



July 15, 2022

Honorable Anthony Portantino, Chair  
 Senate Appropriations Committee  
 State Capitol, Room 412  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2313 (Bloom) – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Portantino:

The State Water Contractors (SWC) support AB 2313 (Bloom), as amended on June 30, 2022, which would authorize the Judicial Council to establish a training and education program for judges related to complex water matters, and require a court to prioritize assigning a judge with training or education under the program for actions relating to complex water litigation. In addition, AB 2313 would require the Judicial Council to identify experts in water science or management who may be available to a judge adjudicating an action relating to water. AB 2313 is scheduled to be considered in your Committee on August 1, 2022.

The SWC is an organization representing 27 of the 29 public water entities that hold contracts with the California Department of Water Resources for the delivery of State Water Project water. Collectively, the SWC members provide a portion of the water supply delivered to approximately 27 million Californians, roughly two-thirds of the state’s population, and more than 750,000 acres of irrigated agriculture. Water supply delivered to the Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley, Central Coast, and Southern California from the State Water Project is diverted from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

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After more than 170 years of statehood, California's water rights system is well established, but that doesn't mean that questions don't remain about water rights validity or seniority, which are exceedingly complex and conflict-laden adjudicative processes. Similarly, issues related to water appropriations, riparian rights, diversions, reasonable and beneficial uses, and the Public Trust Doctrine all make California's legal construct relative to water issues very complex and challenging to navigate and understand.

AB 2313 would take important steps forward in moving California's legal and judicial system toward a more accessible and manageable judicial process for resolving and adjudicating water-related disputes. Too often, complex water matters get bogged down in the judicial process due to the relative scarcity of judges and judicial officials with advanced knowledge, experience, and understanding of California water law and issues.

As experienced many times over the course of California's water history, so many key water conflicts end up in court, so it is extremely important that the judges who render decisions about this life-sustaining resource have an added background in water. Specialty judges are not a new concept. There are judges at the state and federal levels who only oversee cases involving bankruptcy, family law, probate, or juvenile matters. The complexity of California water law and the conflicts embodied within that set of statutes and cases supports the approach advanced through AB 2313 to improve the judicial process and better position the courts to handle complex water issues.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at [jpierre@swc.org](mailto:jpierre@swc.org) or at (707) 280-9673, or SWC's legislative advocate Glenn Farrel at [glenn@gfadfocacy.com](mailto:glenn@gfadfocacy.com) or (916) 216-1747 if you have any questions regarding the SWC's position on AB 2313.

Sincerely,



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State Water Contractors



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General Manager  
Antelope Valley East Kern Water  
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Ray A. Stokes  
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Mark S. Krause  
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Darin Kasamoto  
General Manager  
San Gabriel Valley Municipal  
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Roland Sanford  
General Manager  
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cc: Members, Senate Appropriations Committee  
Assemblymember Richard Bloom