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Mr. Steve Ritchie, Acting Executive Director,  
CALFED Delta/Bay Program

Dear Steve:

Don't be misled by the letterhead. Those of us who served in the military were not born with a blue suit on, Neither do we keep it on after we are too old to fly. Hence the return to farming.

Personally I'm worried that my farm will go out of production due to legislated action by CALFED OR OTHERS. During the period 1950 through 1970 we were able to get enough water to flush the salt from our soil about every 5 to 10 years. The breakdown of granite in the mountains releases salt, (Sodium Chloride) that comes in with the irrigation water, and settles in the soil. Eventually it gets to be of a strength that kills roots of the crops. Before that happened, we farmers would get enough water at the end of an irrigation season to flush the water deeply into the soil, clearing it for the crops to come. At the same time, we were recharging the aquifers beneath. Wells stood at 50 to 80 feet beneath the surface. Today we often have to drill to 240 feet or deeper to get water for the cattle.

The tendency of the various agencies involved with the water division seems to be, "use a minimum of water for crop production. Ship the water that isn't used for crops out to cities, wildlife refuges, or to improve the quality of water in the streams." All of this is fine in principle, but fails to follow Mother Nature's way of making land available for mankind to use. Flooding isn't flushing the farmland any more. The land low enough to receive the spring rush of runoff has been taken over by developers, and yearly we see the miles and miles of housing beneath water.

Water doesn't run uphill. The best engineers can't change that. We must get the planning engineers to put the development on land above the water runoff level. Our farms accepted the occasional flooding that was unplanned. Now, instead of that we have cities building percolation basins to recharge the aquifers, while the soil from 4 feet down to the aquifer stays dry for years, and for miles and miles.

Please, can we have some of these meetings on water allocation timed to occur when the farmer isn't planting, cultivating, or harvesting. During winters the farmer can attend and offer much that isn't taught in the universities, yet is of valuable future use by the entire human race.

Thanks for taking the time to read this.



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