

State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, Ca. 95812-0100

June 24, 2014



Dear Board Members,

I am a third generation farmer in the Patterson Irrigation District, a California irrigation district that holds pre-1914 water rights on the San Joaquin River. The ranch I farm is approximately 192 acres, currently growing walnuts, almonds, corn and oats. In past years we have also grown apricots, squash, carrots, beans, broccoli, and alfalfa. The ranch borders the San Joaquin River, and the part of the property along the river is a Watershed Protection Flood Plain. My grandparents moved here in the 1930's after losing their ranch during the depression. My dad liked to tell the story of the two days it took to walk their herd of cattle to the new ranch in Patterson. After returning home from WWII, my parents bought the home ranch on Fruit Ave. (1946) We, Foidas, have been living and farming here since then, 68 years, and I hope to be able to pass the ranch to my kids and grand kids. Why did my parents and grandparents move here? Some of the best soil in the state is here, and WATER. A well designed irrigation system was in place to supply water to their crops. Though the idea of pre 1914 riparian water rights were not an issue in 1930 or 1947, rights to water were a given. There was no thought that 80 years later a water board with not elected, but politically appointed members would consider taking their water rights.

I have been following the State Board workshops regarding the curtailment of senior water rights holders on the San Joaquin River and am deeply concerned about the possibility of curtailment and what that will mean to my farm and surrounding community. I do not believe the SWRCB should issue curtailments for the San Joaquin river system for 2014, nor do I believe it is legal to do this. We are aware of the severity of the drought and have made significant changes to our operations to account for some water supply shortfalls for 2014, including laser planning fields that are furrow irrigated. This is costly, but it makes the fields uniformly sloped (eliminating high and low spots) so the fields are irrigated faster using less water. Sudan grass will be planted in place of corn in some fields. This required much less water, but also produces less feed. The almond orchard is sprinkle irrigated using current weather data and and Et values used to create efficient computer generated irrigation schedules.

The issuance of curtailments will have a major impact to our operations including not planting some of the row crop ground, and putting much more pressure on a single shared well on the property. The quality and size of the walnut and almond crop will also be affected. Our production costs are increasing and the bottom line next year will decrease greatly. Far few taxes will be paid. More importantly is what I consider as the trickle-down effect. We grow feed for a local dairy. Less feed will increase the cost of milk production. The cost of a trip to the grocery store set to increase dramatically not just from milk but everything that is grown in California, fresh produce meat and vegetables. Back to the farm, there will be less hired labor, and fewer supplies needed. This will dramatically affect the community that supplies these and the labor force that lives and works here. These individuals will suffer the most.

We ask that you consider the additional and potentially long-lasting economic impacts that will result from senior water rights curtailments, on a year that is already fraught with water supply shortages. We also ask that you consider the coordinated efforts to assure that senior rights holders will not be injured this year. **We implore the State Board not issue curtailments to senior water rights holders on the San Joaquin River.**

My parent's generation was called the greatest generation ever. They lived through a depression and WWII, and lived a life of sacrifice and hard work. That sacrifice was for people. There comes a point with an extended drought, and global warming, that hard decisions need to be made that support community survival over fish. The board needs to look at the larger picture not what appears to be their personal agenda.

Sincerely,

Steve M. Foiada

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