

RE: Scoping Meeting on May 22, 2012 in Los Banos, California

To: Bureau of Reclamation

Bay-Delta Office

Attn: Janice Pinero

We are Frank and Judy Williams. We live in Firebaugh, California and farm on the west side of Fresno County in the Westlands Water District with Mark and Mary Fickett. We have farmed out here since 1985. Our permanent crops are almonds and pomegranates. When we have more allocation, we have planted grain, cotton, dehydrated onions, cucumbers, beans, and melons.

In 2009/2010 was a devastating year for us not only financially, but emotionally. We were financed with an almond company and they denied our financing prior to our receiving our 10% allocation on April 20th. Knowing that we only had 10% water, we knew our only option was to hopefully be able to keep our trees alive. We knew we would have no viable crop that year and just shook the unmarketable nuts to the ground and shredded them.

We had to lay off more than half of our labor force. This was not only devastating to our employees, but to the local businesses in the community. Because of so many foreclosures in this area, our home values have plummeted. We tried to refinance our home to get a lower interest rate and the banker informed us that because of all the foreclosures, our home is in a zero dollar zone. Basically, our home is worth nothing.

Where we farm, there is not an option to financially have a well for groundwater.

The uncertainty of allocation affects everything we do. Our financing depends upon how much allocation we receive. It also affects if we can plant other crops and hire additional employees. Our biggest fear is that we have another year like 2009/2010. It is hard to plan your future when there are so many unknowns with our water supply. We don't believe we could survive another year like 2009/2010.

Frank and Judy Williams

Frank Williams
Judy Williams

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 The following pages are to be forwarded to the name listed below.
 The content of this document is intended solely for the individual listed.

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Date 6/26/12
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 From Frank & Judy Wilkins
 Remarks Letter regarding Scoping Meeting in Los Brea on May 22, 2012