

April 7, 2014

Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Speaker John Pérez
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: MESSAGE FROM A BROAD COALITION OF COUNTIES CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BALANCED
2014 WATER BOND

Dear Senate President Pro Tem Steinberg and Assembly Speaker John Pérez:

With deliberations over the next water bond still occurring, we are writing to declare that until we as a State create new underground and aboveground storage; water-related disputes between regions and communities will continue to be a reality for our future generations. All bond proposals should include funding for future water storage projects as well as receive continuous appropriations in every State fiscal year to ensure that investments in storage, including surface storage, translate into additional water supplies for fish and wildlife, people, and farms. Furthermore, all bond proposals should include a sizeable investment in the State's existing levee system, which is – and will continue to be – vital to our respective goals. Delivering on these investments is critical for public acceptance of any future water bond, and must be done for future generations of Californians.

The Watershed and Integrated Regional Water Management approaches consider how for every action in our watersheds, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Investments both up and down the watershed are more appropriate than in only the most populated regions. The allocation of future bond funds needs to include investments in the counties where our water originates to enhance the upper watersheds and prevent catastrophic fires, in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys where our farm products feed the world and sustain our rural and urbanizing communities, and in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta which supports a vibrant and unique ecosystem. This integrated approach to the water bond discussion is necessary to ensure that we do not piece-meal water management throughout watersheds and risk being left with the same short-sighted approaches to water conflicts that have been left unresolved for decades.

Any future investment in California's water infrastructure should consider how all counties statewide contribute to the overall quality of our economy, environment and sustainability. This coalition of counties signing on to this letter understands that the future of this State is inextricably linked to our ability to solve the discrepancy between water supply and demand in California. We all understand that the support of the electorate is required for any water bond's passage; however, the minimum amount of support should not be the goal. The Legislature and the Governor should strive to craft a water bond that will produce overwhelming support from all of California. No part of this great State should be advantaged in our water policy at the expense of another – this is our common belief.

We understand that crafting a broadly supportable water bond is not easy; however, the undersigned are committed to doing just that. In the coming weeks, we will provide detailed suggestions for a water bond. The undersigned also stand ready to utilize the funds recently provided for drought relief Statewide to address the needs of all Californians. We stand united and are ready to get to work.

Sincerely,

Supervisor [NAME], [COUNTY] County

Supervisor Allen Ishida, Tulare County

Supervisor Larry Ruhstaller, San Joaquin County

Supervisor [NAME], [COUNTY] County

Supervisor [NAME], [COUNTY] County

Supervisor [NAME], [COUNTY] County

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Supervisor [NAME], [COUNTY] County

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