

Dear Ms. Bean,

Governor Brown announced on April 1st, 2015 that there were to be statewide water reductions. In his announcement he stated that agriculture was not the target of these restrictions. I understand that in San Diego County agriculture is being considered as a target for such water restrictions. Farms are to be considered as irrigated urban landscape and will face the same restrictions. This provision will create undue harm to farmers in San Diego County who are just as important as farmers in other parts of the state. The conservation framework should exclude all agriculture as Governor Brown promised, regardless of location.

I am a fruit and vegetable grower in north San Diego County and I have blueberries, strawberries and subtropical fruit trees. All of my products have been established and the investments have been made. I cannot afford to reduce my water any more. We pay more than three times the amount for water as others in the state and we are very efficient at using water because we cannot afford not to be. If I reduce water by the proposed rate I will lose my investment and crops by the amounts proposed. We cannot just turn off water at 20-35% and expect the trees and bushes to survive. If I do not produce a crop I will not have any income to continue farming at all. All water users in San Diego County have made heavy investments in a system that includes a variety of water sources. That investment has been so high as to force many local farmers out of business and idle thousands of acres of productive farmland. This investment was done intentionally based on lessons from previous droughts with the aim of lessening the impacts of future droughts. This exact strategy was promoted by Governor Brown last year when he called for increased regional self-reliance. San Diego County not only heeded that call, but we were practicing it long before the governor's proclamation. To now say those efforts cannot be used to mitigate the impacts of this drought is a powerful disincentive to make future investments in local water supplies.

Farmers in San Diego County are no less concerned about the ongoing drought as are other Californians. Please consider and act on these comments as a matter of fairness.

Sincerely,

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