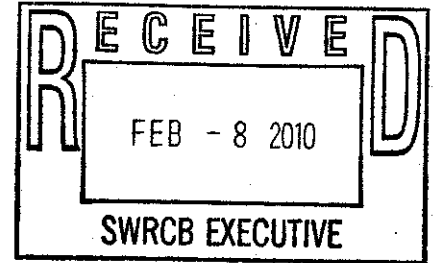


From: Gerald Higbee <GHIGBEE@BAK.RR.COM>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: 2/8/2010 11:42 AM
Subject: Kern River Hearings

To: California State Water Resources Control Board
From: Gerald & Linda Higbee, Land Owners - Buena Vista Water Storage
District:
Subject: Kern River Hearings

As owners of agricultural land in the Buttonwillow area for over 50 years, we are extremely concerned about recent efforts by the city of Bakersfield to appropriate Kern River water for aesthetic purposes for its residents. Local publicity claims that this action will have no effect on Kern County agriculture. We are appalled by the inaccuracy of the "facts" as they have been portrayed. It's obvious that the city of Bakersfield has massive quantities of water that could be used for this "aesthetic" purpose. They simply don't want to pay the high costs involved and would rather use the water rights of others. Any excess water in the Kern River is desperately needed for agricultural uses throughout Kern County.



We, as 2nd Point Kern River rights holders, have, for more than 100 years, used and invested in our pre 1914 water supplies to build and support agricultural enterprises that have been the foundation for economic growth and stability in Kern County. We are facing State Water Project restrictions that have created unemployment of 30 - 40% in the Ag community. Taking away our local water supplies will only make the current economic crisis worse. If the City of Bakersfield feels so strongly about this aesthetic goal, they should use their own resources. Their existing Kern River rights provide an average of 120,000 AF of water each year. This is more than enough to accomplish their goals.

Lastly, I would urge the State Water Resources Control Board to allow such decisions regarding the allocation and appropriation of Kern River water to remain under local jurisdiction. These decisions will have a profound impact on the local economy and should be made by the people who have the greatest stake in the outcomes. Please do not adopt this ill conceived and unfair draft order regarding Kern River water rights.

Thank you for your consideration of these facts and sincerely felt opinions.

Sincerely,

Gerald Higbee
Linda Higbee