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March 11, 2015

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

Subject: Comment Letter: Salton Sea

Dear Chair and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the hundreds of businesses who make up the membership of the Geothermal Energy Association (GEA) we wish to express our interest in the Imperial Irrigation District's petition requesting your board to convene key stakeholders and discuss Salton Sea restoration efforts. GEA is a trade association composed of U.S. companies who support the expanded use of geothermal energy and are developing geothermal Resources worldwide for electrical power generation and direct-heat uses. The Salton Sea is one of the largest geothermal resources in the world, and its future is often tied to the course of efforts to restore the environmental and economic health of the region.

By any measure, the Salton Sea has significant geothermal power potential. The Salton Sea, according to the CEC's 2004 report, has a most likely field generation capacity of 1750 MW. (<http://www.energy.ca.gov/reports/500-04-051.PDF>) A more recent 2013 study by EES Consulting concluded that "The total economic and achievable resource potential near the Salton Sea is estimated at 2,000 MW for projects located on IID, federal, and privately owned land."

The economic value of producing electricity from these resources would be substantial. In addition, we estimate that if the Salton Sea added 2,000MW of geothermal production that would add 2,340 permanent jobs at the area's power plants, and to build the new power plants would create 6,200 construction jobs (in person-years).

Of course, while revenues and jobs are important, they represent only some of the benefits geothermal development would have to the region. Geothermal power has one of the smallest footprints on the environment and has operational values that support an efficient and reliable power system. Geothermal power provides high value baseload power that can substitute for coal or nuclear plants megawatt for megawatt. Geothermal power uses transmission lines efficiently and has other energy security and environmental values. For example, the externality value to the state from this additional generation could add \$100 million annually in public health and environmental benefits.

We hope that any dialogue about the Salton Sea will also consider the value of its geothermal resources and the benefits their utilization can mean.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl Gawell".

Karl Gawell
Executive Director