



January 30, 2017

The Honorable David G. Valadao
1728 Longworth Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Valadao,

On behalf of the Agricultural Retailers Association (ARA) and our members, I am writing to voice our strong support for H.R. 23, the "Gaining Responsibility On Water (GROW) Act of 2017". ARA represents the interests of the nation's agricultural retailers and distributors in Washington, D.C. We have a large number of California members that provide essential products and services to the state's farmers and ranchers

California's Central Valley, which provides the majority of fruits and vegetables for the country, over the past several years has been suffering from a drought, which was made worse by federal regulations. As a result, over 300 billion gallons of water have been diverted away from the region in an effort to protect the Delta Smelt. Today, citizens and farmers in the Central Valley are receiving less water than they previously contracted for and purchased. The water system that established California as a beacon of ingenuity has been pushed to the curb and caused devastating consequences for farmers. While a series of recent rains has brought relief to some parts of the state, key parts of California remain in more serious drought conditions.

For years, you have fought to bring water back to the valley; this year is no different. We support your common-sense legislation that would ensure reliable water deliveries for our valley, secure private property and senior water rights, and save millions of dollars by ending wasteful protectionist plans. To ensure water reliability in the future, the bill obligates the federal government to complete feasibility studies for multiple water storage projects in California and increases the scope of investigation for dam safety throughout the West, including expansion.

Now is the time to enact long term, meaningful solutions to California's water supply issues and we are hopeful this legislation is the next step in addressing the challenges we face. We look forward to working with you on advancing H.R. 23, the GROW Act, this Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard D. Gupton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard D. Gupton
Senior Vice President, Public Policy & Counsel