject any deliveries that do not meet contract timing
5 or other requirements.

6 The rejection of even a single truckload would be very significant—a truckload of wine
7 grapes is worth between \$15,000-\$30,000 to the grower. Our operation alone now ships
8 approximately 280 truck and trailer loads of grapes and will be up to 350 loads in three years.

9 C. Other Agricultural Impacts.

10 Clarksburg growers compete with other areas for agricultural laborers, which are
11 increasingly scarce throughout the state. Laborers often travel significant distances each morning to
12 fields where they assist with planting, harvest, and all other cultural practices necessary to produce
13 agricultural commodities. There is only a two month window after vineyard harvest that large
14 amounts of crew labor are not required. All of this labor has to travel into and out of the Clarksburg
15 District on a daily basis from the greater Sacramento area, Lodi, and as far as Stockton. Laborers
16 would be less likely to accept Clarksburg-area jobs (or will demand significantly more money) if
17 travel times increase due to congestion, road reconstruction, travel safety, or other factors relating to
18 Delta Tunnels construction.

19 This is a serious issue, both in the context of the Delta Tunnels and generally. Wilson
20 Vineyards employs hundreds of seasonal agricultural laborers each year. My understanding and
21 personal experience is that the supply of agricultural labor has decreased by as much as 40% to 50%
22 in recent years. Nobody chooses to drive a greater distance to work and spend more money on gas
23 if they have other options. The agricultural labor workforce will go wherever is closest to their
24 homes (provided competitive wages are paid). This could be a serious challenge for Wilson
25 Vineyards—we cannot lose access to labor, whether due to delays on the roadways or otherwise.

26 Lastly, winemaking enterprises from other areas are establishing vineyards or contracting
27 with local growers to plant new vineyards in Clarksburg due to excellent quality and tonnage that is
28 produced. The excellent reputation the Clarksburg Appellation has earned will be greatly harmed if

1 the north Delta is turned into a heavy industrial area for a number of years with the attendant heavy
2 traffic, operational constraints, safety issues, and air pollution. The result would not only mean a
3 loss of future investment but likely the loss of existing contracts and customers for our wine grapes,
4 wine, and tourism and events facilities.

5 D. Soil Characteristics and Roads.

6 As a 3rd generation Clarksburg farmer, I am very familiar with our soils, high water tables,
7 and their effects on our roads. Our soils expand and contract continually with changes in moisture
8 content. All of our interior paved roads (non-levee roads) except for Clarksburg Road are very old
9 and were not constructed to modern standards. Because of the sub-standard road base construction,
10 narrow shoulders, and in the great majority of cases an irrigation ditch or canal immediately
11 adjacent to the road, our roads have undulating surfaces, continual cracking, potholing, and
12 sloughing. A great example of this is State Route 84 (Jefferson Blvd.) itself. State Route 84 will not
13 long handle a great increase in traffic in the Clarksburg District before it is significantly degraded
14 and poses a safety hazard to heavy construction traffic and local traffic. The state is continually
15 doing repaving and maintenance on State Route 84 now to just be able to maintain its present level
16 of usage.

17 E. Alternative Routes.

18 While the Final EIR/EIS studied four road segments in the Clarksburg area, it did not
19 account for the potential use of other roads that are regularly used by vehicles driving through the
20 Clarksburg area bound for the Courtland Bridge. Agricultural traffic also relies on these roads,
21 including for the regular movement of farm equipment during the growing season (as described
22 above in the context of State Route 84).

23 One likely alternative route is for vehicles to use Clarksburg Road rather than Courtland
24 Road to move east-west between SR 84 and South River Road. This would be an attractive option
25 if State Route 84 is congested or out of service due to Delta Tunnels traffic and/or related repair or
26 reconstruction work. If this occurs, it will result in all the agricultural equipment (and possibly
27 Delta Tunnels construction traffic) using Clarksburg Road. This would route much more traffic
28 through the narrow two lane road in Clarksburg.

1 It is likely, in my opinion, Clarksburg Road and South River Road heading south of
2 Clarksburg would have to be used as an alternative route to State Route 84 south of Clarksburg
3 Road because it would have to be repaired/reconstructed after increased Delta Tunnels construction
4 traffic. After it is repaired, construction traffic will go back to State Route 84 and
5 repairs/reconstruction would occur on Clarksburg Road and South River Road south of Clarksburg.
6 After that, the construction traffic would alternate between the two routes as they were being rebuilt
7 for the duration of the Delta Tunnels construction project. While the section of State Route 84 from
8 the West Sacramento city line to Clarksburg Road is undergoing repairs/reconstruction, South River
9 Road from the West Sacramento city line to Clarksburg Road would likely be used for construction
10 traffic. When the portion of State Route 84 north of Clarksburg Road is back in service, the
11 construction traffic would move back to State Route 84 and South River Road from the West
12 Sacramento city limit to Clarksburg Road would be repaired/reconstructed. Whatever scenario plays
13 out it will severely constrain north-south movement for all non-Delta Tunnels traffic in the
14 Clarksburg District.

