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October 7, 2010

Cheryl Maki, Vice-Chair
Central Valley Regional Water
Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

RECEIVED
SACRAMENTO
CVR/WQCB
10 OCT 12 PM 5:00

**Subject: CA 0077682--NPDES Permit for Sacramento Regional
County Sanitation District**

Dear Ms. Maki:

I write in regard to the above-referenced National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit proposed for issuance by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board to the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SCRSD) in December of this year. It is my understanding that the closing date for public comment is Friday, October 8th. I submit these comments to be entered into that public record.

The proposed permit, issued on September 3, 2010, has generated considerable interest and comment from parties throughout the state, including my constituents and the SRCSD itself.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and Estuary supplies drinking water for my constituents here in Sacramento. It also provides water for farming and for another 24 million Californians to the south and west. The Delta indisputably is in a state of ecological crisis.

As the largest wastewater discharger into the Delta, the SCRSD has operated under a "secondary" treatment that parties assert is less rigorous than similar facilities serving the urban populations of Tracy, Stockton and Manteca. There are



significant concerns over the continued discharge of pollutants into the Sacramento River Delta and its impacts on the beneficial and public trust uses of the water.

At the same time, the SCRSD has expressed serious concern regarding the science underlying the development of permit conditions and the economic impacts of the proposed permit on both individual sewer rates and new economic development in the Sacramento Region. If accurate, these concerns could have a serious impact on the region's already struggling economy.

For all of these reasons, I would request that the regional board provide responses to the following questions in the interest of ensuring these important issues are fully vetted publicly before it takes any final action on the permit:

1. Please provide some historic and regional context for the board's proposed permit for SCRSD. What requirements have been imposed on other facilities in the region and throughout the state? Are they as stringent as those proposed for the district? Is there any dispositive information on the environmental benefits and economic costs associated with conditions imposed on other facilities?
2. The district and other parties state that the filtration requirements of the permit "are excessive and will provide no measurable benefit to public health." Please explain what these requirements are, the basis for their imposition, and the benefits they provide.
3. The district and other parties further assert that "full ammonia removal requirements are not supported by the science" and that few, if any, scientists will state conclusively that the district's ammonia discharges are causing harm to the Delta. Please describe the scientific and substantive basis for these requirements.
4. The district and other parties state that the costs of the permit, when implemented, will exceed \$2 billion and that local sewer rates could triple. Has the board reviewed these cost assumptions and come to any conclusions regarding their veracity? To the extent they are accurate, are there ways for the board or the district to mitigate the costs of implementation in a manner that would not sacrifice environmental or public health benefits?

Maki, CVRWQC
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5. The district and other parties state that the board's proposed risk threshold in the SRCSD permit to protect REC-1 beneficial uses is 80 times more restrictive than the existing USEPA pathogens risk standard for recreational exposures. Please explain why this risk level was used.

All Californians have a stake in restoring the Delta ecosystem and in achieving the goals of the historic Delta legislation enacted last year. Those of us who live in the Delta region have a special responsibility to help protect this fragile resource, including the protection of water quality, consistent with good science and the law.

I commend your board and its dedicated staff for its work along these lines. Given the profound impact this permit may have on my constituents, I anxiously await your response to these important questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell Steinberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

DARRELL STEINBERG
President pro Tempore

DS:kl