



Grower-Shipper Association of Central California
ADVANCING FAMILIES, FOOD AND FARMING ON THE CENTRAL COAST

Via Email: Erik.Ekdahl@waterboards.ca.gov

October 8, 2024

State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Rights
Attn: Erik Ekdahl, Deputy Director
Sacramento, CA 95812

Re: Opposition to Shandon-San Juan Water District Amended Applications to Appropriate Water (A033189, A033190).

Dear Mr. Ekdahl:

It is with great interest that I write, on behalf of the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California (GSA-CC)*, to voice concern and opposition to the above-referenced applications.

Situated in “America’s Salad Bowl,” the Salinas Valley is a primary producer of fresh vegetables, berries, and wine grapes and is home to more than a quarter of a million Californians. To put it bluntly, we’re shocked to learn of the referenced applications seeking to condemn access rights to Nacimiento Reservoir.

The demands to achieve sustainable management of groundwater resources are forcing many regions to confront water use, plan for sustainability, and make challenging decisions to protect future water use. While respecting presumed concerns over water use, certainty, and groundwater recharge limitations faced by those within the Shandon-San Juan Water District, such an aggressive approach distracts from rather than realistically supports addressing challenging groundwater management questions. As an organization dedicated to the service and support of members of the agricultural sector, farm economy, and communities dependent on a sustainable future, this move appears as a counterproductive approach that raises attention to an assumed anticipated dire situation for the petitioners. As you are likely aware, there are areas within the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin that are in a condition of expected overdraft, and any such “new” demands would affect not only senior water rights holders but hundreds of thousands of Californians, riparian users, as well as destroy entire communities. Again, while acknowledging there may be tough decisions ahead for water-stressed areas due to SGMA demands, a “scorched earth” squatter-like attempt to deliberately inflict harm onto one region for the benefit of another must be flat-out rejected.

There must be more productive avenues to call attention to and perhaps support a region’s presumed dire concerns over SGMA demands other than launching what amounts to legal grenades regardless of one’s standing, water rights, facility ownership, operating, and devastating impacts.

Sincerely,

Christopher Valadez, President/CEO
Grower-Shipper Association of Central California

cc: Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Monterey County Board of Supervisors

*The Grower-Shipper Association is a non-profit trade organization that, since 1930, has represented the needs of the farming, shipping, processing, and harvesting communities throughout California’s coastal production regions with a particular focus on the Salinas, San Juan, and Pajaro Valleys. Due to its history and ongoing efforts, the Association serves as a leading organization for farming interests covering agronomic, technical, and economic matters due partly to a robust infrastructure for gathering input and socializing efforts and practices to responsibly address concerns affecting the region’s agricultural production.