



# KERN COUNTY FARM BUREAU, inc.

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**Michael Young**  
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**Don Davis**  
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Executive Director

October 16, 2009

## VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Division of Water Rights  
State Water Resources Control Board  
Attn: Paul Murphey  
P.O. Box 2000  
Sacramento, CA 95821-2000

### **Re: Kern River FAS Petition Hearing**

Dear Mr. Murhpey,

The Kern County Farm Bureau is a non-governmental, non-profit, voluntary membership organization that's purpose is to protect and promote agricultural interests throughout the County of Kern and to find solutions to the problems that are encountered on our members family farms and ranches as well as the communities that they surround.

The Kern County Farm Bureau is in its 95<sup>th</sup> year of existence and represents over 1,700 members who farm and ranch over 850,000 acres of land in Kern County. Many of our members are small family farms that actively cultivate less than 500 acres a year.

It is the policy of the Kern County Farm Bureau to encourage our members to use water resources in a manner that conserves the natural resource while using best management practices to make their farms and ranches profitable.

Beginning in the 1870's and continuously up to today, the available Kern River water supplies have been diverted by much of our membership and used principally for the irrigation of a wide variety of agricultural commodities. A good portion of Kern County Farm Bureaus membership is dependent on Kern River Water. Some of the most highly productive farmland in the State is developed in Kern County and is reliant on Kern River water. In 2008, agriculture in the Kern River area contributed nearly \$1.1 billion in direct agricultural value and a total of \$1.7 billion in overall output to Kern County. Kern River agriculture directly contributed to 19,000 agricultural jobs and indirectly contributed to another 15,000 off farm jobs.

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Irrigated agriculture is a key component to the Kern County economy producing significant revenue and jobs for the Region, State and Nation. In 2008, Kern County Farm Bureau member's harvested nearly 879,000 acres that contributed \$3.1 billion in output to the County of Kern. Fruits and nuts represented 58 percent of the crop value, vegetables 21 percent, field crops and rangeland 18 percent, and nursery, seed, and other crops 3 percent. The Kern County Farm Bureau is proud that through its membership Kern County is consistently among the top four agricultural counties in California. But more importantly Kern County's agricultural output in 2008 represented nearly 15 percent of the total State output.

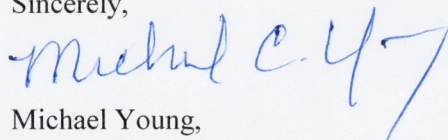
Kern River water is the most significant local source of water available to farmers in Kern County. It is absolutely essential to sustaining the existing agricultural economy for Kern County that historic supplies be preserved. Unless historic use of Kern River surface water supplies are protected, irrigated agricultural will have to increase its reliance on more expensive, energy intensive, and limited groundwater resources in the Region, which either immediately or over time will lead to the reduction in amount of farmland in production.

Personally, I farm in an area that is serviced by the Kern River. In periods of drought I have seen my ground water levels drop off significantly. Without Kern River surface supply, there will be a time that my ground will be no longer productive. Without water I can't farm.

In order to preserve the economy of Kern County with regards to industries directly and indirectly related to agriculture, it is essential that the historic uses of Kern River water remain a reliable and stable supply for the Region – without any reduction. Without certainty in the future supply of Kern River water – as historically used by farmers in the Region -- the necessary capital investment for long-term operation of this productive agricultural economy cannot be maintained. The 1987-1992 and 2006-2009 California droughts illustrate convincingly and dramatically that agriculture and entire regional economies suffer severely when farmers are unable to obtain the water required to keep their land in production.

Water is the life blood of not only our membership, but also of the communities and the economy of Kern County. It is essential that Kern River water remain reliable and stable so that our members have the continued opportunity to share in the responsibility of producing a safe, affordable and abundant food supply, on our own soil. We do not want to see the day where we are dependent on other countries for our food, as we are with oil.

Sincerely,



Michael Young,  
President – Kern County Farm Bureau

cc: Service List (see attached)

WATER RIGHT HEARING REGARDING PETITIONS TO REVISE THE DECLARATION  
OF FULLY APPROPRIATED STREAM SYSTEM OF THE KERN RIVER – SCHEDULED  
TO COMMENCE ON OCTOBER 26, 2009

**PROOF OF SERVICE LIST**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF Kern

I, Michael Young, declare: I am and was at the times of the service hereunder mentioned, over the age of eighteen (18) years, and not a party to the within cause. My business address is 19000 Wildwood Rd. Buttonwillow, CA 93206

On \_\_\_\_\_, I caused to be served the below listed document(s) entitled as: \_\_\_\_\_, on the parties and participants in this action, as listed below.

Division of Water Rights  
State Water Resources Control Board  
Attn: Paul Murphey  
P.O. Box 2000  
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000  
Email: [wrhearing@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:wrhearing@waterboards.ca.gov)  
With subject of "Kern River FAS Petition Hearing  
And U.S. Mail (Original)

CITY OF BAKERSFIELD  
c/o Colin L. Pearce  
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NORTH KERN WATER  
STORAGE DISTRICT

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  X   (BY ELECTRONIC MAIL) on \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ California,  
pursuant to Pursuant to the State Water Resources Control Board letter dated September  
16, 2009, for this hearing all participants have agreed to accept electronic service of  
hearing-related materials.

  X   (STATE) I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California  
that the above is true and correct.

Executed on \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_, California.

\_\_\_\_\_