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The Secretary
Senate Environment, Communications
Information Technology & the Arts Committee

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re the Upper Southeast Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Program I hope my concerns are not too late to be considered by your Committee.

First of all South Australia is recognized as the driest State in the driest continent of the world and as such we should be conserving water where possible and making use of this vital resource, not draining it out to sea and so wasting it.

In general terms the affected area was cleared of native vegetation in the 1950s and early 1960s with much of the region sown to deep rooted Lucerne and perennial grasses which took the place of the native vegetation that it replaced and in so doing so maintained the balance of water use and recharge. By the mid 1970s there was approximately 300,000 hectares of the region sown to these pastures and there appeared to be no major problems but in the late 1970s the Blue/Green aphids devastated the Lucerne and virtually wiped it out overnight. This upset the balance of water use and recharge and it was then that flooding problems appeared.

Since about 1993 and continuing until the present time, with both the area being resown to Lucerne increasing all the time and rainfall decreasing, the water tables, in general, have been dropping even where there are no drains presently constructed.

I live and farm in Zone C of the scheme which is approximately 100 kms. to the east of the worst affected areas and even here our water tables are dropping significantly in recent times so much so that on our property we have seven of our stock water bores, out of twenty five, gone dry. This fact, even though a long way from the affected area, must, in the long term, reduce the amount of underground water flowing out that way.

With predictions of even less rainfall in future years it would appear that the many millions of dollars of Federal, State and landowner funds would have been much better utilized in finding ways and means of using this vital resource or, as many of the good farmers are overcoming the problems themselves, the monies could have been saved.

To sum up my concerns and opposition about the scheme-----

1/. The drains are being dug too deep so consequently will drain, not only surface water, but also underground water which in turn will cause damage to the soils and will be very expensive to repair.

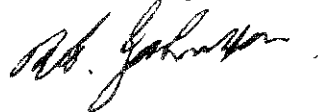
2/. The Federal and State taxpayers are certainly not getting value for money benefit.

3/. We should be utilizing the water not draining it out to sea.

- 4/It is causing a lot of anger in the district and has widespread opposition.
- 5/The monies could have been spent much more productively or not at all.
- 6/The very large majority of landowners in the region will get no benefit even if some do.

Other landowners in this vicinity who share the same concerns as me are
P.E.Hill of Binnum S.A.and M.& K.Flower of Frances S.A

Yours sincerely



R.A.Johnson.