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November 12, 1999

Secretary Bill Lyons
Department of Food & Agricultural
1220 N Street, Suite 409
Sacramento, CA 95814

Secretary Mary Nichols
Department of Resources
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Lyons and Nichols:

Thank you for meeting last week to discuss the CALFED program and its effect on farmers, ranchers and agricultural water suppliers throughout California. I regret missing the meeting due to a last minute scheduling conflict. You can be sure that constructive solutions for CALFED are the highest priority for Northern California Water Association (NCWA) and water users in Northern California.

It is my understanding from David Aladjem that the meeting was largely focused upon the agricultural community's disenchantment with the CALFED program. The real challenge is to collectively move the ball forward to assure that CALFED does not redirect impacts to agriculture and rural areas in the state. We must reformulate the existing CALFED program to promote and foster the economic, social and environmental benefits which agriculture provides to the State of California and the world.

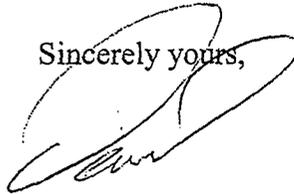
With respect to agricultural land acquisition, NCWA has prepared a comprehensive analysis that details the land acquisition programs in the Sacramento Valley for the past several decades. The magnitude of such programs in the Sacramento Valley alone is significant and very real to these rural communities—nearly 280,000 acres have already been purchased and more than 110,000 acres are proposed for purchase by CALFED and its member agencies. Recognizing that the numerous land acquisition programs pose a serious threat to farming and agricultural water supplies, we are encouraged that you have both committed to fully address the following issues:

- A local coordination plan to assure local participation and confidence in the CALFED process and other land acquisition programs.
- A complete and accurate inventory of *all* land acquisition programs in California undertaken by both public and private interests. This inventory should build upon the NCWA analysis for Northern California.
- An assurances package designed to address the landowner and water user issues associated with land conversion and other agency actions in into the Central Valley.

Finally, in looking to the future, the Resources Agency was directed by last year's state budget to complete a conservation blueprint by early next year. Based on this current dialogue and the issues and concerns associated with agricultural land conversion programs, this blueprint, at a minimum, should squarely address these important issues. The Resources Agency, in coordination with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and with input from the Department of Conservation, should immediately develop guidelines for future land acquisition programs undertaken or funded by state agencies. It may be that legislation addressing this issue will be necessary to reflect state policy on this important topic.

Thank you again for your leadership on these important issues. We look forward to working with you to further define state policies regarding agricultural land acquisition. If you have any questions, please call Dan Keppen or me in our office.

Sincerely yours,



David J. Guy
Executive Director

cc: Steve Ritchie, CALFED
Daryll Young, Department of Conservation
Patrick Wright, Resources Agency