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# California State Senate



SENATOR  
JIM NIELSEN  
FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
BUDGET & FISCAL REVIEW  
HEALTH  
INSURANCE  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

March 6, 2014

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

Dear Governor Brown:

It has been brought to my attention that the state may eliminate all water allocations from the State Water Project to the agricultural community to zero this year. A minimum amount of water in state reservoirs is required by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) at the end of September. If carried out by SWRCB as planned, this will mean that the agricultural community will not have access to water this year.

This will have long-term devastating impact to farmers, farm workers and their families.

Given your family roots in the North State, you know the importance of farming and its significance to the region and to the state economy. The state's 80,500 farms and ranches earned a record \$44.7 billion for their output in 2011, according to the most recent statistics available by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

California remains the number one state in farming with 11.3 percent of the United States' total. The state accounted for 15 percent of national receipts for crops and 7.1 percent of the US revenue for livestock and livestock products.

Water is a scarce resource, and California is suffering from an historic drought. All users must share the scarcity equally. This is a much more equitable way to divide the allocation of water for the benefit of all users – farmers and residential.

Should this policy go into effect, farmers will not be able to water their trees, crops and livestock. This will result in the reduction of dairy and cattle herds. We will also see the deaths of fruit trees, rice fields (which are critical habitats for many of California's

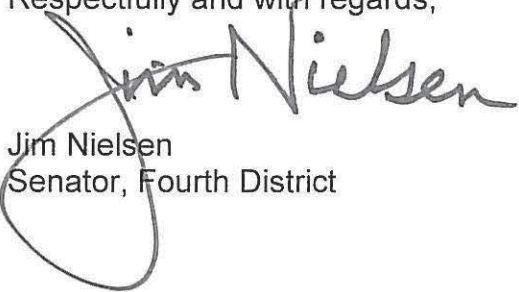
migratory birds and other species), and other crops, not only for this year, but years to come.

Consumers still recovering from the Great Recession will undoubtedly be subjected to higher prices at the grocery store.

On behalf of the agricultural community I represent, I ask that you use your executive power to join us in partnership to resolve this crisis without eliminating water to agriculture. Please initiate some collaborative meetings with agricultural water users and organizations with members of your administration to present constructive alternative solutions to zero supply.

I look forward to hearing from you, and I pledge to work with you in bringing about the best possible solution for all water users.

Respectfully and with regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Nielsen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jim Nielsen  
Senator, Fourth District