BEFORE THE
CALIFORNIA STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

HEARING IN THE MATTER OF
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES AND UNITED STATES BUREAU OF RECLAMATION REQUEST FOR A CHANGE IN POINT OF DIVERSION FOR CALIFORNIA WATERFIX

TESTIMONY OF IXTZEL REYNOSO
I, Ixtzel Reynoso, a resident of Clarksburg, California, do hereby declare:

1. I am an adult over the age of eighteen. I have personal knowledge of all the facts contained in this declaration, except those stated on information and belief. As to those statements based on information and belief, I believe them to be true. If called to testify, I would and could completely and truthfully testify as to the statements contained herein.

2. During the summer time I often wake up to the rhythmic sound of sprinklers in the alfalfa field directly west from my bedroom, I go to bed listening to the low hum of a grape harvester trudging through the vineyard north of my bedroom, and I sometimes arrive home midday to a bucket full of cucumbers from the field east of our home that some friendly workers left on our doorstep. I live in the North Delta along with my mother, father, and younger brother. Although my family history in the Delta goes beyond my birth, I have lived, worked, and gone to school in the North Delta for the past 3 years. In these three years I have met some of the hardest working people. These are the caretakers of the land; they wake up at the crack of dawn to set up rain pipes, till the soil, and harvest the crop through the late hours of the night. I have worked side by side with my classmates, their siblings, and their parents in the fruit packing sheds during the late summer months. I have heard the stories of friends and their moms who were unable to procure a job in the packing sheds and had to work in the fields, covered from head to toe in clothing in order to protect themselves from the unforgiving heat. Yet I rarely hear complaints. The overwhelming sense of thankfulness is astounding, all over the simple opportunity to work, work that relies on water suitable for farming.

3. I am currently a student at the University of the Pacific. I will recount interviews I held with my peers, family friends, a caring librarian, and an experienced English language development teacher in the Clarksburg area, an environmental justice community. Some people I interviewed will lose their jobs or their homes and have limited resources for relocation if the tunnels are built. These are people whose education will be put on hold or dreams of farming in the Delta will be shut down, individuals whose livelihood will be destroyed if the twin tunnels are built and the flow of the Delta compromised.
4. The North Delta houses a large environmental justice community. A quick drive down any rural road will display the disparity that occurs in the community. The small run-down houses between fields and orchards where field workers and their families reside are often loaned to the family by their bosses, who live in nicer, larger houses nearby. If you decide to visit the Clarksburg library during lunch time in any summer month, you will find Margaret Kaplan, the librarian, passing out free lunches for children and their families, no questions asked. (RTD-62.) In that same visit, you can head across the street to Clarksburg Community Church where a non-profit distributes food once a week. On my first day at Delta High School in January 2013, I noticed that every single person in the lunch line before me received free lunch. I was met with odd looks by the lunch ladies when I paid for my meal. Walk into Delta High School in the morning, and you will be met by a large group of Spanish-speaking freshman and sophomores waiting outside the door of Ms. Rodriguez, the English Language Development teacher. The services provided in the schools, churches, and libraries all around the North Delta have been adapted to support the environmental justice community in order for the upcoming generations to lead better lives. But as much help as community organizations provide, the backbone to the livelihood of the environmental justice community is agriculture jobs, provided by the healthy flow of Delta water.

5. Proof of the struggles of the community lies clearly in the large role that the library plays in the community. Margaret Kaplan has been the librarian at the Yolo County Library Clarksburg Branch for about three and a half years. It was during my time serving as student representative on the Friends of the Clarksburg Library that I realized her impact and the importance of her work in the community, especially the environmental justice community. During my interview Margaret explained her goals for the library, the role of the library in the community, which shows the need that can be found in and around Clarksburg. Margaret painted a clear picture of her role in the community without much prompting. She explained her entrance into the community three and a half years ago: “I worked really hard as an outsider to get to know everyone and make everyone feel comfortable so that they feel like this is their library… all of the community uses the library… everyone is welcome”. She paused, smiled, and continued: “I see the library more as a community center.” She listed the various bilingual programs that are offered, yoga
classes, and lunch distributions. She recounted a touching story showcasing the unique uses the
library serves for the community: “There is a family who uses the library daily, they come here,
yeat a couple of meals here, it’s the whole family, mom and kids spend a good six hours here,
whenever we are open. I have no idea where they live or the situation they are in but they like to use
the internet and microwave, they know they can come here, no judgments.” Margaret, along with
the various organizations that work with the library, have created a safe place to support and uplift a
community that desperately needs the help. Their efforts will be destroyed if the environmental
justice community loses their main source of income in agriculture.

