

Application No.: A.08-05-039

Exhibit No.: _____

Witness: Allen Ishida

Testimony of
Allen Ishida, District One Supervisor
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

Allen Ishida
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July 28, 2009

COUNTY OF TULARE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



ALLEN R. ISHIDA
Supervisor - District One

July 28, 2009

Dear Commissioners:

I am a third generation citrus farmer, who spent over twenty five years in the commercial real estate business selling farm land in California. I have a sound professional opinion of what is prime and unique farm land. The definition of prime farm land is based not only on soil ratings and climate, but also the quality and quantity of water available. Route 1 traverses some of the finest soils and underground water supplies in the state.

I have read the Environmental Impact Report on the Cross Valley Loop Project and would appreciate adding the following comments. The land adjacent to the foothills has a climate which is conducive to the production of citrus because it is less susceptible to freezing temperatures which damages citrus fruit. For this reason the California Citrus Industry is located along this thermal belt where water is available. Route 1 is located in a micro-climate within this thermal belt and in the winter is one of the warmest areas in the citrus belt.

Route 1 disrupts one of the few areas in the citrus belt that has sufficient ground water to irrigate its crops. Most of the citrus belt is reliant on surface water from the San Joaquin River which is delivered by the Kern-Friant Canal. Beginning this year Friant Water Users will be giving up ten percent of their surface water for the restoration of a salmon run in the San Joaquin River. This ten percent loss is just the beginning. Farmers dependent on this surface water could end up like the Westlands Water District and receive a zero allocation for surface water. Producers including myself, who are totally dependent on surface water, will be out of business. The loss of Friant Water could result in the California Citrus Industry losing sixty percent of its production. The citrus industry in Tulare County is the second largest income producing crop in Tulare County. We need to protect every acre of citrus that has the soils, water, and micro-climate that is represented by the area traversed by Route 1.

It takes approximately 48 acres of rangeland to mitigate the income loss of one acre planted to a trees crop. This is another reason that I believe Route 3 is the right choice for the Loop Project.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allen Ishida", is written over a horizontal line.

Allen Ishida, District One
Tulare County Board of Supervisors