



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Washington, DC 20240



IN REPLY REFER TO:

MAR 11 2015

LATE COMMENT

96-42030
ADM-1.10

Ms. Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear: Ms. Townsend

On February 6, 2015, the California State Water Resources Control Board issued a notice soliciting comments regarding the status of the Salton Sea and revised Order WRO 2002-0013. The Department of the Interior (Interior) submits this comment letter for the limited purpose of recognizing the importance of actions by the State of California and relevant entities and stakeholders to consider approaches to address the environmental conditions at the Salton Sea, such as the Workshop for which this information is submitted.¹

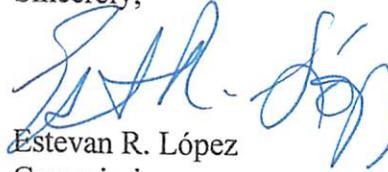
As an initial matter, Interior strongly supports continued implementation of the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA), which concurrently with other federal approvals (including the Colorado River Water Delivery Agreement), is essential to ensuring that California's water needs are met within California's allocation from the Colorado River. The QSA provides all parties with certainty to ensure that overall use within California does not exceed agreed-upon amounts. Implementation of the QSA will affect resources of the Salton Sea. Accordingly, Interior also believes that there is a need to provide certainty to address changing conditions at the Salton Sea.

As the Board is aware, flows for mitigation purposes to the Salton Sea from non-Colorado River sources are provided by exchange for Colorado River water as identified in the Colorado River Water Delivery Agreement; such flows will terminate in 2017. With the ongoing drought both in California and in the Colorado River Basin, it is ever more critical to work together to find affordable and implementable solutions to the many challenges that face water users west-wide. Interior encourages all of the California parties and entities to work together expeditiously to identify a common vision to respond to changing conditions at the Salton Sea in a manner that is practical, implementable and affordable and that can be tailored and refined in light of changing information and understandings regarding the Salton Sea ecosystem and surrounding environments.

¹ This comment letter is submitted for the sole purpose of providing information to the State Water Resources Control Board for its information and consideration. The Department of the Interior does not consent to provide this Board with jurisdiction in this proceeding to review actions of the Secretary of the Interior (or any of her subsidiary officers or employees).

The 15-year planning period to address conditions at the Salton Sea established at the time of the historic agreements reached in 2003 will end soon - which highlights the importance of identifying an appropriate approach to the concerns regarding the Salton Sea ecosystem and surrounding environments. Interior supports efforts by California to develop a shared vision for the future of the Salton Sea.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Estevan R. López', written in a cursive style.

Estevan R. López
Commissioner