



Judith G. Case, Chairman
Fresno County Board of Supervisors
District 4

Hall of Records Room 300
2281 Tulare Street Fresno, California 93721

February 15, 2010

Senator «Name»
«MAILING__ADDRESS»

Dear Senator:

I am writing to urge your support for California Senator Diane Feinstein's Emergency Temporary Water Supply Amendment as proposed to lessen the devastating effect of water supply curtailment to the agriculture industry in Central California. This amendment does not suspend the Endangered Species Act, but provides temporary relief to a long suffering region while long-term solutions to California's broken water system are being worked out.

Please put the people of Fresno County and the San Joaquin Valley back to work. The quickest and most effective way to provide jobs in our area is to restore a reasonable level of water supply. I ask that you:

1. Support Senator Feinstein's Emergency Temporary Water Supply Amendment and,
2. Consider joining Senator Feinstein as a co-sponsor of this bill that will put thousands of people back to work.

This short term amendment is similar to a New Mexico amendment in 2003 which was passed unanimously by the Senate to deal with a similar situation as that which we are experiencing in the San Joaquin Valley. While meeting the requirements of the Endangered Species Act, the Emergency Temporary Water Supply Amendment will provide a base water supply between 38-40% to our largest industry, agriculture, and provide needed water to millions of Californians living in the southern part of our state. This temporary measure will allow for a 38-40% water supply to a region that is currently experiencing 128% of natural rainfall. The problem is not a natural drought this year.

California is often viewed as a wealthy state but the people of the San Joaquin Valley, in the heart of California, are often overlooked. A 2008 Congressional study compared the San Joaquin Valley region to Appalachia in terms of poverty and federal support to be less than other areas of our country.

As a local elected official, I have seen the devastation to our local economy based on a three-year drought, exacerbated by water supply curtailment due to environmental concerns. The economic harm of a curtailed water supply combined with a severe recession has literally brought our region to its knees. Our unemployment is extraordinarily high, food lines gather early in the morning for basic necessities to feed hungry residents, and family homes are being lost to foreclosure because of the lack of employment.

I would like to provide the following information to illustrate the challenges faced in our region:

In December 2009, unemployment reported by the California Employment Development Department:

California Statewide Unemployment:	12.1%
Fresno County Unemployment	16.8%
Fresno Westside Cities Unemployment:	
Firebaugh	28.2%
Huron	37.9%
Mendota	31.9%
Riverdale	22.2%
San Joaquin	37.3%

Our Westside communities have unprecedented levels of home foreclosure. The current US foreclosure rate for January 2010 as listed on RealtyTrac.com is 1 in 405 homes taken into foreclosure in the United States. In California, this rate is 1 in 185 homes. In Fresno County, the foreclosure rate is 1 in 163 homes. In Mendota, a town particularly hard hit by water supply curtailment, 1 in 99 homes were placed in foreclosure in January.

Fresno County is the number one agriculture producing county in the United States.

Agriculture production and the many businesses which provide services and supplies to the farm community is the top employer in our county. The easiest way to restore jobs in this tough economy is to provide reliable water to the most productive agriculture area in our country.

Please put the people of Fresno County and the San Joaquin Valley back to work. The quickest and most effective way to provide jobs in our area is to restore a reasonable level of water supply. I ask that you:

2. 1. Support Senator Feinstein's Emergency Temporary Water Supply Amendment, and
3. 2. Consider joining Senator Feinstein as a co-sponsor of this bill that will put thousands of people back to work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Judith G. Case, Chairman
Fresno County Board of Supervisors