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February 9, 2021

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Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

As your State Board of Food and Agriculture we greatly appreciate your leadership in addressing California's diverse set of water challenges. The issuance of Executive Order N-10-19, provided us with the Water Resilience Portfolio laying the foundation for collective and proactive action on water supply, the environmental health of natural ecosystems, and safe drinking water for disadvantaged communities. The portfolio also prioritized preparedness, reflecting on California's variable climate and the state's preponderance for more frequent fires, droughts and flooding.

While our most recent winter storms are welcome, the prospects for significantly dry conditions this spring are a strong precursor for another drought year. It is with this in mind, that we recommend that the Administration, if it has not already, begin drought preparations and convene a multi-agency task force to help initiate planning and actions to respond to predicted water shortages. With the many water challenges that communities and industries are facing – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) compliance, Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan Updates, safe drinking water, and reduced water allocations – earlier cross-agency coordination and planning is critical. We also encourage the task force and your agencies to work closely with local and regional water agencies to advance Voluntary Agreements as a key part of your Water Resilience Portfolio.

Agriculture is among the most impacted economic sectors in drought conditions, specifically the region of the southern San Joaquin Valley. This rural region is also home to many disadvantaged communities that were severely impacted by water scarcity in the last drought, compounding the very serious safe drinking water issues that are a state



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priority to resolve. Early planning and preparation by the Administration will help the state and water regions better achieve water resilience and support ecosystem health during this critical period.

This Board stands ready to assist you and the Administration in moving forward.

Sincerely,



Don Cameron

cc: Karen Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture
Wade Crowfoot, California Natural Resources Agency
Jared Blumenfeld, California Environmental Protection Agency
E. Joaquin Esquivel, California State Water Resources Control Board
Karla Nemeth, California Department of Water Resources
Charlton Bonham, California Department of Fish and Wildlife