

Assembly California Legislature



EDUARDO GARCIA
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIFTY-SIXTH DISTRICT

January 6, 2015

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

Re: Salton Sea Stakeholders Meeting

Dear Chairwoman Marcus:

The State Water Resources Control Board (the "board") recently received a formal request to convene a series of stakeholder meetings to discuss the current status of restoration efforts at the Salton Sea (the "Sea"). As the California Assemblymember representing the communities most affected by the Sea, I write to request the board's involvement in this important dialogue.

The Sea attracts thousands of visitors annually and is very important to the area economically. The Sea is also California's largest lake and one of its most significant ecological resources. It supports a diverse wildlife habitat for over 400 species of birds and serves as a critical link on the 5,000 mile international Pacific Flyway.

Unfortunately, the Sea is deteriorating rapidly and faces a bleak future if no immediate action is taken. Mitigation water currently delivered to the Sea under the Quantification Settlement Agreement will stop flowing in 2017. Inevitably, this will result in the exposure of thousands of acres of dry lakebed as the Sea dries up. Windblown dust emissions from as much as 100,000 acres of exposed lakebed will dramatically worsen the already-poor air quality in Southern California. The incidence of asthma, heart and lung disease and even premature death among the working-class population of affected areas can be expected to increase exponentially in the years ahead. This imperils the region's largely agricultural economy, which accounts for nearly 50 percent of all local employment, not to mention the viability of the area's multi-billion dollar recreation and tourism industries.

Recently, I visited two sites proposed for habitat conservation and air quality mitigation pilot projects. I was very pleased to learn of the planned projects. However, the urgency of the situation demands our immediate intervention and renewed collaboration with amongst all stakeholders.

Your board has demonstrated remarkable leadership in finding solutions to some of our state's most pressing water related issues. I am confident that with your collaboration, we will make

some real progress in tackling the restoration of the Salton Sea. Please contact me if you have any questions. I look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Eduardo Garcia
State Assemblymember, 56th District

cc:

Thomas Howard, State Water Resources Control Board
Secretary John Laird, CA Natural Resources Agency
Martha Guzman- Aceves, Governor's Office
Kevin Kelley, Imperial Irrigation District
Maureen Stapleton, San Diego County Water Authority
Jim Barrett, Coachella Valley Water District
Jeffrey Kightlinger, Metropolitan Water District of Southern CA
Roger Shintaku, Salton Sea Authority