

April 25, 2008

Ms. Molly A. Penberth  
Manager  
Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program  
Division of Land Resource Protection  
California Department of Conservation  
801 K Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Penberth:

The undersigned members of the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment (CRAE) appreciate and applaud your recent decision to expand the mapping of rural residential in the San Joaquin Valley to all of its eight counties. CRAE is a broad coalition of agriculture, environment, and public agency leaders working to promote "an agriculture that is economically viable, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible."

As you are aware, the San Joaquin Valley is California's single most productive agricultural region and its fastest growing. The loss of farm and ranch land is, therefore, of great concern. "Ranchettes" are especially problematic because they are the least efficient kind of development. Your own statistics for four San Joaquin Valley counties (Stanislaus, Merced, Madera and Fresno) show that they account for a quarter of all the land developed for non-agricultural uses, yet, according to American Farmland Trust, they house less than two percent of the Valley's population. As such, they consume 13 times as much land *per capita* as the average urban development in the region.

Local jurisdictions in the Valley and elsewhere need the kind of information the Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program provides to make good land use decisions that will safeguard agriculture and the environment while accommodating future growth. We thank you for your efforts on behalf of farm and ranch land, and look forward to working with you to expand the mapping of rural residential development still further to include all of California's agricultural regions as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Ag Council of California  
American Farmland Trust  
California Association of Winegrape Growers  
California Cattlemen's Association  
California Farm Bureau Federation

California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation  
Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
Corny Gallagher, Agribusiness Executive, Bank of America  
Ecological Farming Association  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Marrone Organic Innovations, Inc.  
The Nature Conservancy  
Richard Rominger  
Roots of Change  
San Joaquin Resource Conservation District  
Sustainable Conservation  
Western Growers  
Western United Dairymen

cc: Bridget Luther, Director, California Department of Conservation  
Mike Chrisman, California Secretary of Resources  
A.G. Kawamura, California Secretary of Food & Agriculture  
Heads of councils of governments in 8 San Joaquin Valley counties