

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

February 19, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

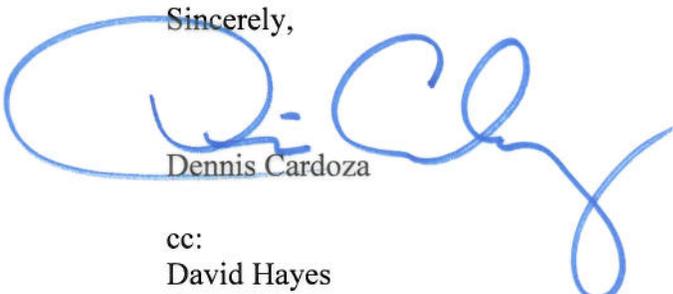
Dear Secretary Salazar:

We are writing you regarding the attached request by the San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announce irrigation water supply allocations for the 2010 irrigation season as soon as possible, **preferably by Monday, February 22, 2010.**

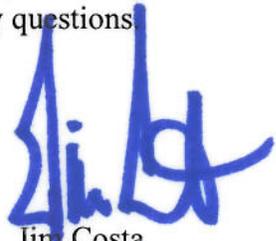
As you are aware, the Biological Opinions and other regulatory decisions are having a devastating impact on farmers, farm workers, and the economy of the San Joaquin Valley and the state of California. Last year's meager allocation of 10 percent resulted in a desperate situation for farmers, and growers are understandingly anxious to receive information regarding this year's allocation so they plan accordingly. Historically, the Bureau has announced allocations by February 20, marking the beginning of a new irrigation season. For months, we have asked when the allocation announcement would be released, and have been advised that an announcement would be out by February 19. We are now told that the water allocation announcement will be delayed. Any delay in an announcement adds to the uncertainty currently experienced by farmers and further exasperates an already serious situation. These delays cause a ripple effect in the agricultural supply chain, further exacerbating the impacts of the water supply crisis in the San Joaquin Valley.

We strongly encourage you to release the water supply allocation by Monday, February 22, 2010. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Dennis Cardoza



Jim Costa

cc:  
David Hayes  
David Nawi  
Don Glaser



February 18, 2010

Mr. Donald Glaser  
Regional Director – Mid-Pacific Region  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
2800 Cottage Way  
Sacramento, CA 92825-1898

RE: 2010 Agricultural Service Contractors Allocation Announcement

Dear Mr. Glaser,

I am writing on behalf of our agricultural service contractors to request you announce, as soon as possible, Reclamation's water allocation for the forthcoming 2010 irrigation season. We recognize that Reclamation's contracts state the initial allocation announcement will be "on or about" February 20 and that this year the date happens to fall on a Saturday. However, throughout our region, February has historically marked the beginning of a new agricultural season, bringing with it considerable labor and commerce. The uncertainty about the 2010 water supply is creating extensive anxiety in our communities and resulting in many plans being put on hold awaiting your announcement. These delays create ripple effects that disrupt the entire agricultural supply chain. For these reasons, it is imperative that Reclamation announce its allocation forecast promptly, preferably by February 22<sup>nd</sup>, so that planning and implementation efforts can be adjusted accordingly.

To illustrate the importance of timely water supply information, let's examine the planning process associated with the production of tomatoes, the State's 8th largest crop<sup>1</sup>. To put things into context, consider that California is the world's 5th largest supplier of food and agricultural commodities<sup>2</sup>. Reclamation is the largest supplier of water to California agriculture. Of the 5 top agricultural counties in the United States, 4 rely to some degree upon Reclamation water supplies conveyed through the Delta (Fresno #1, Tulare, #2, Kern #3, Merced #4<sup>3</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> Source USDA: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/StateFacts/Top25AgCommodities/Top25CA.txt>

<sup>2</sup> Source CDFA: <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/files/pdf/card/AgHighlightsBrochure07.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Source USDA: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/StateFacts/US.htm>

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The United States is the world's second largest producer of tomatoes; California is the world's largest producer of canning (processed) tomatoes producing 96% of the nation's supply<sup>4</sup> or about 11 million tons of tomatoes annually<sup>5</sup>. The planning process for canned tomato production begins with the canneries schedule for harvest. The harvest period is largely July through September, essentially a 100 day period. In order to process a typical crop, the industry must schedule and contract with farmers for the production of 110,000 tons of tomatoes per day. For this to be achieved, growers must plant 2,900 acres per day four months prior to their harvest date. Since most processing tomatoes are transplanted, farmers must plan to seed up to 24,650,000 plants each day, 2 months prior to planting. Of course, all of this is dependent upon proper financing being in place. As you can see, this is a very complex and time sensitive endeavor. Delay in the dissemination of information regarding water supply ultimately translates into lost opportunities to generate the economic and labor activity so desperately needed and sought in the Valley.

Currently, there are millions of tomato seedlings waiting in greenhouses to go to the fields. But those fields need water. Further, delays don't only affect tomato production; the time lag between planning, decision, and implementation and the potential opportunity cost illustrated here is true for virtually every crop grown. In order to minimize the continuing social and economic disruptions pervading the Valley, it is urgent and essential that you provide as full and accurate water supply forecast as you can, as soon as you can. Much remains at stake. Throughout the region, there is great anticipation that the abundant rainfall in the north, near-normal storage in Shasta, and the commitments of Secretary Salazar and other representatives of the Obama Administration to do all that they can to provide sufficient water supplies to the Valley will translate into a near-normal water supply allocation for 2010. We are available to assist you in any way we can.



Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Daniel G. Nelson in blue ink.

Daniel G. Nelson  
Executive Director

CC: David Hayes, David Nawi

<sup>4</sup> Source USDA: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/vegetables/tomatoes.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Source CTGA: [http://www.ctga.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=15&Itemid=32](http://www.ctga.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15&Itemid=32)