

Dear Ms. Bean,

My husband is a 5th generation and I am a 4th generation San Diego County farmer. Being born and raised into farming in San Diego County we have long known it is a constant challenge. After college my husband and I considered staying in well established wine regions but we wanted to be home, in San Diego County. A county we know well, we know the weather, soil and farmers well. Most of our lives we have seen big changes, mostly development but we vowed to keep farming in San Diego County. We are working with farmers to transition their groves into low usage vineyards, instead of selling them to developers. This proposed 35% cutback would be devastating! I hope that doesn't happen, I want my children to have the opportunities I did in growing up in farming. This cutback would be the final nail in the coffin for many farmers.

In his April 1st call for statewide water use reductions and in comments since, Governor Brown stated that the mandatory program of restrictions was not directed at agriculture. It has now been learned the proposed conservation framework considers farming in San Diego County to be part of the urban landscape and subject to the same restrictions designed to curb excessive landscape irrigation. This provision will create undue harm to farmers in San Diego County who are just as important as farmers in other parts of the state. The conservation framework should exclude all agriculture as Governor Brown promised, regardless of location.

All water users in San Diego County have made heavy investments in a system that includes a variety of water sources. That investment has been so high as to force many local farmers out of business and idle thousands of acres of productive farmland. This investment was done intentionally based on lessons from previous droughts with the aim of lessening the impacts of future droughts. This exact strategy was promoted by Governor Brown last year when he called for increased regional self-reliance. San Diego County not only heeded that call, but we were practicing it long before the governor's proclamation. To now say those efforts cannot be used to mitigate the impacts of this drought is a powerful disincentive to make future investments in local water supplies.

Farmers in San Diego County are no less concerned about the ongoing drought as are other Californians. Please consider and act on these comments as a matter of fairness.

Sincerely,

Alysha Stehly

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