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March 11, 2015

LATE COMMENT

The Honorable Felicia Marcus, Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Letter of Support on behalf of the Imperial Irrigations District's Petition for Change seeking modification of Revised Order WRO 2002-0013

Dear Madam Marcus:

On behalf of the Imperial County Transportation Commission, I am writing to express our support for and interest in the Imperial Irrigation District's (IID's) recent petition regarding the Salton Sea.

On November 18, 2014, IID filed a Petition for Change seeking modification of Revised Order WRO 2002-0013. The petition notes that the requirement to mitigate for the salinity impacts of the transfer to SDCWA, CVWD, and MWD will end in 2017, at which point the ongoing decline of the Salton Sea's water surface elevation and the ongoing increase in salinity levels at the Salton Sea is expected to accelerate if no program to restore the Salton Sea is in effect. IID also requests that the State Water Board modify Revised Order WRO 2002-0013 to require the State of California to fulfill its commitment to restore the Salton Sea as a condition of the Board's approval of the transfer.

The Salton Sea is our state's largest lake and one of its most significant natural and environmental resources. The Salton Sea provides a diverse array of wildlife habitats that support several threatened and endangered species, as well as more than 400 species of resident and migratory birds, and serves as a critical link on the Pacific Flyway. The Sea is also home to the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge and the Salton Sea State Recreation Area, both serving as recreational destinations and attracting thousands of visitors annually. The deteriorating conditions at the Salton Sea will have adverse impacts on public health, property values, agricultural production, recreational revenue, and the region's habitat value for birds and wildlife. These impacts impose costs on people in the area and, to a lesser extent, on Californians generally. The current condition of the Salton Sea and the accelerated decline expected post 2017 is an issue that cannot be ignored.

It is requested that your Board continue to work with the IID and all other stakeholders' to reach a consensus around a realistic, feasible restoration plan for the Salton Sea and a mechanism for funding the plan which will benefit Imperial County and Coachella Valley/Riverside County region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Mark Baza'.

Mark Baza
Executive Director