



March 14, 2017

TO: State Water Resources Control Board

FROM: Michele Livak, Hilmar, California

On behalf of my husband Bob Livak and myself, and my parents Vernal and Barbara Tornquist

This is a letter opposing the State Water Control Board's plan to divert water for Agricultural use to fish.

I pray the hearings were not just a formality, another box for you to check in the process, and that you were listening to the many people in agriculture who have spoken or written to you. The way the plan has been presented is that you seem to have no idea how this plan will affect the Central Valley. Reduced or no water to farmers, means reduced income, which will mean reduced expenditures in all areas – employees, services, goods. From there, our land values will deteriorate which will in turn mean our taxes will have to be reduced. Reduced taxes will affect our local schools and, of course, the state.

I am part of a fourth generation farming family. **We are a small family farm operation – we farm about 200 acres (35 of that is rented ground).** This ground supports three households: my husband & myself, my parents who are 95 and 88 and still live on their ranch, and our 25 year old son. If this amount of acreage is what you consider a corporate farm, I do not understand how that can be. Us and the many farmers like us that have less than 200 acres will be greatly affected by this plan. Our son who has an Ag Business degree has wanted to farm since he was very young, has been driving tractor since he was 9, and works with my husband and does custom farm work. Now with this proposed plan, my son's future is uncertain. There will not be enough custom farm work when there is not enough water. If we have to fallow half of our land to keep the other half in production, it is going to be very difficult for him and us to make ends meet. My son is scared and I am very upset to think of all the other young farmers who are facing this situation due to the water plan.

We have done everything we can to be more efficient farmers. We have already had to fallow land. I have always worked full time (at the same position for 30 years) to supplement our farming income. My father had almonds way before everyone considered almond farmers greedy. I raked almonds when I was in Jr. High and High School (I am now 57 in a few days) to earn money for my school clothes. I still help out during harvest time.

Unfortunately, California is now the laughing stock of the nation. This plan has shown the rest of the country that we have put fish above farmers/people. Within our own state, it is now farmers vs. environmentalists. We need more water storage and people need to work together to form a plan instead of having one side tell the other side this is how it is going to be without any collaboration with the farmers, ignoring research that irrigation districts have been doing because it differs from your research, disregarding what regional economists are telling you will happen, and I could go on. I'm not even going to go into the underlying issue of the twin tunnels and water going down South (because your board denies this) but we all know that is part of Brown's water grab plan even though we are repeatedly told it is not. We are not the stupid country bumpkins that you think we are.

We attended hearings in Merced and Modesto. We pray that you were listening and have realized the devastation this plan will cause and will reconsider how you are intending to destroy the Central Valley. Please work with the irrigation districts that you neglected to consult with who have viable plans in place to help the fish. There seems to have been a huge communication breakdown. Since when does a board make a decision like this without consulting the very people it affects before you make the decision???

Thank you for taking the time to read this. It's very difficult to write a positive letter when our livelihood is in jeopardy and everything my family has worked for could be destroyed. Again, we are praying for an outcome that does not ruin the Central Valley.