

Statement to SWRCB at hearing on 7-27-2016

Chair and Board Members, I appreciate the time you have allocated to hear our concerns. I am Stephen F. Heringer, 5th of 6 generations to farm Clarksburg and upper Delta soils. We have farmed sustainably for almost 150 years and grown literally dozens of different crops across the decades. We have always been very judicious in our use of the land and resources, with a clear vision to always leave the Great California Delta in better condition for future generations.

Our farming operation has been certified and audited sustainable by Sure Harvest annually for the past decade. We converted to drip irrigation two decades ago, long before it was mandated by drought conditions or paid for by NRCS grants.

We have been outspoken in our opposition to the Cal Water Fix as it is quite clear that the degradation of the Delta environment and ecosystem has been exacerbated by the export of millions of acre feet of water annually. It has also been proven by their historical activities that Metropolitan Water and the Central Valley will stop at nothing to gain the water they need for residential, commercial, and agricultural development in their regions. Claims that the current proposal will improve the Delta Ecosystem are a pipedream and a huge fabrication of the truth that unfortunately won't be totally and clearly proven for a decade or two should the tunnels be built.

The Delta has much more to lose in this proposition. It will invite salt water intrusion into the upper Delta and will permanently harm Delta communities whose economic base is built on serving agriculture. Salt water will leave 10' s of thousands of acres of prime California farm ground poisoned. All of our irrigation and drainage infrastructure that has been installed over the last 100 years is based on certain river flow elevation levels which will be negated by the export of water up river, thereby putting our pumps and siphons out of commission. To presume that this ill-conceived plan will bring the several species of fish driven to near extinction back from the precipice is ludicrous. To destroy the Delta's estuary for the benefit of other California regions is not a political decision that our State should be making.

We are deeply appreciative to those of you on the State Board and in State Agencies that are protective of the beautiful California Delta and its ecosystem. The oversight you have asserted during this process, to properly shed the light of day on the tunnels project, its cost benefit ratios, and the fact that it creates not one ounce of new water, leaves California taxpayers and Delta residents deeply indebted to you for your service. Several other plans, which are much less costly and much less destructive of the Delta, have been totally ignored in the rush by Metropolitan and the Central Valley Contractors to push the tunnels plan. We urge you to stay diligent and resolute in your efforts to protect the Delta's unique estuary for the sustainable benefit of all Californians and to help insure that the next and all future generations of Delta farm families can stay productive on their land.

Thank You for your consideration & attention.

Stephen Heringer

Clarksburg, CA