



February 9, 2017

The Honorable David G. Valadao
1728 Longworth Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Valadao,

On behalf of the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, a business association representing over 1,100 members who collectively employ over 60,000 Californians, I am writing to support your bill, H.R. 23 the Gaining Responsibility On Water (GROW) Act of 2017. California's Central Valley, which is home to the top producing agricultural counties in the nation, has been suffering from a chronic drought, which has been exacerbated by federal regulations. This historic drought has already cost our great state \$2.2 billion in economic activity and at least 15,000 jobs.

Making matters worse, the drought's effects on the San Joaquin Valley and Kern County have been amplified given that surface water deliveries through both the State Water Project and Central Valley Project have been constrained for years. Though the state continues to evaluate alternative conveyance through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to ensure the safety and sustainability of the State Water Project; the chief impediment to consistent surface water deliveries are Endangered Species Act rulings/findings regarding the smelt and salmon populations in the Delta and along the San Joaquin River. Furthermore, the lack of the development of any recent and significant surface water storage projects, along with the immense amount of environmental review required to build such projects, have conspired to place the San Joaquin Valley in a precarious position of over reliance on diminishing supplies of water. At the same time, ratepayers and contractors throughout California are paying for water that is simply not being delivered.

For years, you have fought to bring water back to the valley; this year is no different. We support your introduction of H.R. 23, which we believe would ensure reliable water deliveries for our valley, secure private property and senior water rights, and save millions of dollars by ending wasteful protectionist plans. To ensure water reliability in the future, the bill obligates the federal government to complete feasibility studies for multiple water storage projects in California and increases the scope of investigation for dam safety throughout the West, including expansion. We have been blessed with a significant amount of precipitation over the last three months; however we should not lose sight of the need for meaningful regulatory reform and a pathway to build more surface water storage. Our ability to secure California's water supply would have been

Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce

Your Partner in Business

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dramatically increased if efforts to approve and streamline water storage projects had not languished in Sacramento and Washington D.C. for decades.

Now is the time to enact long term, meaningful solutions to California's water supply issues and we are hopeful this legislation is the next step in addressing the challenges we face. We look forward to working with you on advancing H.R. 23, the GROW Act, in this Congress.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'NO', is written over the word 'Sincerely'.

Nicholas Ortiz
President & CEO
Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce