

August 30, 2014

Supervisor Salud Carbajal
105 E. Anapamu St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Mr. Carbajal;

I would like to comment on the recent water availability study performed by the U.S. Geological Survey that you will be considering on September 9.

I have lived in Cuyama Valley since 1973, and I have seen firsthand the explosion of farming in our valley. When we first moved here, there was some farming east of the Cuyama River and none to the west. Now there is not an inch unfarmed. We've all known that overdraft has been occurring since irrigation was introduced in the 1930s, but the pace of extraction has dramatically increased. First the artesian wells dried up. Then exhaust caused by numerous unregulated diesel pumps began to diminish our air quality. Homes and yards have been sprayed with pesticides and other toxins near the fields. Now it appears that the three major agribusinesses are determined to pump the valley dry.

Cuyama Valley does not receive much rain in most years. In the 2006-2007 season, my backyard received 3.23 inches. In 2013-2014, I recorded 2.44 inches. And yet, this year alone the largest farmers opened up thousands of acres of virgin land for farming, which means more water depletion. I realize that more people in this world means that we need more food. But people also need water! It is completely irresponsible *at best* to increase groundwater extraction during a period of drought. And almost everything is watered with sprinklers, which means that much of the water never gets back into the ground due to evaporation.

I'm not sure what the answer is, but since the growers evidently have no self-control, someone else needs to control them. The bill that just passed in the legislature is good, but it will be some time before we will see results in Cuyama Valley. We are small and insignificant to most people and government entities, with no political clout. Are our wells all going to be dry before something is done?

The USGS report is excellent and carefully done. Maybe it was finished just in time to get something constructive done so people can still live and work in Cuyama Valley.

Sincerely,

Louise Draucker

Louise Draucker
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