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and

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Oral Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Water and Power

Committee on Natural Resources

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Legislative Hearing on the Discussion

Draft Legislation Amending the Secure

Water Act of 2009

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TO: Members of the Water and Power Subcommittee

Good morning, and thank you for allowing me to testify before this Subcommittee on Water and Power.

My name is Chris Hurd and I am a 4th generation family farmer from Firebaugh, California, farming on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley entirely in the Central Valley Project. I am owner and partner in Circle G Farms, growing almonds, pistachios and row crops. Today, I represent the Family Farm Alliance, which is a grass roots organization with one mission. That is, to keep secure, affordable, reliable water flowing to western farms and ranches. We are here today to support this bill, HR 3980, implementing a surface water storage program. Storage is what the west was built on, but it has been skewed from its original intent.

In California, we have a current drought, but we've had them before such as 1977, 1978 and five years of 1987-1992.

Now, the last 25 years have been layers of regulations taking our contracted H₂O off the land. We started last year (2012-2013) with above average storage, but the system was operated to drain the water for fish and water quality issues. Today, there's no water in California's system or storage, and rain won't help if the regulatory crisis isn't fixed and the system to be run with human and balanced consideration. We cry out for the leadership needed – non-partisan! Thousands of us California farmers have invested millions of dollars in drip and conservation. Our farm is 100% drip irrigation, farming only the profile at 95% efficiency. We have zero surface or subsurface drainage, and are very proud of our beneficial use and contribution to a \$44 billion farm gate of fruits and vegetables in California. The months of July, August, September, and October find 10 – 15 trucks per minute, hauling produce along Interstate 5 which our farm borders. This equates to 300,000 – 400,000 tons per day of over 300 commodities grown from our safe national food production. Included are citrus, grapes, almonds, pistachios, tomatoes, garlic, onions, mixed vegetables, and row crops. Certainly, our country must be proud of production which equates to the U.S. consumer spending 7-8% of their disposable income for food, compared to 30-40% spent overseas by our neighbors.

Now hardship abounds California wide. Most irrigation districts face a potential zero allocation for 2014. Schools are closing, vendors are going broke, tens of thousands of workers are unemployed, food lines are forming and families are devastated. The federal agencies implementing the ESA and Clean Water Act must be held accountable and use the discretionary leverage available under the law to help move water. The 'cavalier' attitude of the agencies implementing ESA is ruining the west.

Are we so arrogant or foolish that we think depression, mass unemployment, or food shortages cannot happen here again, that we will always be able to produce enough food for an exploding global population? Maybe we should ask our parents and grandparents whose hardships led to the foresight to building these existing reservoirs, distribution, canal systems and water projects.

I will speak bluntly:

- A) Putting ideology and partisanship ahead of public service is failure.
- B) California needs its elected representatives in Congress to provide leadership, to show courage, and vision and **fix the** problem in order **to make it through this crisis.**
- C) Is the United States of America to be a viable Agriculture Producer in a volatile world or not?
- D) Stop the bickering and serve the people now! History will judge us all by constructive actions not rhetoric or promises.

Thank you, and I will stand for any questions.