



March 27, 2020

Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Shannon Grove
Senate Minority Leader
State Capitol, Room 305
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Member Marie Waldron
Assembly Minority Leader
State Capitol, Room 3014
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Governor's Proposed Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention and Natural Resources Protection Bond Act of 2020 (as posted to DOF website on 1/31/20) - **SUPPORT IF AMENDED**

SB 45 (Allen, Portantino, Stern) – Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020 - **SUPPORT IF AMENDED**

AB 3256 (E. Garcia) – Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Climate Resilience, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020 – **SUPPORT IF AMENDED**

Dear Pro Tem Atkins, Speaker Rendon, Senator Grove and Assembly Member Waldron:

On behalf of the 200 members of the Southern California Water Coalition (SCWC), I thank you for the opportunity to identify and recommend funding priorities for inclusion in any Climate Resilience Bond that moves forward to the November 2020 ballot. Our membership, which stretches from the Mexican border on the south to Kern County in the north, is broad and unlike any other in its inclusion of leaders from business, county and city government, agriculture, labor, environmental organizations, water agencies and the general public.

We recognize that much has changed as we collectively grapple with the coronavirus COVID-19 emergency. Even as we cope with daily changes from this pandemic, our vision for a resilient water supply for California remains clear. Enormous challenges lay ahead of us with projected extreme droughts and floods, rising temperatures, depleted groundwater basins, and aging infrastructure. Each of these challenges is consequential on its own. Together, they pose a grave threat that is only intensified by seismic vulnerabilities and sea level rise due to climate change. To address those impacts at a statewide, regional and local level, we must have new financial resources available to make critical investments quickly and efficiently. To that end, the SCWC submits the following list of priorities for inclusion in any Climate Resilience Bond:





\$750 million to \$1 billion for grants and low-interest loans for recycled water as a standalone program, administered by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). A \$3 billion waiting list of water recycling projects awaits action at the SWRCB. A recent WaterReuse California survey shows more than \$10 billion in financing needed for planned reuse projects statewide. Recycled water has been identified as a sustainable, nearly drought-proof supply when used efficiently. Our members and partners have successfully conducted projects to add recycled water to their water portfolios, but much more could be done if state bond funds were available. The Draft Water Resilience Portfolio projects that the total volume of water California recycles today could triple in the next decade, if funding was available.

\$500 million for repair of state-owned water conveyance facilities that are failing due to land subsidence. Land subsidence is a gradual settling or sudden sinking of the land surface from changes that take place underground. According to the Department of Water Resources (DWR), historic subsidence within the San Joaquin Valley is primarily attributed to groundwater aquifer overdraft.

The California Aqueduct is the primary method of transporting State Water Project (SWP) water from Northern California to Southern California. Significant subsidence along the alignment of the California Aqueduct has impaired SWP operations and deliveries, forcing higher operational power costs, increased outages and major repairs. As California strives to boost the resilience of its water supply in the face of climate change impacts, we must adapt existing infrastructure to capture and convey as much water as possible during less frequent, more intense weather patterns. State funding will help address subsidence impacts that have substantially reduced the carrying capacity of the water delivery system, increase resiliency during droughts and advance groundwater recharge projects necessary to meet the groundwater sustainability goals established under state law.

Implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA): The Southern California Water Coalition supports funding for groundwater storage projects, as proposed in the three climate resiliency bond proposals, to help meet the groundwater sustainability goals as defined in SGMA and the objectives outlined in the Governor's 2020 Draft Water Resilience Portfolio. Priority should be given to project areas that may be contributing to the land subsidence problem noted above. Investments could include voluntarily retiring farmland or investing in groundwater recharge projects without harming other water users or beneficial uses.

\$500 million to \$1 billion for treatment of Constituents of Emerging Concern. Due to historical use of two PFAS compounds (perfluorooctanoic acid and perfluorooctane sulfonate) in manufacturing, consumer products, military airfields and airports, these chemicals are now being detected in water sources throughout the state. The current regulatory Notification and Response Levels for these two compounds alone may cause the closing of hundreds of wells statewide, which could require alternative replacement water and/or expensive treatment systems. New state funding is necessary in the form of local grants to water and wastewater districts and municipalities to help treat and monitor drinking water supplies and to treat contaminated wastewater effluent threatened by these compounds.

Include salinity management and desalination projects that treat brackish water and seawater on the list of eligible projects for regional or inter-regional funding to build resilience from flood or drought. Poor water quality directly impacts our water supply resilience. Contaminants in our water, such as too much salt, regulated and emerging



constituents of concern, and other pollutants that are not yet known, can reduce the amount of usable water in an area. In some locations around the state, moving ahead with seawater or brackish water desalination can ameliorate existing and future risks and improve the water resilience of entire regions in California.

Local and regional water agencies should be trusted and empowered to manage their water resources and plan for the future. We strongly support regional supply diversification that achieves multiple benefits. Significant investments by the state are necessary for DWR and the SWRCB to promote a climate resilient supply.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the SCWC bond priorities. If you have any questions or wish additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (949) 632-2074 or by email at cwilson@socalwater.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charley Wilson", is placed on a light beige rectangular background.

Charley Wilson
Executive Director and CEO
Southern California Water Coalition

cc: Assembly Member Rob Bonta

Members and Consultants to Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 2
Members and Consultants to Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
Members and Consultants to Senate Environmental Quality Committee

Members and Consultants to Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3
Members and Consultants to Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee
Members and Consultants to Assembly Natural Resources Committee

Director Kate Gordon, Office of Planning and Research
Rachel Machi Wagoner, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor