



IMPERIAL VALLEY **REGIONAL** CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE

August 5, 2026

California Department of Food and Agriculture
Office of Agricultural Resilience and Sustainability
1220 N Street
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Letter of Support for the Southern Desert Agricultural Water Efficiency and Conservation Initiative

To the CDFA Office of Agricultural Resilience and Sustainability Review Committee:

On behalf of the Imperial Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce (IVRCC), I am pleased to express our strong support for the application submitted by the Imperial Valley Community Foundation (IVCF), in partnership with the Imperial County Farm Bureau (ICFB), for the CDFA State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) Block Grant. The proposed Southern Desert Agricultural Water Efficiency and Conservation Initiative would expand producer access to funding and technical assistance across Imperial County and eastern Riverside County, including the Coachella Valley, Blythe, and Palo Verde agricultural areas.

Our organization serves the Imperial Valley business community and its residents. We see a significant need for additional investment in agricultural water-use efficiency, as agriculture is the backbone of our regional economy and a primary driver of jobs and economic stability. Our region experiences prolonged periods of extreme heat, placing additional strain on water resources, agricultural production, businesses, and the health and well-being of our residents. Investments in innovative water conservation technologies and sustainable agricultural practices will help preserve our limited water resources, strengthen food production, support economic resilience, and ensure the long-term viability of the Imperial Valley's agricultural industry and the communities that depend on it. These conditions can be especially difficult for small and mid-sized farms, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, Tribal producers, and producers located in or serving disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities.

The proposed partnership is well positioned to respond to these needs. IVCF will provide experienced fiscal oversight, grant administration, compliance, and community-centered stewardship. ICFB will contribute trusted producer relationships, agricultural outreach, application support, and field-level coordination. The team's technical-assistance partnerships will help producers evaluate eligible practices, develop sound projects, quantify expected water and greenhouse-gas benefits, complete applications, and successfully implement and maintain funded improvements. The planned bilingual public website, continuous regional outreach, one-on-one assistance, workshops, and demonstration field days with experienced SWEEP recipients will help make the opportunity more visible, understandable, and accessible.

If funded, this initiative is expected to accelerate adoption of irrigation measurement, scheduling, automation, monitoring, conveyance, pressure-management, and other eligible improvements that can reduce water and energy losses while strengthening long-term farm resilience. It would also help address a persistent regional funding and capacity gap by pairing direct on-farm investment with the

locally trusted support producers need to participate successfully.

Our organization is prepared to support the initiative through business outreach, communications, referrals, promotion of educational workshops and demonstration events, and engagement with the agricultural community. By connecting producers with information and resources, we will help expand awareness and adoption of water-efficient practices that strengthen agricultural productivity and support the long-term sustainability of the Imperial Valley.

For these reasons, IVRCC respectfully encourages CDFA to fund the IVCF and ICFB proposal. This investment would bring meaningful and direct benefits to an underserved agricultural region while advancing California's water-conservation, climate-resilience, and agricultural-sustainability goals.

Sincerely,



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