

# CALIFORNIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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January 26, 2017

The Honorable David Valadao  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1004 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Congressman Valadao,

The California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) is pleased to support House Resolution 23 that will provide necessary drought relief to California's farmers and ranchers. CCA represents ranchers and beef producers that comprise California's \$3.5 billion beef cattle industry.

As you well know, California has experienced one of the worst droughts in recorded history. Although a wet winter has brought higher than expected levels of rainfall to certain parts of the state, many regions continue to face the effects of drought. Ongoing drought has negatively impacted forage production on California's vast rangelands. But more significantly, drought has left many ranchers without water which, even in the presence of adequate forage, has forced farmers and ranchers to liquidate their herds.

The lack of water deliveries to farmers and ranchers in California has not solely been the result of the drought but and has been compounded by restrictive federal and state laws that have chosen to elevate the priority of fish over farmers. California has also not taken the opportunity to build new surface water storage that will help offset the increasing pressure on the state's antiquated water supply and delivery systems.

H.R. 23 seeks to address many of the regulatory issues that constrain the delivery of water to farmers and ranchers that are not only producing food and fiber but also serve as the economic engine for jobs and employment for our rural communities. Specifically, your legislation will streamline regulations to build new surface water storage and ease restrictions on the delivery of water to farmers and ranchers in the San Joaquin Valley who are largely dependent on the Central Valley Project.

H.R. 23 also takes a proactive approach in balancing the needs of water for farmers with those of fish by addressing predation in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Delta. Predation is one of the most significant reasons for the decline in certain anadromous species like the Delta Smelt. Without addressing this issue, any attempt to recover fish species in the Delta will be futile.

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Furthermore, CCA appreciates your inclusion of language that protects area of origin water rights. Maintaining and enforcing California's water rights system is paramount to ensure the protection of private property rights and provide certainty that those with pre-1914, riparian, adjudicated and other senior appropriative rights will be serviced first prior.

For these reasons, we strongly support H.R. 23.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Oldfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Justin Oldfield  
Vice President, Government Affairs