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From: Cathie Buchanan <cathie.clbuch@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 14, 2022 12:06 PM
To: California Water Commission
Subject: Draft White Paper

To Whom It May Concern,

The comments page seems not to be accepting comments. I have cut and pasted my comment on the Draft White Paper below.

Have a good day.

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The way the Draft White Plan is written, Tribal communities, small and medium farms, and rural communities, tributaries and watershed protection seem to be treated as an afterthought non-important secondary groundwater users. The Groundwater Sustainability Agencies would like to implement a “trading” program, similar to the carbon “trading” program, where if one user does not use all of their permitted allotment of groundwater, the remaining can be sold to another user in the same groundwater basin. There is no requirement of Big Ag to meter their water usage. There is no mention of mandatory conservation practices to be implemented by the big water users. Flood irrigation is the most wasteful method to water the fields, and, the drainage carries with it minerals, pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers that put into harm the ecological systems at the discharge points. Not to mention that many of the Big Ag users ship their food products overseas. The plan is supposed to work on “trust.” IF there is a question as to the groundwater supply being drained, then and only then will actions be implemented to safeguard the individual smaller water users and communities, which is contrary to a “sustainable” plan.

There is a mention that this program is to work on “trust”. How does this Agency plan on building trust when history states that trust is impossible on the part of Big Ag, the agencies to properly administer the laws, and when water has been denied to the small farmers resulting in the numerous bankruptcies of the 1980s and 2020?

The way the Draft White Paper is written brings me back to the massive farm bankruptcies of the 1980’s and 2020. In the 1980’s when water was scarce, Reagan and/or Bush took away the water from the smaller farms. Then there is the overdraft of the San Bernardino Forest by Nestle that caused the beetle bark infestation and the wildfires. Nestle took hundreds of thousands of gallons more water every day than was permitted for decades, and nothing happened to them.

The Tribal communities, small and medium farms, and rural communities, tributaries and watershed protection should always be the primary concern. Better safeguards need to be in place prior to any rationing of the groundwater resources.