

December 1, 2020

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Chairwoman Gloria Gray
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
700 North Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Chairwoman Gray:

Ventura County Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business (VC CoLAB) is a non-profit membership organization advocating for reasonable regulatory policies on behalf of our more than 520 business, agricultural, and individual members in Ventura County.

We applaud Metropolitan Water District's (MWD) past support of critical investments in California's water infrastructure. We write today to urge you to continue that same strong commitment to improving our water supply's reliability, resilience, and safety.

VC CoLAB and our supporters in Ventura County have long been aware of the critical need for upgrades and improvements to California's water delivery system. In July 2017, (then) Chairman of the Board of MWD, Randy Record, sent a letter to the Ventura County CEO stating "the cost of inaction will have significant negative consequences for Southern California. The Delta's declining ecosystem and miles of aging levees are increasingly vulnerable. Investing in a Delta solution will help maintain the reliability of our state water system. But we all need to understand this project and important financial details before making a firm investment decision. This will be one of the most important water decisions for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California in a generation."

Nearly one-third of Southern California's water supply comes from the Sierra Nevada. This resource provides the backbone water supply for about 29 million people statewide, millions of acres of farmland, Southern California's \$1.6 trillion economy, and our environment. But the current delivery system relies upon aging and undermaintained levees that are vulnerable to earthquakes, floods, and rising sea levels. As Californians, we understand that it is not "if" a major disaster will occur; it is "when and where." While many questions still must be answered about the single-tunnel Delta conveyance project, we all understand that the cost of doing nothing is too great. The water delivery system that nearly 30 million people rely upon must be modernized and made more resilient.

Ventura County has some of the most stringent growth control restrictions in the state. We have long been a leader in water conservation efforts to support our Ground Water Sustainability Plan process. In addition, our local water

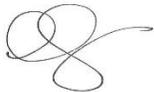
agencies are actively seeking out innovative solutions to improve and expand our water supply. But despite all these complementary efforts, Ventura County's unique geography and water needs mean that our county is still heavily dependent on state water. Disruptions to water deliveries through the Delta have the potential to leave our residents, businesses, and local agricultural industry without enough water for minimum health and safety needs.

We strongly support MWD assisting with the funding of the state's environmental review and planning process for the single-tunnel Delta conveyance project. The recommended funding share ensures the environmental review can be completed, and necessary planning can proceed. Continued investment in the environmental review and planning process for an updated Delta conveyance system ensures this process, which is essential for future decision-making, moves forward in a timely fashion and avoids further costly delays for this critically important project.

VC CoLAB has long spoken out in support of efforts to increase California's water resilience. The one-tunnel Delta conveyance system is an essential part of ensuring reliable water for generations to come. We urge MWD to provide funding now to ensure that this project moves forward with the required environmental planning and permitting work. This planning effort will provide the information necessary to make informed decisions in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue. We hope MWD will vote to continue their support of this critical improvement project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Lampara', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Louise Lampara
Executive Director