VIA Email on June 9, 2011

Dear Kelli,

Thank you for your letter regarding the water issues facing California's Central Valley. I appreciate hearing your thoughts on how this critical issue affects your family and industry even though we ultimately disagree about the best solution to our water needs.

Water allocation levels for the Central Valley this year are higher than they were in 2010 yet remain far below what California deserves. Despite this positive update, California still faces challenges of inadequate water infrastructure and a growing population, as well as competing priorities of water users. Farmers in particular have been hit hard by reduced allocations in recent years that have caused them to leave land fallow and lay off countless agricultural industry workers in the Central Valley.

Acting aggressively on this dire need, my Central Valley colleagues and I introduced H.R. 1837, the San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability Act. The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power held a hearing on this bill on June 2nd, and is slated for a full Committee hearing in the near future. The San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability Act is a sure step toward providing farmers with the certainty they need to hire workers and keep the agriculture market moving in these tough economic times.

While these factors have made finding a workable solution difficult, they are not insurmountable, and I am committed to addressing these challenges head-on in my work on the House Natural Resources and Transportation and Infrastructure Committees. These Committee assignments put me in a position to focus on water management and storage facilities. To this end, I introduced legislation with my Central Valley colleagues that would increase water storage in the Valley by making improvements to the New Exchequer Dam at Lake McClure. This project would increase create an additional 70,000 acre feet of storage, enough for over 160,000 homes and would also generate 10,000 megawatts of clean, renewable energy. Importantly, in these times of unsustainable federal debt, this project will come at no cost to the taxpayers.

Additionally, on April 20, 2011, I introduced H.R. 1604, legislation which streamlines the process for federally funded Central Valley water construction projects. This bill deems the federal requirements of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) to be satisfied with the completion of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for Central Valley projects. I believe a duplicative environmental review process is unnecessary and should be eliminated to save time and taxpayer dollars. California's environmental review process alone is sufficient enough to protect the environment, and farmers are in need of water now.

I look forward to working on this and other legislation that would help address the pressing water issues in our district. Not only will this help create new jobs and sustain our industries but it will improve the lives of families in the Valley. Rest assured, I will continue to keep water a primary focus and fight for increased access to water in the Central Valley.

Once again, thank you for contacting me. I encourage you to stay up to date with my activity in Washington, D.C., and in California's 19th District on my website, www.denham.house.gov, and on my social media sites: @RepJeffDenham on Twitter and Representative Jeff Denham on Facebook.

Sincerely,

JEFF DENHAM

United States Representative