



May 23rd, 2012

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Merced**
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Merced, CA 95340
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To The Department of Interior,

I am writing to you in the hopes that our voice will be heard as a representative of those we serve and advocate for at Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Fresno. As the Agency Administrator of Catholic Charities, I have great concern over decisions being made to protect the Delta Smelt and Salmon without regard of the impact it has on all the people in the Central Valley. The Agencies haven't considered what types of impact might occur each time they turn the pumping facilities off.

I have worked for Catholic Charities for over 4 ½ years in both Development and then being placed as our Agency Administrator charged with the responsibility of running the Agency since April 2011. I witness firsthand the need to have access to quality produce for our clients and the negative impact that would take place if our farmers don't have enough water to grow their crops. Our lines will increase around the building with folks who are out of work due to the restricted water supply and lack of jobs. Many of the people we serve are farm laborers and count on jobs in the Ag industry for work year round. Each time we see unemployment rise, we witness more domestic violence taking place in the homes of those who are under great financial stress to provide for their hungry families. When our clients don't have access to proper fruits and vegetables needed to sustain well balanced nutrition, we see a rise in health problems.

We are currently working with other community based organizations to help end homelessness and poverty, however, this will only increase with the lack of water flowing to our valley farmers and we will see more foreclosures and folks living on the streets and in their cars. Children start to fall through the cracks when their parents are hungry and trying to find work and we will see a decrease in student enrollment. As it is, 43 percent of the clients we serve are under the age of 17 and have a difficult time staying in school when mom and dad need extra help with income. We see more graffiti and crime rise when people are unemployed and hungry for proper nutrition.

It is my hope and that of my staff and volunteers that you will take into consideration what I have stated and please think about the impact of your decision.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kelly Lilles in blue ink.

Kelly Lilles
Agency Administrator, Catholic Charities

Providing Help, Creating Hope

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