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Testimony  
Before the Subcommittee on Water and Power  
Committee on Natural Resources  
United States House of Representatives

My name is Stuart Woolf and I am the President and CEO of a business known as Woolf Farming Company. Woolf Farming is privately owned by my parents Jack and Bernice Woolf, their six children and 24 grandchildren. My basic responsibility is to build an enduring family business, passing one generation's assets to the next, in bigger and better shape than which it was received.

After landing on Omaha Beach in Normandy and participating in what he refers to as the "Great Adventure", my father returned from WWII and found a job working for a farming pioneer named Russell Giffen. Dad worked for Russell for over 30 years and then started his own farm in 1974 when, in compliance with Reclamation Law, Mr. Giffen liquidated his holdings. Dad was 57 at the time and together with his wife and kids, took all of his savings, leveraged his personal assets and purchased a couple thousand acres and like many others, started a new family business in Western Fresno County.

Through lots of hard work, reinvestment, strategic partnerships and luck, the company has grown significantly. We produce a diversified crop mix, mostly specialty crops and are directly involved with several processing facilities. These facilities include: Harris Woolf Almonds, Los Gatos Tomato Products, Cal West Rain, Patterson Vegetable Products, Huron Ginning Company and the Woolf Nursery. Collectively these operations provide work for over 900 full time employees 600 of which are union members. Our products are marketed globally.

Our team manages its resources intensively and sustainably. Like many others, we have invested millions of dollars in land leveling, distribution systems, pipelines, wells, land retirement, water scheduling, drip irrigation and recycling. We have NO run-off. In the words of my father, "we work the water so hard it has blisters". Decisions are driven by our "return per acre foot". We enjoy our best returns when we produce more food with fewer inputs, particularly water.

We tend to focus on shelf stable products which include: almonds, pistachios, processing tomatoes, onions & garlic and more recently, bare root roses. The combination of Mediterranean climate, class 1 soils and basic infrastructure, in particular, water projects, has allowed us to gain global strategic advantage in most of our markets. I am here today due to my fear of losing our global competitive advantage.

The unreliability of our surface supplies has had a dramatic impact on our operations. Given the uncertainty at planting time, we are forced to choose lower value, low cost crops that we may abandon if we don't receive sufficient surface water, as opposed to higher valued

specialty crops which we process. The financial impact is felt at the farm, the processing plant, with suppliers & customers, and with our employees and our local communities. The combination of investments in drip and a greater reliance on ground water is poisoning our seed row. These practices simply are NOT environmentally sound or sustainable.

I encourage you as our representative and leaders to take immediate action to:

- 1) Demand the Bureau of Reclamation acknowledge and take immediate action to meet the irrigation needs of California's Central Valley and the communities within,
- 2) To support Federal & State investments in infrastructure to improve water conveyance throughout California to the benefit of all stakeholders including environmental, business and social interests,
- 3) Support investments in additional storage so we can capture and use winter flood flows before they runoff and are lost in the ocean,
- 4) Lastly, and most importantly, I strongly encourage each of you to seek reform of the Endangered Species Act to not only protect the environment but to also take into account the human needs of people you represent.

Now is NOT the time for more fundraisers, more committee meetings, more studies, etc. Desperate times require action & leadership. Please provide it. Give us a reason, a hope, that future investments in California's agricultural economy won't be a waste.

In the meantime, I will be recommending to my family to invest in agricultural ventures elsewhere where there's better access to resources and foreign investment is welcomed.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts with you today.