6. I became the teacher’s assistant for Jennifer Rodriguez, the English language
development instructor, during my senior year at Delta. My eyes were opened to certain struggles
my peers encountered in education. Ms. Rodriguez works tirelessly teaching beginning,
intermediate, and advanced English courses to students at Delta High School. She works with
students who recently migrated to the United States and those who have been born here but for
whom English is still a second language. I sat down with her during the final days of the school year
as she prepared paperwork. I asked her about her work, her classes, and the unique struggles her
students face. She began our interview with, “I speak Spanish, it’s nice I can communicate with
them, it gives them someone they can feel comfortable with right away… not that it’s a job
requirement but it’s very beneficial here.” I asked her if she could describe the community that she
works in, and she began to describe the community from her lens as an educator: “It's a community
of have and have nots…the reason why my students are here is because they have a job, or their
parents have a job here…parents are not terribly educated, and they don't have the cultural capital to
comfortably participate in the classroom, this creates many roadblocks for their education.” I then
asked her about the future of her students if their parents’ jobs in agriculture were to disappear. She
responded: “Although we have a lot of migrant workers, the kids are actually very stationary, we
don’t think of them as the typical migrant kids who are at one school for two months then at another
school for two months, it’s not like that traditional model. They work around the kids’ schedules. If
the jobs go away, the kids will be uprooted again. The parents may or not be able to find jobs.
That’s a horrible outlook for the welfare state for the kids. That is a huge chunk of our school’s
population.” I asked about the jobs of the teachers, she sighed and responded: “We are deemed a necessary school because of our location so I don’t really know how that would play into staffing, but if we lost a lot of our students there would have to be a lot of cuts… We all would be impacted… We already work really hard to provide all the services that we do and that would be drastically curtailed. Our school will become a ghost ship. We have a lovely little school, and I would hate to see it lost.” Stability in education is vital to the success of students who already have educational setbacks, and loss of income will lead to additional struggles for families and students who live within the North Delta region.

7. The community is clearly in a fragile state, it is a community that is building its roots, and it cannot be displaced in its current condition. As I have noted previously, success in education will provide stability and long-term success for many in the environmental justice community. Many of my peers have gone on to community college after graduating from high school but still live at home due to their families’ financial situation. The following two interviews portray the effect the twin tunnels would have on two of my peers who decided to continue their education in hopes of making everything their families have gone through worth it.

8. In the deeper rural parts of the North Delta lies the home of Angelica Perez and her family of 6. She is the eldest of four children and has become the first in her family to attend school beyond middle school. Angelica is currently a student at Sacramento Community College, and I met her for our interview at a café between her break between school and work. Ms. Perez has lived in the Delta for a greater part of her life; her parents moved from Mexico 19 years ago and have been working hard, day in and day out, in order to support their growing family. I asked her where or who her parents worked for. She responded: “My mom works for Kellan Farms and my dad works for the Pylman family who farms in the Delta.” When I asked her if she ever worked in agriculture, she laughed and responded: “I have, every summer since I turned 15.” One hundred percent of her family income came from work in agriculture until she found a job at a Home Depot near her community college. I then asked her what would happen to her family if a suitable water supply was no longer available to the farmers her parents work for. She took a second to find words: “We would probably, I don’t know, we would be even more broke than we are now, I guess. We
wouldn’t have any income.” We moved on to the next question. “Would you be able to afford a place in Sacramento if your family would be forced out of their home due to the lack of work and water? How would it affect your education?” I asked. Angelica shook her head: “No, I would have to cut down my classes in order to work, they [her parents] would expect me to work in order to provide for my siblings.” With that hard-hitting question, we ended the interview. Afterwards, Angelica added that she was thankful for the fact that her family paid for their own housing and were not additionally reliant on farmers for housing, unlike the family of her best friend.

