



June 30, 2014

California State Water Control Board
Sacramento, CA

RE: Water Rights S018689 & S017678

Dear Board Members;

It is our understanding that the Water Control Board will be considering curtailment or other actions directed against pre-1914 water rights in California at your next meeting or at a meeting in the future. As holders of adjudicated riparian water rights that have been in effect for about 150 years we strongly oppose any action to curtail or modify these rights. We have been through many droughts in Northern California in the past and actions by the State of California to suspend pre-1914 adjudicated water rights have never been necessary. We do not feel any action is necessary or warranted now.

Our water rights form the foundation of our ranching operation. We rely on the water in the summer to irrigate our pastures that in turn provide grass for our cattle. These pastures also are essential for the health of many wildlife species—turkeys, other birds, and deer. Without these pastures the ranching operation would cease to exist and the wildlife would also suffer or disappear entirely.

It is our understanding that these pre-1914 adjudicated riparian water rights are real property. As such, we would view any modification by the State of California to be a taking. In a drought such as the current one, it would seem more

judicious to curtail water use in southern California—drain swimming pools, use desalinization for domestic water, etc. We do not feel it necessary to create another desert in Northern California like the one created in the Owens Valley. It is obvious to anyone we need more dams and reservoirs in California, not only to mitigate drought conditions, but also to protect against floods which will surely come again.

It is important to remember that agriculture is the number one industry in California both in terms of cash sales and export sales. The number one California water use priority should be for agriculture—the source of our food and the driver of our economy. Agriculture supports local and regional economies through the creation of jobs—equipment dealers, car sales, feed and fertilizer companies, irrigation dealers, banking, insurance, grocers, and the list goes on and on.

The Board should be cautious in making these decisions because of the repercussions for the entire state economy.

As ranchers we are stewards of the environment and of our cattle—we do an excellent job of being stewards. The Control Board should exercise the same degree of stewardship as you make these decisions. Taking away water rights is not the way to be good stewards.

Thank you for your judicious consideration of these facts.

Sincerely,

John and Cathy Maas
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