

No. 142, Original

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In The  
Supreme Court of the United States

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STATE OF FLORIDA,

*Plaintiff,*

v.

STATE OF GEORGIA,

*Defendant*

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Before the Special Master

Hon. Ralph I. Lancaster

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**MOTION FOR LEAVE TO FILE BRIEF OF  
*AMICUS CURIAE* GEORGIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION**

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**MOTION FOR LEAVE TO FILE BRIEF OF  
AMICUS CURIAE GEORGIA FARM BUREAU**

Without farmers, Georgia can't grow.<sup>1</sup> Georgia Farm Bureau Federation ("Farm Bureau") respectfully requests leave to file a brief as an *amicus curiae* on behalf of its more than 300,000 members, who are farming families primarily located in rural areas of Georgia.<sup>2</sup> Farm Bureau is a 79-year-old independent, grassroots organization, whose mission is to promote farm markets and provide leadership to Georgia's agricultural community.<sup>3</sup> As the largest farm organization in Georgia, Farm Bureau endeavors to support these farming families' continuing efforts to be agriculturally successful, progressive, and prosperous.<sup>4</sup>

This case is of critical importance to the success of individuals and families in farming and related jobs across the state of Georgia, and particularly in and around the Flint River Basin, located in southwest Georgia. Farm Bureau seeks the opportunity to demonstrate that the outcome of this case could seriously impact the way of life of many generations of Georgians whose well-being, and the prosperity of their communities, depend on the success of Georgia's agricultural sector. Farm Bureau also seeks the opportunity to contribute to the Court's and parties' understanding of irrigation techniques employed in southwest Georgia; the impact

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<sup>1</sup> Georgia Farm Bureau, *Without Farmers, Georgia Can't Grow*, [http://www.gfb.org/aboutus/without\\_farmers.html](http://www.gfb.org/aboutus/without_farmers.html) (last visited Sept. 1, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Georgia Farm Bureau, *About Georgia Farm Bureau*, <http://www.gfb.org/aboutus/default.html> (last visited Sept. 1, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

of irrigation on farming in that area; the farmers' conservation efforts; and Farm Bureau's own efforts, including those of its advisory Water Committee.<sup>5</sup>

Agriculture is the "oldest and largest industry" in Georgia, and remains the foundation of the state's economic well-being.<sup>6</sup> Approximately 42,257 farms operate in Georgia. Food and fiber production and related processing accounts for more than 411,500 jobs and a total economic contribution of \$74.3 billion.<sup>7</sup> The economic contribution of farming reaches far beyond these 9.6 million acres, to industries such as equipment manufacturing and sales, higher education, and agricultural lending.<sup>8</sup>

No resource is more precious to southwest Georgia's farming families than water; Farm Bureau's members are motivated to conserve and protect this resource for themselves and future generations. Indeed, these farming families (some in their seventh generation<sup>9</sup>), have implemented extensive conservation measures, and consistently engage in meaningful dialogues about Georgia's future in

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<sup>5</sup> See Georgia Farm Bureau, *Commodity Committees*, <http://www.gfb.org/commodities/committees/default.html> (last visited Sept. 13, 2016); Georgia Farm Bureau, *GFB Water Committee Gets Update at SIRP*, <http://gfb.org/agnews/story.asp?RecordID=6029> (last visited Sept. 13, 2016) (detailing the Water Committee's 2016 spring meeting, which included discussions of key past and current projects, irrigation techniques, and policy recommendations, *inter alia*).

<sup>6</sup> Georgia Farm Bureau, *Agriculture – Georgia's \$74 Billion Industry*, [http://www.gfb.org/aboutus/georgia\\_agriculture.html](http://www.gfb.org/aboutus/georgia_agriculture.html) (last visited Sept. 1, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> The University of Georgia College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, PowerPoint Presentation: *2016 Ag Snapshots: A brief focus on Georgia's agricultural industry*, at 3, available at <http://www.caes.uga.edu/center/caed/AgSnapshotDownloads.html> (last visited Sept. 1, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> For example, the University of Georgia's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, founded in 1859, has three campuses, ten research and education facilities, employs over 2600 people, and enrolled over 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students in the fall of 2015. The University of Georgia College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, *CAES Quick Facts*, <http://www.caes.uga.edu/about/quickfacts.html> (last visited Sept. 1, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Georgia Farm Bureau, *UGA Ag School Dean Tours South Georgia Diversified Farm*, <http://www.gfb.org/default.html> (last visited Sept. 1, 2016) (including quotation from Tim McMillan, Berrien County farmer: "We're seventh-generation farmers.").

conservation and farming. Georgia's farmers are stewards of this land so that they, and the rest of their state, may continue to have a place on the regional, state, and national economic playing fields.

Without the availability of current irrigation systems, the future is bleak for southwest Georgia. The 4.5 million acres of cropland in Georgia<sup>10</sup> would be far less productive. The source of nearly half of our nation's peanuts and the second largest source of cotton acreage<sup>11</sup> would dry up. The loss of the \$12 billion contribution of row and forage crops to Georgia's economy, along with their 76,000 related jobs,<sup>12</sup> would be devastating. No substitute is available for these existing economies that drive Georgia's health and progress, nor for the irrigation systems upon which Georgia's farmers rely.

The history of farming in Georgia is a successful, progressive one – but most importantly, one of real individuals and families who are the backbone of the state's economy. Reducing available sources for irrigation would have tangible consequences – real job loss and real economic hardship. The current productivity of Farm Bureau's member families would become unsustainable, and a large region of the state of Georgia would cease to exist as we know it.

For these reasons, the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation respectfully asks the Special Master to grant this motion for leave to file a brief of *amicus curiae* to illuminate the significance of agricultural considerations in this equitable

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<sup>10</sup> 2016 Ag Snapshots, *supra* note 7, at 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

apportionment case, and the potential impacts of this decision on the farming communities and families whose interests Farm Bureau represents.

Respectfully submitted,

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September 16, 2016.

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

This is to certify that the Motion for Leave to File Brief of Amicus Curiae Georgia Farm Bureau has been served on this 16th day of September, 2016, in the manner specified below:

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