9. My next interview was with Julian Jimenez, whom I met for our interview on the banks of a slough across from Delta High School. I began by asking him about his background. Julian has grown up in Clarksburg along with his two younger brothers. “My parents immigrated from Mexico and resided in Fresno for a couple of years before moving to Clarksburg to raise us.” I asked him if he had ever worked in agriculture before. He laughed at the obvious question: “I began working in the agriculture as a teenager, and I’ve worked in various agriculture jobs around the Delta ever since. Right now I do custom baling all over the Delta.” His father works raising livestock in Rio Vista while his mother cleans houses. Julian and I participated in the same Future Farmers of America program at Delta; ask anyone in the program what Julian’s dream is, and they would laugh and answer “JJ Farms,” because Julian’s dream is common knowledge. He loves farming; that’s what he wants to do. He is currently going to Consumes City College and studying crop production management. Very plainly and simply, he said: “Everything my family does, everything I want to do is heavily reliant on water.” His dream lies in adequate water suitable for farming. His livelihood lies in the waters of the delta, from the water that he drinks, to the water consumed by the cows his dad cares for, to the water used to irrigate the fields that he bales.

10. The final interview I conducted for this testimony was with Juan Pozas and his family. I was touched by the love and caring in the house, and I quickly realized the sensitivity that the subject of the future created. Immediately upon my arrival I was greeted with a smile and a frothy cup of freshly squeezed pineapple juice. The house is small, without central heating and air; a small stove and sink sit next to a wood burning stove. The kitchen takes up about fifty percent of the total house. Alejandrina, Juan’s wife, was cooking dinner and had set up a plastic chair lined with
pillows in order for Juan to be able to sit through dinner with the least amount of pain possible.

After greeting us, Alejandrina walked over to a bedroom to the right of the kitchen. She held Juan’s arm as he clung on to his cane and slowly walked over to the table. He firmly shook my hand and sat in his chair. I then proceeded to ask him a couple of questions. His eldest son and wife were also sitting at the table, along with my father, who attends church with the family. When I asked Juan how long he had been working for his employer John, he quickly responded, “trienta anos, y no mas e trabajo para John,” which translates to, “thirty years, and I’ve only worked for John in those thirty years.” I then asked where his water came from. He pointed outside the driveway where the well sat. I asked what would happen if the well ran dry or his water became contaminated. His son laughed and said “I don’t know what we would do.” Juan just shook his head. I hesitated before the next question because I knew how heavy it would be for the family. I asked what would happen if the boss would be forced to sell the land, and all three at the table looked at each other, and a murmur of many responses came from Juans’s son and wife. Finally, Juan said, “nos quedariamos en la calle.” Silence followed. This translates to “we would be out on the street.” I quickly thanked them for answering the questions, and we proceeded to eat some fruit and enjoy lighter conversation.

11. Juan Pozas immigrated to the United States from Mexico. He was lucky enough to have support from his employer to gain citizenship. He was known for his loyalty and hard work; Juan’s employer set him up in a house across the street from his own house. Juan worked 30 years for John. Unfortunately his employment with John ended after his body could no longer take the strenuous work, and he ended up with a broken back. Due to his work and loyalty over the last 30 years, John has allowed Juan and his family to stay in the home. As outlined in the interview, Juan and his family are in an even more severe situation than other farm worker families that live in the Delta. Without the physical capability of working again, Juan relies on the kindness of his employer for a home. If John were to be forced to sell his land due to the negative effects of the tunnels on his business or if parts of his land lie in the path of the tunnels, Juan and his family could very well end up on the street.

12. Mr. Pozas has died since I spoke with him. My testimony faithfully reflects my notes and recollection of my conversation with him.
13. These interviews are unable to capture the full impact that the twin tunnels will have
on the fragile community in the place that I call home. Personally, agriculture created a building
block for my family to grow from; my grandfather, my aunts and uncles, and my parents all worked
in the fields. I have heard about and experienced the strenuous agriculture labor, but I know that
without those jobs my parents would not have been able to get through school. They wouldn't have
been able to attend university and receive their teaching credential and lead the impactful lives they
live today. Their jobs in agriculture provided a home for my father’s family of ten, jobs created by
the healthy flows of the Delta. I owe my current life to the flow of the Delta. The environmental
justice community will lose its livelihood if the flows of the Delta are compromised, their education
will be detrimentally impacted, their hopes and dreams will be stalled, their wells will no longer
pump drinkable water, and their jobs and homes will be lost.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the
foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 6th day of September, 2016, at
Stockton, California.

IXTZEL REYNOSO