

JIM COSTA

16TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA
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COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
WATER, POWER AND OCEANS



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
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GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

April 22, 2015

Honorable Das Williams
Chairman
Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Williams,

This letter is to call your attention to a matter of great concern to the people that I represent in the San Joaquin Valley, and to a policy issue that I've dedicated my public life in both the State Legislature and the United States Congress to: California's water.

We are in the fourth consecutive year of extreme drought and by some accounts the driest period in 1,200 years of California's history. In response the Governor issued, for the first time in California's history, unprecedented mandatory water restrictions for water users throughout the State. Countless farmers in the San Joaquin Valley are experiencing their second consecutive year with zero surface-water allocations this year, and wells across California are continuing to run dry; with many more to follow. These are incredibly difficult times, and with no end in sight, State and Federal officials must be extremely diligent about how the vital water we do have is managed in a sustainable way. Assembly Bill 1242, if enacted, would assure an important tool in the San Joaquin Valley's water-sustainability toolbox, by permitting the flows from headwaters, such as the Tuolumne, Merced, and Stanislaus rivers, to continue to provide necessary recharge of depleted groundwater tables with their surface flows prior to being exported out of the region.

Subsidence was a major factor motivating passage of the Sustainability Groundwater Management Act of 2014 and Merced County is significantly impacted by subsidence. However, the proposal from the State Water Resources Control Board to require up to an additional 350,000 acre feet to be diverted to the Sacramento San Joaquin Bay-Delta from these rivers would have a catastrophic impact on the rate of subsidence of the Valley. Our agricultural economy and our region's ability to achieve sustainable management goals laid out by the Sustainability Groundwater Management Act of 2014 are dependent on these headwaters. Assembly Bill 1242, if enacted, would ensure that the State Water Resources Control Board consider and mitigate the adverse impact of any new water quality control plan. It would also require the Board to implement mitigation measures to reduce identified significant adverse impacts and would prohibit the adoption of plans with adverse impacts that cannot be sufficiently mitigated, consistent with the provision of the California Environmental Quality Act.

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I applaud Assemblyman Gray for his leadership on this issue that is so important to the residents of the San Joaquin Valley by introducing Assembly Bill 1242. As you and the Committee continue your diligent oversight of California's invaluable natural resources, I would ask that you consider the value Assembly Bill 1242 will have for the San Joaquin Valley during our State's severe and unprecedented drought.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Costa". The signature is stylized with a large "J" and "C".

Jim Costa
MEMBER OF CONGRESS