

L. Reed C

# Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.

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December 19, 1985

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Public Service Achievement Awards  
Common Cause  
2030 "M" Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Friends:

I nominate for your 1986 Public Service Achievement Awards three individuals who were critical to uncovering the now-infamous Kesterson disaster in California. They are:

Felix Smith  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Sacramento, CA

Lloyd Carter  
Fresno Bee  
Fresno, CA

Robert James Claus  
PO Box 979  
Beverly Hills, CA

Mr. Smith was the key whistleblower who first alerted government officials to the growing selenium menace caused by agricultural drainage. He persisted in demanding official accountability at great risk to his government career.

Mr. Carter has reported on the Kesterson disaster with great courage and tenacity, first as a UPI reporter and then with the Fresno Bee. He remains the single most knowledgeable reporter on the issue and is personally responsible for uncovering numerous new levels of government malfeasance and environmental hazards.

Mr. Claus owns land adjacent to Kesterson which has suffered direct harm from the Kesterson contamination. For a number of years, Mr. Claus has fought a tremendous (and often lonely) battle in the courts and before administrative agencies to expose the extent of contamination at Kesterson and the surrounding areas and the official culpability of federal and state officials for causing and covering up the problem. It was

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Mr. Claus, more than any other person, who was responsible for forcing the State Water Resources Control Board to take seriously the growing disaster at Kesterson Wildlife Refuge.

Each of these men independently pursued this growing problem long before it gained national attention. Each of them has played a major role in alerting and protecting the public in what has become one of California's major environmental and economic disasters.

Very truly yours,



Hamilton Candee  
Attorney at law  
Water Pricing Project

bc: Lloyd Carter  
James Claus  
Alice Howard  
Laura King  
Al Meyerhoff  
Felix Smith