



March 28, 2021

The Honorable Robert Rivas  
Chair, Assembly Agriculture Committee  
*Submitted Electronically*

**RE: AB 350 (Villapudua) – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Rivas,

The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) has represented small and mid-scale family farmers in California for over 40 years, seeking to preserve family-scale agriculture, promote local food systems, and advance environmental sustainability. We are pleased to support AB 350 (Villapudua), which would establish a program at the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) in order to make grants to technical assistance providers in each of the eight counties of the San Joaquin Valley so that they might advise landowners and farmers on their options with respect to idling land under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

AB 350 (Villapudua) is complementary to AB 252 (Rivas), which would establish the Multi-benefit Land Repurposing Incentive Program at the Department of Conservation (DOC) to make grants to counties and groundwater sustainability agencies to support planning and to make grants to farmers as they reduce groundwater demand under the SGMA. Both bills address the potential idling of an estimated 500,000 acres in the San Joaquin Valley due to SGMA, but AB 350 creates technical assistance at the individual level.

CAFF supported SGMA because we saw that large-scale farming operations were drilling ever deeper wells and threatening the very existence of small farms as groundwater overdraft accelerated. There is no doubt that SGMA will have a major impact on agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley. There is widespread agreement that this land should be repurposed in a planned and organized fashion and not simply through piecemeal individual decisions. AB 350 would assist landowners and farmers to make such decisions through the lens of county-wide developments.

CAFF believes this transition could eventually benefit the San Joaquin Valley by creating a more sustainable agriculture. We respectfully request your support for AB 350.

Sincerely,

David Runsten

Policy Director