



To Whom it May Concern:

The Central Valley of California is one of the most productive agricultural regions in the entire world. While I am an outdoorsman and can appreciate the importance of healthy ecosystems for fish and wildlife, I'm more concerned about the socio-economic impact of political actions which hold no scientific rationale and aim only to appease specific interest groups. Releasing more water into the area rivers sounds like a great idea until you look at the big picture. More water for the Delta means less water for the Valley. While Delta water may help the estuary, Valley water adds value to the state economy. Keeping water in the Valley serves three purposes:

- 1.) More water in the Valley improves quality of life for families in both urban and rural areas by strengthening the agricultural economy and keeping the cost of living at a reasonable level.
- 2.) Any excess water in the Valley is not wasted: it percolates into the soil restoring groundwater supplies or is treated and released into the rivers and streams. This water will end up in the Delta anyway. Any losses due to evapotranspiration are comparable to what they would be without agricultural activities.
- 3.) Healthy agricultural income adds to state revenue through taxes on farmers and families who depend on agricultural jobs.

How would this change impact my family? Increasing the cost of water will make a tight budget even tighter, limiting our purchasing power and returning less sales tax dollars to the state. Furthermore, I work in the food industry. Increased water costs will raise the price of our raw products and increase our operating costs, challenging our ability to do business.

There is no secret why thousands of jobs have been lost in the Central Valley. Increased costs brought on by bureaucratic decisions have forced businesses to pull-up stakes and move to friendlier states. While those in Sacramento, San Francisco, and Los Angeles cheer your decisions, the rest of the state suffers the consequences. The economic "recovery" is still a myth to most in the Central Valley. Allowing less water for the Valley will certainly increase costs, decrease incomes, and decrease revenues throughout Valley communities.

I understand that water is a difficult resource to manage: no life on Earth can be sustained without it and its annual replenishment varies from year to year. Families need it. Farmers need it. Fish need it. It is difficult to balance economic and ecological needs. Yet, too often, water is used as a bargaining chip to pander to a political base. Simply put, treating water as a traded commodity trivializes its importance to the entire state.

This Board is saddled with the task of "playing god" with California water. You are appointed officials and, while I appreciate your desire to "do the right thing", I have no sympathy for the difficulty of your decisions. If you did not understand the challenges of your position, you should have declined your appointment. I urge you to maintain current flow levels until solid scientific data can be presented to recommend otherwise. Listen to the folks who are going to

personally bear the brunt of this decision rather than some lobbyist hundreds of miles away. In my opinion, arbitrarily favoring fish over families and farms is a choice which will not add to the long-term stability of California. Thank you for your consideration.

Josh Stensland
Ripon, CA