

Dear Ms. Bean,

In his April 1<sup>st</sup> call for statewide water use reductions and in comments since, Governor Brown stated that the mandatory program of restrictions was not directed at agriculture. It has now been learned the proposed conservation framework considers farming in San Diego County to be part of the urban landscape and subject to the same restrictions designed to curb excessive landscape irrigation. 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.

Water is a small expense as 1% of our gross sales but is vitally important to our ability to stay in business. We have spent a tremendous amount of money and effort to protect this asset.

In 1982, we dug a two acre pond to capture rain water and tail water from our greenhouses. Ten years ago our regulators asked us to keep our tail water separate from their rain water, which we did along with a separate pumping system. That pond yielded 18 Acre-feet of water each year except for the last 3 years when it did not fill up due to lack of rain.

In 1991 with the threat of cutbacks due to the drought, we drilled two wells and upgraded our irrigation system to reduce our water consumption by 57%. Fortunately the Miracle March rains saved California that year but we had no way of knowing when we made that investment. Since then we have drilled four more wells in search of better quality water 1,000 to 1300 feet deep. While the quality is a little better, it is only good enough to be used in our evaporative cooling pads unless we desalinate it with reverse osmosis membranes. We are doing that in addition to using reclaimed water from our local sewage district. We currently have that reclaimed water at two of our locations but the third will not be connected until the end of this year. To get by until then, we will need to build additional storage and upgrade the capacity of our reverse osmosis unit. And after spending several hundred thousand dollars on these systems, we have to pray that the aquifer we are drawing from doesn't go dry.

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,

Tony and Sue Godfrey  
Olive Hill Greenhouses  
Fallbrook, California 92028  
We grow and market indoor foliage and flowering potted plants