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Board President
Owner, Sierra Orchards

May 15, 2013

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Mr. Mark Cowin
Director
California Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 942836, Room 1115-1
Sacramento, CA 94236-001

Dear Director Cowin:

It was our pleasure to have Deputy Secretary Gary Bardini participate at our board meeting last week with representatives from the Westlands Water Districts and the Northern California Water Association to discuss water transfers. Since we are experiencing another extremely dry year, the issue was timely and critical for our farmers and ranchers in the Central Valley.

We appreciate the commitment that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has to working with stakeholders to improve to the overall transfer process. However, it is still the opinion of this Board that the current approach to managing water and operating storage/conveyance facilities does not result in the optimal use of water for the state.

In the short term we need a process to expedite water transfers for the current year that will help alleviate extremely dry conditions in impacted growing regions. But this is not a solution. We also need to evaluate options now that will be of critical use for future years.

We propose that an Interagency Drought Task Force be convened to assist DWR with current transfer implementation and future planning. While this is only our second dry year in this drought cycle, we cannot wait for drought conditions to begin drought planning.

To facilitate drought planning, the Board believes that DWR and the State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) should coordinate with appropriate federal agencies, water districts and water agencies to improve efficiency in the process to review and approve water transfers in California. In order to meet this goal, DWR and SWRCB should consider addressing all of the following: short-term and long-term transfers; consolidated place of use; template agreements for transfers; and a permanent joint point of diversion for the State and Federal Water Projects.



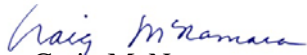
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We fully understand the challenges these recommendations may pose, but believe your leadership team at DWR is uniquely positioned to improve the current water transfer model. Our Board is more than willing to work with you in bringing together the necessary stakeholders to begin discussions and start work on these needed reforms.

Thank you for your continued engagement and willingness to work on this important issue.

Sincerely,


Craig McNamara
President

cc: Secretary Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture