

commentletters



From: Dawn Souza <dn.souza@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 06, 2016 10:56 AM
To: Marcus, Felicia@Waterboards; Dadamo, Dorene@Waterboards; Doduc, Tam@Waterboards; Moore, Steven@Waterboards
Subject: Worth the fight. Save our water

Hello,

My name is Dawn Souza.

My family is an agricultural family. My parents re-located here from the LA area then dad started work in a packing plant here. My father, Robert High, founded our farming business in 1969 here in Modesto, CA. His first ranch was peaches on River Road in Modesto. He quickly grew to become the largest peach farmer in CA. After peaches he invested in Almond farming and grew his business to a good, profitable business.

I remember as I grew up, observing the stress of being a farmer in the Central Valley. Nature and weather were always big subjects for him. But that is given in farming families. Dad always accepted the nature part of farming. He saw the challenge and rose up with innovative ways to increase production at the ranch despite droughts, frost and other factors.

No, nature has not been the long-term stress for the Central Valley farmer. It is more often than not people, more accurately the government, that has been the biggest stress on farming in the Central Valley. It is regulations on chemicals, fertilizers, equipment, labor, air quality, and wild life in your crops. No, the biggest stress for my father was not nature but people, those who think they know what is best for everyone. A Central Valley farmer has to comply with what people working elsewhere, outside of the agricultural business, decide is right. Whether it is right for our business or not. I grew up here knowing that in the past our water was taken from our area and given to the LA area. We as citizens and farmers here have to conserve and fret, while those who have no requirements indulge in our water.

That is happening again with these new regulations. Government is making it extremely hard to be a farmer in one the most fertile areas in our country. People want food but forget that it has to be grown and harvested. Due to our location we are blessed to be able to farm so many commodities. Government choices are going to cripple the industry if allowed to constantly divert our natural resources to other locations.

Please consider the Central Valley farming community when you are making these decisions. We have rights to our water.

Thank you for taking the time to read this,
Dawn Souza

“Our region’s leaders – supervisors, water district board members, employment officials, etc. – must be ready to refute poor analysis and correct any bogus data. With substantially less water, jobs will disappear, land values will fall and less will be collected in taxes. A congressional report already calls us the Appalachia of the West; with less water, we could be the Sahara.”

The Modesto Bee, Jan. 22, 2016