



Good Afternoon.

My name is Tony Campos and I am an owner and partner in a diversified family farming and almond hulling and processing operation based in Caruthers, California. I would like to thank you for holding a field hearing here in Fresno to discuss the upcoming Farm Bill and receiving our input and viewpoints on the various aspects of the proposed Bill. Though there are many issues to discuss I would like to focus the next few minutes on the Environmental Quality Incentive Program also known as EQIP.

In the 2008 Farm Bill EQIP was given a \$150 million authorization for air quality projects throughout the 50 states over 5 years. These projects help growers and ranchers provide significant environmental benefits to our communities, and provide growers and ranchers cost-share assistance for participating in the program. California is currently receiving \$37 million dollars over five years to fund conservation efforts.

As you may know, California is developing very stringent air quality rules. If adopted, these rules will force growers and ranchers to accelerate the replacement of their farm and processing equipment. We all want to be part of the solution when it comes to bettering the air quality we all breathe but we need help in achieving the standards set before us. Through EQIP funding in 2009, 340 tractors and pieces of processing equipment were purchased resulting in a reduction in

emissions of 560 tons NOx, 72 tons Reactive Organic Gases, and 18 tons PM10. This funding has allowed California growers to take real, positive steps toward emission reductions and getting some of the most polluting equipment out of the fields. This program has been one of the most successful at reducing PM 10 and PM 2.5.

One example of the program's success is the purchase of new almond harvesting equipment. Almond harvesters are expensive to purchase brand new. Many growers would not be able to do so without EQIP funding. Not only is the EQIP program reducing emissions from the engine, it is reducing the amount of dust as well. This is a situation where an older engine is being replaced by a cleaner-burning Tier 3 engine; but the real advantage is that the newer harvesting machine has been built in such a way that the amount of dust created is reduced by more than 50%.

I respectfully ask that the funding for this program be increased to \$400 million in the 2012 Farm Bill. There is great demand for the replacement of the older, higher polluting Tier 0 engines in both farm and processing equipment. There are many of these Tier 0 engines on farms and ranches that have been in operation because growers cannot afford to upgrade to a newer, cleaner engine. For farming operations with economies of scale, replacing Tier 0 tractors can be quite costly but the burden on smaller family farms is far greater and in some cases makes it almost impossible to achieve if not for assistance programs. With all the economic and environmental stresses we have faced within Agriculture in the last year, an expansion of this program would help growers become more efficient in their operations and use less fuel.

The key to this successful implementation of this program has been the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The program should continue to be implemented by this agency, because NRCS has developed expertise in many issues affecting farmers and ranchers, including air quality and water use. Because of this expertise, NRCS has facilitated key relationships with the major stakeholders including growers and agricultural organizations, and has the buy-in of these groups. Many growers are skeptical to work with government agencies, but NRCS has been able to overcome that skepticism because their program has been successful at achieving emissions reductions, while helping farmers get the equipment they need.

Again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon and for listening to my concerns.