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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **More Than \$11 Million Paid**

**WATSONVILLE** — Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency made the final payout of \$1.27 million in refunds this week and is finished paying the total of \$11,264,705 agreed to in a court settlement. Ratepayers who paid augmentation fees directly to the district have received direct reimbursement; city of Watsonville water users received refunds through their city water bill.

Key to the survival of the agency while financially hamstrung from the rates reduction and refunds was the willingness of several agricultural entities to take credits against future water use, rather than an actual payout. The top entities that requested credits in lieu of payouts were:

- Dobler & Sons
- Ed Kelly/Colleen Strawberries
- Larse Farms, Inc,
- Monterey Bay Academy
- Del Mar Foods
- Scurich Brothers
- Kitayama Brothers Nursery

Stuart Kitayama with Kitayama Brothers Nursery stressed the importance of funding the Agency in order to keep the supplemental water deliveries operational at the coast, while maintaining local control of water resources. He noted that “This is our valley and our resource – it is our responsibility to maintain local management for the good of the valley and our local economy.”

“The magnitude of this effort cannot be understated” according to Mary Bannister, General Manager. The refund process was overseen by agency Director Dennis Osmer who created a database linking scanned checks to the entities making the payments. In total 3,556 checks were sent during the 3 year refund period.

“This was a great effort on the part of many people, directors and staff to build the credibility of the Agency in the course of very hard times” said Osmer, who has been active in working on the refund process.

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