

December 14, 2011

Sam Abed, Mayor

City of Escondido

201 N Broadway

Escondido, CA 92025

Dear Sam,

As an avocado grower in the North County for over thirty years. I do not support a 12% hike in water rates for agriculture.

Agriculture has historically and continues to be a significant part of Escondido, providing jobs and tens of millions of dollars in local economic activity. It is also part of the charm of Escondido as a city and certainly attracts visitors and permanent residents to our community. Because of rising water costs I personally have been forced to cut down twelve hundred trees of one of my avocado groves. Furthermore, my remaining grove of twelve hundred trees has not been profitable for two of the last three years.

Hundreds of acres of trees have already been cut down over the last three years due to higher water prices. If rising water prices for agriculture continue, growers will be out of business and unable to purchase recycled water when it's available. Water rates for growers should be kept at the 2011 levels until a new differential service level for agriculture can be developed.

In my office I have labels from packing houses that reach back in to the previous century. These packing labels are a work of art and remind us of the rich heritage that Escondido has developed over decades. I support a "no change in agriculture water rates" decision by the Escondido City Council.

Very Truly Yours,



Harvey Mitchell

14192 Ridge Canyon Road

Valley Center, CA 92082