

John and Angela Prieto
Prieto Farms, Inc.
2111 Saint Anton Dr.
Lodi, Ca 95242
(209) 333-7155

April 6, 2015

Governor Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, Ca 95814

Dear Governor Jerry Brown,

Our current drought is affecting all aspects of our region at this time. We are writing this letter to you in hopes that you make the right decisions ahead and protect the water rights that we, as farmers, have had for over a hundred years in the past.

My husband, his family and I all rely on water as a basis for our cherry orchards that we have planted in Gustine, Stockton, and Lodi. We own 170 acres of cherries, in which 150 acres are planted in Gustine, Ca in CCID water district, which operate on 100% surface water and have NO wells currently for irrigating. Without water, naturally, we would not be able to spray, harvest, or maintain the trees.

When we found out that there was going to be only 75% water allocations at the beginning of the year, we knew we could change our irrigating schedules and accommodate this allocation. Then, in the beginning of February, we attended a meeting with the board of CCID and found that we would only have 40% allocations in all months of this year. As you know, this put us in a state of panic BUT we contacted irrigation companies and were planning on spending over \$20k to convert to drip irrigation in hopes that this will allow us to not stress out the trees as much, possibly giving them a chance to stay alive with that little water.

Currently we have spent over \$300,000 on chemicals, pruning, fertilizing, irrigation costs, replants, employee wages, fuel, and other expenses THIS year in hopes to harvest our cherries in May. If we DO NOT get water or allocated less than 75%, our trees that we have invested A LOT of money in, will DIE!

Foremost, we were looking forward to having our first harvest of 52 acres of Cherries that we have babied and invested heavily in since January of 2008. To prepare this ranch for this coming FIRST harvest, we had to deep rip, disc, land plane, plant over 9,000 trees, run underground irrigation, fumigate, prune, spray insecticides and fertilizers, purchase equipment(tractor, mower, discer, shredder, quads etc.), just to name a few of the expenses. Roughly over the last 5 years we have invested over \$500,000 into this piece of property alone! The other 90 acres of cherries are established trees that produce beautiful HUGE cherries that feed our nation and put enough money in our pockets to hold our

other investments in our land and rental homes. Without this money from the cherry farms, our family could go hungry. We would be forced to give our homes and ranches back to the bank, as crop insurance does not cover you without you properly irrigating your land. Our time as a farmer will be over and we would be forced to find a new occupation. I am not only worried about the stress and devastation that this would cause my family, but all of the 500 seasonal workers that are employed to harvest and prune our cherries. They too would be out of jobs. This would cause our almost recuperated economy to go backwards again in a recession! I know that we, as a business would not be able to replant any new trees if we had to loose every tree that we have grown over the last decade. Agriculture has been going strong over the past 5 years+ and in turn has stimulated the economy the way it has needed to be. Agriculture land will be worth pennies, if a farmer can not receive adequate water to irrigate their crops or trees.

To conclude my letter, I am begging for one simple thing, WATER. Please keep me and all of the other farmers and ranchers in mind and reject any proposals that would remove agriculture from the definition of health and safety. We understand how important fish and wildlife are for Lake Shasta, but our human kind is more important as we need to eat as well and the event of no water will be a catastrophe due to all the families we employ being out of work this cherry season. We also urge you to seek a fair solution that would benefit all at stake and protect or agricultural land that we pour our heart in souls into. We purchased these orchards in hopes that our children (and generations following) would also choose the honest living to be a farmer, just like Dad! Please do not take this dream from us!

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,



Angela and John Prieto
prietofarms@att.net

CC: Dianne Feinstein, Barbara Boxer, Franklin E. Bigelow, Adam Gray, Anthony Canella, Andy Vidak, Jim Patterson, Henry T. Perea, Kristin Olsen, Rudy Salas Jr., Connie Conway, Jeff Denham, Jim Costa, David Valadao, Devin Nunes, and State Water Resources Control Board.