

FRIANT

WATER AUTHORITY

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May 2, 2014

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David Valadao
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Feinstein and Representative Valadao:

The Board of Directors of the Friant Water Authority (FWA) offers its full and enthusiastic support for your efforts to secure enactment of legislation to address California's water problems in a manner that will ensure that the current water supply crisis is never repeated. On February 27 and again on April 24 of this year, the FWA Board of Directors voted to support favorable Congressional action on S. 2016 (now S. 2198) and H.R. 3964 in order that a final House-Senate measure can be negotiated and enacted into law as soon as possible.

We appreciate your leadership in drafting and advancing legislation, and are grateful for the efforts made by you and by the Members of the San Joaquin Valley Congressional Delegation to try and bring flexibility and common sense to the regulatory regime controlling operation of the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project.

Despite those efforts, Friant's 15,000 family farms and communities remain without surface water supplies for the first time in history. The most productive agricultural region in the world continues to face a disaster from which it may never fully recover. We must insist you and your colleagues come together and do everything possible to provide water supply to Friant this year and to enact legislation to restore balance to the operation of the federal and state projects for the long term.

The immediate task is to pass Senate legislation so work can begin to craft a final bill which must include elements of the House-passed legislation. Both bills contain important provisions the FWA supports, as well as some that are clearly non-starters for us, but we support both bills moving forward to create a

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vehicle for meeting the water supply needs of California. Chief among them is the need for a reliable water supply to ensure the survival of our orchards and farms even in times of drought.

We believe a final bill must include long-term balance and equitable sharing of the surface water supplies without sacrificing fisheries and other environmental resources. The drought of 2014 has demonstrated that the federal agencies are not capable of administrating the Endangered Species Act in the Delta in a balanced manner to provide necessary protections for fish while also fulfilling the fundamental water-supply functions of the federal and state projects. Congress must the provide direction needed to achieve balance.

It is the position of the FWA that federal water legislation for California must ensure that application of the ESA in the Delta be transparent, predictable, collaborative and solidly grounded in science. Legislation not including such reforms is not worth pursuing because it provides no foundation for a reliable water supply. FWA's position was conveyed directly to Congress and the Administration in recent days by FWA staff and by representatives of some FWA member irrigation districts who travelled to Washington at the request of the FWA Board of Directors.

Congress must also act to facilitate the development of new federal and non-federal surface and groundwater storage. Clearly, current supplies are inadequate to meet current demands and woefully inadequate to meet the needs of the future.

We are grateful for all your efforts thus far, and we commend the exemplary work of you and your staffs and the staffs of the other Members of the San Joaquin Valley Delegation. We will continue to provide whatever assistance you require to mitigate the current crisis and to make sure that we are never again in this situation.

Respectfully,



Harvey A. Bailey
Chairman

cc: Senator Barbara Boxer
Representative Kevin McCarthy
Representative Jim Costa
Representative Jeff Denham
Representative John Garamendi
Representative Jared Huffman
Representative Doug LaMalfa
Representative Devin Nunes
FWA Member Districts