

March 11, 2014

Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.  
Governor  
State of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown,

The drought crisis has reached its most difficult phase to date. Leaders of several agencies and departments within your administration are working to determine how to manage critical demands for water from our complex infrastructure of reservoirs, canals and pipelines. Though in need of major surface storage and conveyance improvements, California's water system has been operated during prior severe drought conditions without causing the kind of damage our communities will endure this year if the State Water Resources Control Board continues on its current course. Simply put, the system is being handicapped by regulatory restrictions that will thwart the very purpose for which this infrastructure was designed and constructed: To ensure an adequate water supply for beneficial uses by cities and farms, especially in times of drought. Our current understanding of the proposed actions by the State Water Resources Control Board would subvert the experience, pragmatism and common sense of the federal and state public agency professionals who know best how to operate this dynamic system in even the driest conditions.

We request that your administration direct the State Water Resources Control Board to work with the Central Valley Project and State Water Project to rebalance existing objectives in light of the current crisis in order to maximize the flexibility of operations to capture water for storage and delivery both north and south of the Delta.

Under the pretext of the drought crisis, the State Water Resources Control Board seems intent on placing itself in functional command of the federal Central Valley Project and the State Water Project, a role it is ill equipped to assume, and further appears intent on needlessly attacking water rights held by farm water contractors.

This will create a domino effect, causing economic and social damage in one region after another. For the families in the areas served by the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors alone, estimated economic damage could reach \$1 billion. The next domino would fall on the farmers and farm workers served by the Friant Water system, as it would be forced to cut off water to hundreds of farms on the east side of the Valley in order to partially mitigate the harm to the Exchange Contractors by sending scarce committed water downstream. Conflict and litigation will be unavoidable, presenting a grave threat to cooperative water management practices that have served to bind the state's diverse water interests together for the greater good. Furthermore, the ensuing conflicts and economic harm could launch a new and prolonged era of distrust and regionalism.

As we write this letter, the State Water Resources Control Board's order continues to impose hard limits on the amount of water that may be pumped from the Delta. As occurred this past February after the first storm in over a year, we are again missing a vital opportunity to capture a pulse of runoff in the Delta from the recent storms. The water project operators estimate that for several days following the last storms, over 20,000 cfs flowed through the

Delta and out to sea. As federal and state agencies talked past each other, we watched helplessly as 40,000 acre feet PER DAY were lost to the ocean, enough to provide for 80,000 households for a year or to farm approximately 15,000 acres of fruits or vegetables. Governor, we are in crisis. State and federal project operators should be pumping the maximum possible right now into San Luis Reservoir to improve water supplies for cities and farms this year and next, and they should be given the flexibility to maximize water storage opportunities at every future runoff opportunity in the Delta this year.

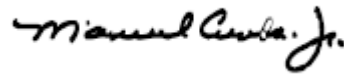
We know that you share our vision for pragmatic and flexible policies that balance competing water needs, and we are thankful for your ongoing leadership in achieving the long-term conveyance solutions that can greatly lessen these kinds of conflicts in the future.

We appreciate the severity of the challenges you and your team face in coping with this crisis. If we can be of any assistance to you, please let us know.

Sincerely,



Tom Nassif  
President and CEO  
Western Growers



Manuel Cunha  
President  
Nisei Farmers League



Will Scott  
President  
California African American Farmers



Roger Isom  
President and CEO  
California Cotton Ginners Association



Roger Isom  
President and CEO  
California Cotton Growers Association



Roger Isom  
President and CEO  
Western Agricultural Processors Association



Richard Matoian  
Executive Director  
American Pistachio Growers