15 Additionally, South River Road handles a large volume of traffic from farming operations.
16 It is now a major roadway used for trucking agricultural commodities via the Cosumnes River
17 Boulevard exit from Interstate 5 and a major route for local traffic going to and from Sacramento.
18 The volume of large trucks and other traffic on the Freeport Bridge already creates a safety issue.
19 Extra traffic from Delta Tunnels construction would increase congestion and safety problems in
20 these locations. Again, north-south traffic will be greatly constrained.

21 F. Other Trucking Activity.

22 SR 84 is routinely used by firms that provide agricultural equipment and supplies (e.g.,
23 propane, fertilizer and agricultural chemicals, fencing), solid waste removal, and other services
24 within the Clarksburg area. Wilson Farms receives deliveries of such materials on a daily basis.
25 These deliveries will be impacted by increased congestion, worsened road conditions, and delays
26 due to local road repairs or reconstruction resulting from Delta Tunnels construction traffic. As
27 with many other elements of the agricultural economy discussed herein, it is reasonable to expect
28 that prices to Clarksburg-area growers will increase as a result.

1 G. Bridges.

2 Bridges at Freeport and Courtland (particularly the latter) are likely to receive significant
3 Delta Tunnels construction traffic if the project moves ahead. This presents two concerns.

4 First, the approaches to these bridges are narrow and difficult to negotiate for large trucks.
5 Structural elements of the bridges are frequently struck—usually by large vehicles—under existing
6 traffic conditions, and must be approached slowly and cautiously by the drivers of such vehicles.

7 Second, as each bridge is narrow, it becomes difficult (at the Freeport Bridge) or nearly
8 impossible (at the Courtland Bridge) for traffic heading the opposite direction to cross when a large
9 truck is using the bridge. This causes congestion and delays, as well as a traffic safety issue.

10 Increased large vehicle traffic on these bridges will absolutely impede local traffic and the
11 movement of harvested agricultural commodities to processing facilities and markets.

12 The traffic impacts at our 1920's era bridges from Delta Tunnels construction traffic will
13 greatly hamper east-west movement for the Clarksburg District. Delta Tunnels construction traffic
14 will at best be like applying a tourniquet, at worst an amputation, of the Clarksburg District from the
15 rest of the region.

16 H. School Enrollment.

17 In my opinion as a Clarksburg resident with general familiarity with the operation of local
18 schools, local traffic and bridge congestion could reduce the likelihood that families from West
19 Sacramento and families on the east side of the Sacramento River will continue to send their
20 children to the charter K-8 school (Delta Charter) Clarksburg Middle School, and Delta High school
21 in Clarksburg. These children are an important part of the local school population and these schools
22 could face difficulty remaining open if enrollment significantly declines.

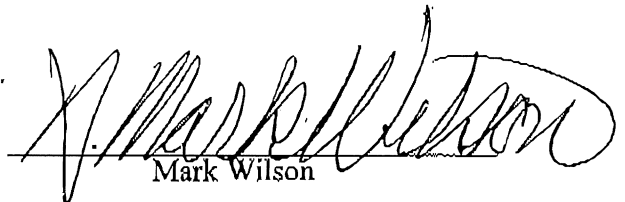
23 **IV. CONCLUSION**

24 As this testimony seeks to make clear, Delta Tunnels construction traffic—whether it
25 approaches the volumes described in the Final EIR/EIS throughout the day or only at certain peak
26 hours—would impact Clarksburg agriculture and the community of Clarksburg in a number of
27 ways. These impacts vary in degree but, particularly when taken together, they represent a real and
28 significant threat to Wilson Farms and other local agricultural operations and our community. To

1 my knowledge, these impacts (and others described above) have received no meaningful attention
2 from DWR to date and they serve as just one example of why the Delta Tunnels project is contrary
3 to the public interest.

4 Like so many other Delta residents, my concerns with the Delta Tunnels extend beyond
5 traffic and many of the other issues described at length herein. It will be very hard to maintain the
6 existing cultural and economic vitality of the Delta during the course of more than a decade of
7 construction and all of its impacts on the local environment, economy, and quality of life. Noise,
8 dust, traffic and other factors would diminish the quiet and rural character of this region that is an
9 essential part of what attracts residents and visitors alike to Clarksburg and surrounding areas
10 (including our many wineries). These are the real and well-founded concerns of thousands of Delta
11 residents and businesses, and I respectfully ask that you give them the significant weight they
12 deserve in your deliberations on the project.

13 Executed on this __ day of November, 2017.

14 
15 Mark Wilson

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