



March 28, 2021

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia  
Chair, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
*Submitted Electronically*

**RE: AB 252 (R. Rivas) – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Garcia,

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 252 (Rivas), which would establish the Multi-benefit Land Repurposing Incentive Program at the Department of Conservation (DOC) to support farmers as they reduce groundwater demand under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and help them to identify alternative uses for their land.

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, where the Public Policy Institute of California has estimated that perhaps 500,000 acres will be idled. There is widespread agreement that this land should be repurposed in a planned and organized fashion and not simply through piecemeal individual decisions. AB 252 would address this by having DOC make grants to counties and groundwater sustainability agencies to engage in land use planning with the intent of repurposing idled agricultural lands by funding landowners to create habitat, dryland farming, wildlife-friendly groundwater recharge facilities, recreation space, or rangeland.

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

Sincerely,

David Runsten  
Policy Director