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My name is Simon Vander Woude. My family owns and we daily operate a dairy in Merced County. To that end, we employ 29 Merced residents who support their families and the local economy through their wages. (Payroll of about 1.2 M\$)

I am also a husband and father of 6 children ranging in age from 19-4. I sincerely hope there is an agricultural economy here in Merced County in which they may be able to participate someday. I am also very involved in my community, church and school. Our children attend Providence Christian School and Stone Ridge Christian High School.

I currently serve on the building committee for a new campus for these schools. We are building a \$30M Christian School campus here in Merced. All of this money will be privately raised through generous supporters of Christian education. We are building this school to educate young men and women to not only be civic leaders, but to also be those who will conduct their lives with honesty and integrity. Most importantly we strive to provide a Christian faith as their foundation on which to base their lives and future decisions. A large portion of our funds raised are from the agricultural community, even though our student population represents the community demographics. A negative impact to this group of donors puts negative pressure on our fundraising abilities. At our new campus we will get our drinking water from a private water company, Meadowbrook Water, which is all groundwater. If they have to go deeper for drinking water, it will not only cost more, but in different stratas you start running into different quality issues. This is the drinking water for our students. Please don't place this increased river flow impediment as a hurdle to what we are trying to build for generations of Merced families, I beg you to consider the students of our communities. I am told that 70% of the property tax base in Merced County is from agriculture. By taking this additional water our ag economy will be directly impacted and I fear the population and, therefore the student body of our school will be adversely impacted.

I understand there will be years where the farming community may not even notice this extra water was sent down the river. Those are not the times we worry about. As we have painstakingly realized over the past few years everyone must cut back their use of water except the river flows. In a natural state, without dams, would the Merced River have been running in the fall of 2015?

I am also very involved in the SGMA process in our subasin. By the diversion of surface irrigation water out of our subasin the math for groundwater sustainability will not work without even more severe cutbacks or stoppages to agriculture. We have participated in good faith in the SGMA rulemaking process. We have a large enough task in front of us already without this added burden of even less water for our valley. Please don't pull the rug out from underneath us as we try to create a sustainable model for water in our basin.

The ramifications of these decisions will have long lasting effects on not only the jobs lost in agriculture, but also the community as a whole.