



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

NOV 16 2009

The Honorable Jim Costa
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Costa:

Earlier this week, I made an important announcement regarding forward steps that the Administration is taking to address the water crisis in California. The announcement highlighted, in particular, the National Academy of Sciences' review of scientific questions associated with restrictions on water deliveries from the Bay Delta. It also referenced the financial assistance the Administration has provided under the Recovery Act, our on-going work on various infrastructure projects, and the work plan that six Federal agencies are putting together in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding that we announced recently.

I am writing to acknowledge the key role that you played in all of these initiatives and, more generally, in bringing to my attention, and the attention of the Administration, the serious water shortages that have hit the San Joaquin Valley and your constituents. Within weeks of my arrival at the Department of the Interior, you met with me and provided an overview of the situation, you emphasized the human and economic cost associated with the brutal convergence of a third year of drought, the collapse of the fisheries in the Bay Delta, and the fact that the State's water management policies and infrastructure development have not kept pace with its population growth.

In response to your requests, I have visited the Valley and witnessed, first hand, the suffering that many farmers and valley communities are experiencing. That is why we have been working diligently to address this serious and long-standing problem.

There are no easy solutions here. We are on a long and difficult journey to address issues that have built up over many years. But there are hopeful signs including, in particular, the recent enactment of comprehensive water legislation by the Governor and State Legislature, a joint State/Federal commitment to develop the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, and the on-going work that the Administration is undertaking on many fronts, as referenced in the announcement that I made this week.

Thank you again for your persistent and effective leadership on all of these matters. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the months and years ahead. I hope this response addresses also the issues raised in your September 9 letter on the water crisis.

Sincerely,

Ken Salazar



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NOV 16 2009

The Honorable Dennis Cardoza
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Cardoza:

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Ken Salazar