



Don J. Cameron  
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Terranova Ranch, Inc.

June 25, 2020

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Sciences, California  
Polytechnic State  
University

Christopher Valadez,  
President, Grower Shipper  
Association of Central  
California

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

As the nation continues our pathway to economic recovery and you consider additional stimulus funding in support of businesses, communities, and the workforce, we would like to underscore critical components of California's infrastructure where dedicated federal funding is desperately needed. As the fifth largest economy in the world, California is challenged in two key areas that directly impact the state's ability to recover and emerge stronger from this pandemic.

The first area is that California still has a digital divide where communities and regions of the state lack sufficient connectivity and access to broadband. The federal government has dedicated significant resources to national broadband development, yet connectivity and access (urban and rural), remains elusive for a large number of California citizens. Federal action is needed not only to secure California's fair share of broadband funding but also to provide sufficient access to students, telemedicine, small businesses, and communities. With stay-at-home orders, county ordinances, and other precautions enacted as a result of COVID-19, we have seen the disparity and limited scope of California's broadband service harm those especially in rural areas of the state.

Broadband connectivity is a bipartisan issue and can have a bipartisan solution. Federal funding and policy are needed to provide necessary infrastructure, improve accountability among service providers, and increase involvement of the Federal Communication Commission in finding solutions. Sufficient connectivity is vital not only to California's farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers for business recovery and sustainability, but to their families and communities as well.



The second area is the state's water infrastructure. The uniqueness of California's geography combined with the nation's largest agricultural sector and treasured biodiversity makes water infrastructure investments critical. As the most populous state, we remain challenged in providing safe, reliable and affordable drinking water to communities and a dependable supply of water to agriculture within the Central Valley. It is this water availability and supply, which feeds the nation and ensures our stewardship of the natural resources upon which agriculture depends. Water infrastructure projects not only support immediate, well-paid jobs in communities throughout our state but assist in long-term recovery and resilience. As you consider future recovery assistance, infrastructure investments in water projects, many which are shovel-ready, are a strong stimulus for the state and an investment in California's future. In the coming weeks, we will be working with state government and stakeholders to provide a list of projects to your offices, which may be considered.

A significant amount of federal investment concerning these issues is currently available within House legislation including H.R. 2 – "The Moving Forward Act" and H.R. 6800 – "The Heroes Act", as well as comprehensive infrastructure investments for the nation in the transportation and water sectors. These critical investments will not only assist in economic recovery, but also address growing food insecurity resulting from this pandemic. H.R. 6800 includes an increase in benefit funding (15 percent) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a vital component of recovery when we are witnessing unprecedented need at food banks nationwide. Senate consideration of both H.R. 2 and H.R. 6800 on comprehensive infrastructure investments and ensuring access to food is strongly needed.

As the California State Board of Food and Agriculture, we would also be remiss not to offer our strong support for the Farming for Support of States Act and the Food Supply Protection Act, both of which support much needed assistance at the state level. The Farming for Support of States Act is a bipartisan effort that is calling for \$1 billion in funding directly to state departments of agriculture for COVID-19 related aid. The Food Supply Protection Act supports food banks, strengthens food partnerships and protects workers to help those in need and address challenges within the food supply chain related to the ongoing pandemic.

Our nation's food supply is dependent on farmers, ranchers, agricultural workers, and food processors to fill our supermarket shelves. Any loss of farming at the scale, diversity, and innovation that we currently have is a loss for all of us. Assistance is needed and we are hopeful that proposals like this can be realized.

Thank you for your continued leadership.

June 24, 2020

Page 3

Sincerely,



Don Cameron

cc: The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Senator Kamala Harris  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives  
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives