

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 18, 2010

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
Chairwoman
Water and Power Subcommittee
House Committee on Natural Resources
1522 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Napolitano:

Thank you for providing us with a copy of your letter to Senator Feinstein regarding the proposed Emergency Temporary Water Supply legislation. As you may know, we have been very engaged with the Senator in the drafting and thought process behind this urgently-needed relief. Given our continued efforts to bring real solutions to California's water supply crisis in the short, mid, and long-term and our personal commitment to the hard-working people of the Valley, we would be remiss if we did not personally respond to the points in your letter.

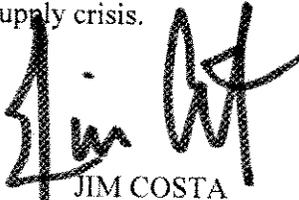
You are correct in asserting that there has been a fair amount of discussion over the last several weeks as to what happens in the fourth year of a devastating water supply crisis, including hearings in the Water and Power Subcommittee. It is true that the Administration has released an Interagency Work Plan, that Bay Delta Conservation Plan efforts appear to be on track, and that the National Academy of Sciences study that we began discussing in March of 2009 is finally underway. Yes, we have passed language to ease water transfers throughout the Valley this year and we have pressed the Administration, state, and local water agencies to come together and collaborate like never before, bringing approximately 560,000 acre-feet of water to the Westside of the Valley last year that would otherwise not have been delivered. We have made some progress on pieces of legislation that could be helpful as small parts of the overall puzzle. However, all of this amounts to absolutely nothing if we do not get our farmers, farm workers, and farm communities back to work by ensuring that they have enough water to maintain their livelihoods.

As you may be aware, we have also held several water forums with federal, state, and local stakeholders and water agencies in the Valley in recent months, including on January 12th; the take-away message from those meetings has become increasingly disturbing. For example, Sierra snow pack levels are approaching 130% of average. Common sense would lead us to believe that hope is on the horizon, yet the more it rains, the more water the Valley loses. As it stands this year, some regions of California will continue to receive a full water supply while the Westside of the Valley remains at 10% or less of its contracted water. Instead of going into storage at a time when it is needed most, more and more water will be running straight to the ocean. This is unexplainable to our constituents.

Throughout this drought and economic crisis, we have stated repeatedly that immediate action is needed to protect and restore agricultural production in the San Joaquin Valley. Madam Chairwoman, time is running out. How many more jobs need to be lost in our Valley before the people of Washington, D.C. come together to show that they care and will do something about it? As it stands, unemployment rates in several Valley cities and communities still remain at upwards of 30 and 40%. If this is not an appropriate issue for the jobs bill – as you assert in your letter – we do not know what is. The Temporary Emergency Water Supply legislation could bring more than one million acre-feet of water back to the region, providing enough water to restore production on 288,000 acres of fresh fruits and vegetables. This much restored production would put thousands of farmers and farm workers back to work, all without costing the taxpayer a penny.

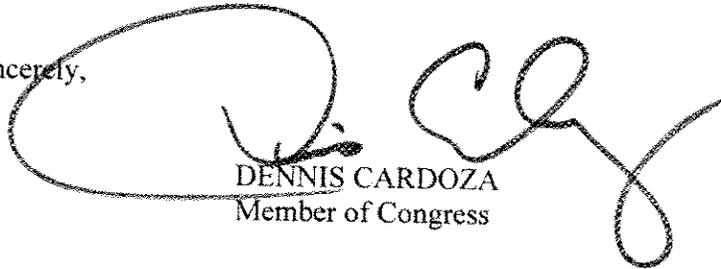
In our view, every region of California deserves a sustainable water supply. The Emergency Temporary Water Supply legislation would ensure that temporary relief is provided while long-term solutions are sorted out. We do not consider this a radical notion.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to find solutions California's water supply crisis.



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



DENNIS CARDOZA
Member of Congress