

DH Long Farming
PO Box 173
Zamora, CA 95698

Yolo County Board of Supervisors

Re: Urgency to extend the Moratorium on Ag Groundwater Wells in Yolo Co. Focus Areas

October 6, 2025

Dear Chair Mary Sandy and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

We urgently need your help and support for working towards a sustainable groundwater management plan for our community in Zamora, with approving an extension on the moratorium on new agricultural groundwater wells in Yolo County Focus Areas. We're running out of water, and our land is sinking here in Zamora where we live and farm. Our community is dependent on groundwater for domestic use and for irrigating our crops. There is no district surface water in our area, nor are we represented by a water district (we're in the 'white area'), hence our appeal for help from all of you on the board.

In the past 15-years, our historically dryland farming area has shifted to irrigated tree crops and vines, with 7 new agricultural wells going in, less than 2-miles from our home ranch. These wells are massive and deep, for maximum water extraction. They have 16-inch casings, with a capacity to draw 1,500-2,000 gallons of water per minute. They often run 24-hours a day, 7 days a week during the summertime, depending on field size. Multiply that by 7 and that's enormous pressure on our aquifer, especially for an area that has never been historically irrigated.

Our community has felt the impact of this intense groundwater extraction. Our house well went dry twice during the past 15-years (horrific when air comes out of faucets). Domestic wells are much smaller and shallower than ag wells (typically 8-inch casing and less than half the depth). The first time we ran out of water, we lowered our well column 40-feet; the second time, 60-feet, along with buying new pumps with the old ones burning out due to pump failure. This is as deep as we can go without drilling a new well, which costs tens of thousands of dollars, with no guarantee of a reliable water source with declining aquifers. Three neighbors have likewise run out of water, with one having to drill a new well; the others had to patch their wells due to land subsidence.

On a second domestic well on our ranch (that's now capped and not used) the water depth was 20-feet in the early 2000's. At that time, there was a submersible pump attached to a solar panel for extracting water for animals. When the first neighboring agricultural well went in, the water table dropped 20-feet. After a second nearby ag well was drilled, it dropped another 20-feet. When the third and fourth ag wells went in within a mile of our farm, the water dropped another 40 feet, and we lost the ability to extract water from the 80-foot depth (took too much energy). Our water table has never recovered to levels in the early 2000's and we capped the well (no longer being used).

On our family farm, where we grow field crops (tomatoes, wheat), a mile northeast of Zamora, our land is sinking from groundwater overdrafting. Two new neighboring wells went in

about 5 years ago, within a mile of our farm. We feel the effects. When water is being extracted from the new wells, our water output drops, affecting productivity. Data from the California Department of Water Resources also show that the land around Zamora has dropped a foot in the past 10-years. Some local farmers claim that the ground in our community has dropped 4-feet since the 1950's (official records don't go back that far). You can see the impacts during flood years, with new areas inundated with flood water where historically there was no flooding, leading to high tree crop mortality in these areas and lost productivity. We wonder, who's land is next to subside and flood? In addition, our agricultural well collapsed here in Zamora in 2021, due to subsidence, and we had to drill a new well at a cost of \$150,000. These costs are not sustainable for family farms.

Water is finite, as we've experienced, with too many negative consequences of overdrafting, causing much stress. To help us move towards sustainable groundwater use here in all Yolo County Focus Areas, we urge you to extend the new well drilling moratorium at least another 10-months to give us more time to understand the hydrology of our area and whether we can continue to support new wells without causing additional groundwater overdraft and subsidence. There also needs to be verification of hydrological reports assessing aquifers, particularly if the data came from the last 3-years, with wet winters and higher water tables. Farmers need to be part of this discussion on local groundwater conditions with historical knowledge of well output, especially during drought years. This moratorium on new wells would also give us time to talk more about groundwater recharge strategies for our area to ensure water security.

Our livelihood and the future of farming in our area is in your hands. Without water security we cannot farm. With gratitude for your support.

Sincerely,

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