July 27, 2004

Honorable Mayor Gary Podesto
Councilmember Larry Ruhstaller
City of Stockton
425 N. El Dorado Street
Stockton, CA 95202

Gentlemen:

This communication from the San Joaquin Farm Bureau is being distributed to you regarding the conversation and possible action by the City Council of Stockton regarding the greenbelt initiative.

The San Joaquin Farm Bureau represents 6,000 member families many of whom own, farm or ranch, and live on the agricultural properties of this county. It is the belief of this organization that any and all efforts, which would affect our landowner members, must reflect their true desires.

On behalf of our members I urge your council to be diligent in establishing an effort that will address the multitude of issues facing our communities due to the continued urban growth pressures. Your efforts must address the pre-mature annexation of prime agricultural lands. Your City ordinances and charter should reflect the strongest protections available to our agricultural industry. Your efforts must also understand that any opportunity to create greenbelts or community separators must be done on a voluntary seller/buyer arrangement. Agricultural landowners must be able to control their own assets. Your efforts must also reflect that landowners must be compensated at a negotiated price for any loss in value of their land assets. You also must create a time specific effort that will create and identify ways to compensate landowners affected by your efforts.

In order to maintain our way of life and the identities of our communities we need to have opportunities to address these issues. We also must have some commitment from the City of Stockton that it will not walk away from these efforts without reaching an acceptable solution for all parties involved.

Sincerely,

Kenny Watkins
President

cc: Stockton City Council
SJFB Board of Directors