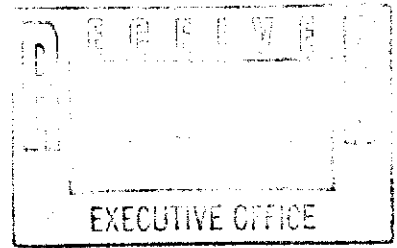


John Grizzle
Farming & Cattle Feeding

1395 Bonds Corner Road
Holtville, California 92250
Bus. (760) 356-4381 Fax (760) 356-2577



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Arthur Baggett, Jr., Chairman
State Water Resources Control Board
P. O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812

Dear Mr. Baggett,

I am writing to you to express my views on the proposed water transfer between the Imperial Irrigation District and the San Diego County Water Authority. I have an historical interest in this agreement which is rooted in my pioneer grandparents who settled in Imperial Valley in 1911 and started farming in the Holtville area. By 1927, when my grandfather passed away, he had managed to bring 1000 acres of raw land under cultivation and had paid for all of it, as well.

I am not sure any of us alive today realizes what hard work and dedication that must have taken since it was accomplished under the most harsh and grueling conditions. I am sure that similar stories can be told by other third and fourth generation families who are now farming the land our grandparents worked so hard to develop.

I started farming in 1964 on 220 acres that was my mother's share of the original 1000 acres. At the present time I am farming 7,000 acres of diversified field and vegetable crops as well as operating a cattle feeding business. I have followed the water transfer process with great interest since its inception. I am a long standing member of the I.I.D. Water Conservation Committee, so I consider myself well versed in water matters.

The original 200,000 acre foot transfer to SDCWA and an additional 100,000 acre feet to Coachella Valley Water District and Metropolitan Water District was doomed from the start, in my opinion, for the following two reasons. First, because the compensation to be paid to I.I.D. per acre-foot transferred was based on the estimated cost of conserving on-farm water by pumpback recovery of surface runoff from irrigated farmland. There was no provision for up front money to be paid to farmers to initially pay for the pumpback systems. The reality is there is just not enough money in the plan to cover debt service and give some incentive to farmers to sign up for the program as structured. The second reason the original agreement was doomed to fail is the environmental impact on the Salton Sea was not fully considered. Now we have the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the State of California telling the I.I.D. that they must transfer 300,000 acre feet of water, while at the same time we have other Federal and State agencies telling I.I.D. that the entire environmental impact of the water transfer must be mitigated before a transfer will be possible.

Finally we come to the current proposal by Federal and State entities and some local people to fallow farm land as a means of generating water for transfer with minimal impact on the Salton

Sea. This generally unpopular idea of large scale fallowing is totally unnecessary and unacceptable, in my opinion.

If the I.I.D. would adopt a program of allocating water to the headgate based on past water use history, a number of positive things could be accomplished. First, as long as farmers are allowed to continue to use unlimited quantities of water there will be over-runs against our current allotment of water from the Colorado River. Headgate allocations would prevent over-runs and provide a bench mark by which to measure on-farm conservation. An equal percentage reduction of water allocated to each head gate of approximately ten percent (10%) would yield approximately 300,000 acre feet of water for transfer.

If the landowner would be paid for the reduced amount of water and if the community was compensated to mitigate any third party impacts resulting from 10% less water, no fallowing would be necessary nor allowed. Farmers would be encouraged to use their water to maximize their efficiency.

Thus, a reduction in deliveries of 300,000 acre feet would result in a reduced flow to the Salton Sea of approximately thirty percent (30%) or 90,000 acre feet. This is a 3:1 ratio compared to a 1:1 ratio for water conserved using any of the following: pumpback systems, dead level basins, sprinkler irrigation or drip irrigation. The 3:1 ratio results in a more favorable scenario for the Salton Sea. If fresh water were permissible as make-up water to replace the lost 90,000 acre feet, an additional percentage of three to four percent could be paid for and allowed to flow through the I.I.D. canal and drainage system into the Salton Sea.

I have presented this gate allocation idea locally to the I.I.D. Board, the Water Conservation Committee and the Farm Bureau, but have run into resistance from certain key leaders who feel that the program would not be personally advantageous.

Whatever program is finally settled on must fit and be acceptable to the majority. If these ideas make sense to you and you wish additional information on how to implement them, I would be happy to elaborate on them.

Sincerely,


John Grizzle