



CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

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To Whom It May Concern:

The California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 34,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of nearly 5.6 million Farm Bureau members. I am writing this letter on behalf of the members we represent in Butte County. CFBF strongly supports their efforts in the formation of the Tuscan Water District. The formation of the Tuscan Water District would strengthen and better allow groundwater pumpers in Butte County a more organized pathway to groundwater sustainability and management.

In 2014, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was signed into law, with a framework for the management and use of groundwater without causing undesirable results on groundwater basins. To accomplish this, SGMA outlined a path by which local jurisdictions would create Sustainable Groundwater Management Plans, that would be approved by the State, and implemented and managed through means including development of local infrastructure.

The Tuscan Water District, a California Water District when approved, would be comprised of 95,000 acres from the Tehama County line south to the northern border of the Western Canal Water District in the Durham area.

Upon signing SGMA into law, Governor Brown stated that “groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally.” Unfortunately, unlike the many surface water districts who already have well run local governance, agricultural and domestic groundwater users in many outlying areas were not in a legal position to represent themselves as an organized body to achieve SGMA compliance. As a result, many California groundwater users were left to be represented by the SGMA-defined catchall, the County. Many county governments, however, themselves lack, not only financial resources and institutional structures to effectively managed groundwater, but also the direct interest and motivation of affected pumpers and private landowners to devise tailored solutions to the needs of a targeted portion of a basin. The formation of the Tuscan Water District will ensure that groundwater users are at the table and part of the discussion and decision-making process for Butte County’s groundwater future, and that they are also able to act nimbly and efficiently in pursuing the best possible management options for their own uniquely local challenges.

The Tuscan Water District would be governed by a Board of Directors, all of whom will be landowners and/or landowner representatives from within the district’s boundary. All landowners will have an opportunity to participate in the governance process – small and large landowners, domestic and agricultural pumpers. Moreover, as SGMA requires, the District would coordinate closely with all other portions of the larger basin of which they are a part, to comply with the law and achieve the basin’s long-term sustainability goals.

The new district would directly serve users and residents of the area, to whom it would be directly accountable. The district would remain engaged with the County of Butte and undergo the county’s local

LAFCO process as part of its formation. As a GSA, the new district would enjoy the legal powers and privileges of other districts, including the ability to acquire water, to contract, to apply for and obtain water rights, to issue regulations, to assess fees, to require reporting and monitoring, to operate systems, and to finance and incur debt in connection with the local infrastructure needs of the area—all necessary tools in the toolkit of any local area to effectively meet the challenge of long-term, sustainable management under SGMA.

For all these reasons, consistent with SGMA's strong affirmation of responsible local management, the California Farm Bureau Federation extends its full support in favor the proposed Tuscan Water District formation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jamie Johansson", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

JAMIE JOHANSSON
President