

Sakata Farms, Inc.



To: House Natural Resource Committee

From: Bob Sakata

Date: May 17, 2010

My name is Bob Sakata, introducing the growing of vegetables in Brighton, Colorado, 65 years ago on a 40 acre farm with \$1200.00 on hand. After 65 years, I have been blessed with a supportive, caring wife who has been a partner, outstanding children, and a dedicated staff, with some third generation people on our team. Together with a positive approach, solid planning with a long term vision, correcting mistakes, and most of all, having faith in our nation, we consider ourselves survivors in a very volatile competitive occupation.

All during this time, whenever we accumulated some equity, we kept on purchasing more productive land and water and made capital improvements wherever needed to increase our efficiency. Today we own and operate our 3,000 acres of prime vegetable land, and my son, Robert T. Sakata, third generation, is now the President of Sakata Farms.

What I have to say next has no bearing upon the purpose of this hearing, but I felt that it is important for all of you to know where I come from.

Since I cannot find a better word, I would have to say that I was a victim of the mass evacuation of 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor in 1942 into Internment camps with no demonstration of violence. This credit must be given to our parents, where they instilled in us to behave, and always do everything possible to prove you are worthy of being an American and to remind us that there is always a price we must all pay to live in a free Democracy. Because of our parents' wisdom, I was able to become a contributor to our society.

Speaking of wisdom, we need more than ever before the wisdom demonstrated by our forefathers in the mid 1800's when they traveled west in their covered wagons and saw the beautiful snow on the Rockies and decided to settle here in Colorado, with the vision of building canals and reservoirs with horses and mules to capture the melting snowpack and direct them to the farms east of the Rockies, which they accomplished, making this area an oasis.

During the last 65 years, this is the change farmers made to conserve water.

1. Flood irrigation on open dirt ditches

2. Land leveling to conserve water
3. Cement ditches to save depletion
4. Siphon pipes to distribute water evenly
5. Surge irrigation to save water
6. Hand move sprinkler system
7. Overhead automatic circular sprinkler
8. Today, drip irrigation system with a massive filtering system

Therefore, we are exercising every new technology available today to increase efficiency of the use of water.

The greatest disappointment and a tragedy is the failure of the U.S. government and the EPA denying the Two Forks Reservoirs that we initiated some 16 years ago with a historic cooperation of 43 different water users supporting this project. If this project was approved, we would have today storage for over one million acre feet of water, and a dam that would have furnished green electricity to the metropolitan area.

Since this project was not approved and because there is no new water available, the cities are forced to purchase farms to capture their water rights they need. Since water rights are private property rights, this has been a blessing for many farmers, who were heavily in debt, to sell their water to the cities and retire, but no farmers today can now afford to buy water rights in competition with the cities. Therefore, for the farmers that are left today with pumping restrictions and with municipalities purchasing farms, the one and only solution is to approve all the reservoirs we can build to save all the extra water blessed to us by God, and to preserve it and to use as we need it in the future. It is just common sense to allow Chatfield Dam to store more water for us farmers, and allow us to build reservoirs as the present glade reservoirs to conserve the extra water to use during the drought periods.

If this does not come to fruition, there will be no more irrigated productive farms in Colorado and let me remind all of you that no nation can survive in a hungry, impoverished land. This decision can well be in your hands.

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