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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

May 21, 2002

Ms. Stella Mendoza
President Board of Directors
Imperial Irrigation District
PO Box 937
Imperial, CA 92251

Dear Madame President,

Six weeks ago representatives of IID came to see me with the Coachella, Metropolitan and San Diego Water Districts. At that meeting, a proposal for evapo-transpiration fallowing was put forth to solve the impasse over the Quantitative Settlement Agreement. I have come to believe that fallowing is a win-win for Imperial Irrigation District and for the environment by ensuring that the transfer will not impact the Salton Sea and that there will not be any resulting liability for the District.

It is very critical that IID make a decision and agree to a form of fallowing that best meets the needs of the District. If Imperial does not decide to fallow, there is a serious risk that the Department of Interior will have no alternative but to suspend the Interim Surplus Guidelines. If this were to happen then Interior could be forced to initiate the proceedings to take the water IID had planned to transfer, and there would not be any compensation.

I understand that this is a difficult decision for the District to make, but I am writing this to say time is rapidly running out. I indicated at the meeting that I clearly recognize that Imperial County needs economic development assistance and IID representatives said that they would come back to me with suggested ways I can help the County. I have become increasingly concerned, however, that we are running out of time for finalizing the transfer agreement and for securing appropriations for fiscal year 2003. I have directed my staff to begin working with the County on getting additional economic assistance contingent on the District deciding to fallow.

As we are now well into the 2003 appropriations cycle, I need the input on how I might help as soon as possible. If I don't hear back from you within the next couple of weeks, I don't know that I will be able to help in time for the 2003 appropriations process. The more I have become involved in this issue, the more I've come to believe that there is no workable alternative other than fallowing. Please let me know as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein