

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

As a California cattle producer, I am writing to express my extreme disappointment at your recent decision to eliminate all but \$1,000 of the Williamson Act subvention funding for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

The Williamson Act program has been a critical tool in protecting nearly 16.5 million acres, or 40 percent, of the privately held land within the state. The Williamson Act, for many ranching families like mine, is the difference between staying in ranching or leaving our way of life behind us. Funding for the subvention is key to keeping local governments a party to contracts, some of which have already indicated they will non-renew contracts should you choose to not fund the program this year.

The net value of this \$39 million program is often overlooked. Not only does this program enjoy broad based support from the local government, environmental and agricultural communities for its role in preserving agricultural operations, wildlife habitat, and providing a backfill to localities that are contracting parties, the program also provides the added benefit of open space preservation, which is a public benefit enjoyed by all Californians.

I respectfully request that you reconsider your decision and restore funding in the May Revise. While I appreciate your tireless efforts to get the state's budget back on track, I believe short term elimination of the Williamson Act poses long term negative consequences, which will likely include nonrenewal of contracts on a county-by-county basis.

Sincerely,

Member, California Cattlemen's Association