

**From:** Tim Simonich [<mailto:itbetim@ocsnet.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 23, 2015 10:59 PM  
**To:** Townsend, Jeanine@Waterboards  
**Subject:** Public Input regarding Board Decisions

16596 Ave. 184  
Strathmore, CA 93267  
June 23, 2015

Felicia Marcus, Chair  
SWRCB

Dear Ms. Marcus and Board Members:

I am a fourth generation farmer in Tulare and Fresno counties. I grow prunes, plums, walnuts, almonds, processing tomatoes, onions, wheat, wine grapes, and pima cotton. What have water curtailments meant to my family, my community and my workers?

First, I now have several "former employees". We had to make the tough decision to lay off workers as we had to fallow about 20% of our acreage. I haven't grown cotton for the last two years which affects the cotton gin that gins the cotton, the warehouse and the people that market my cotton. I had hired a neighbor to pick my cotton so his business has been suffering also. I have equipment dealers that I used to buy equipment from that could not pick me out of a police line-up as all capital expenditures on our farm have been spent on projects to help our farm's water infrastructure: dig newer, deeper wells, install drip irrigation and micro-sprinklers, and install new pipe lines to move water around our farm. My house in Tulare county is currently without water as the well that supplies water for my family collapsed and caved in. This is after the ground water level fell from 88 feet to 175 feet in 4 years! I have irrigation wells that need to be replaced. One dates from the 1930's and has always been a reliable producer but not any more. We have another well dug just 7 years ago that collapsed due to subsidence. The cause of these problems is the lack of surface water deliveries for agriculture.

I would like to remind the board that California has seen this in the past: deepening groundwater levels, well failures, subsidence, and drilling of newer and deeper wells. This occurred back in the 1940's and 1950's. Our forefathers realized the gift that we are blessed with: some of the best soil and climate in the world where we can grow darn near everything and grow it better than anyone else. All we need is water and it provides food, fiber and jobs! Those same forefathers had a solution and that was to build a system of dams and canals and use some of the water our state is blessed with and use it beneficially. That solution stabilized and improved groundwater levels for many years until now.

The board has a tough decision to make: further curtail water deliveries to towns and farms to benefit the environment. I ask what benefit? Increased water flows have been given to the environment over the past 20 years. We have been told the problem is "the pumps". Yet, for all the past actions, no improvement has been shown. Please name one environmental success story that has occurred from the increased water flows thru the Delta. Delta smelt? Nope. Salmon? Nope. All signs seem to be pointing to the fact that the pumps are not the problem and something else is.

Regarding the board's decision to hold water back in Shasta Dam for the benefit of the salmon, all I ask is that a cost-benefit analysis be done. Add up the cost of the water, all the foregone ag production that could have been produced with that water, all the lost economic activity from the support industries (crop inputs, equipment, trucking, processing, etc.) and divide it out over the number of fish it is going to help. What's our cost per fish? \$100? \$1000? \$10,000? I am not an economist but I suspect that it will be a very large number. I urge the board to keep in mind that humans are part of the environment also. Your decision to withhold water has very drastic effects to farms, workers, schools and towns.

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Simonich