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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

ORANGE COUNTY'S GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

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March 18, 2020

The Honorable Bill Quirk
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2163
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2560 (Quirk) Water quality: notification and response levels: procedures - Support

Dear Assemblymember Quirk:

The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) is pleased to support your AB 2560 regarding notification and response levels.

Notification (NL) and response (RL) levels are established as precautionary measures for contaminants without drinking water standards that may be considered candidates for the establishment of maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). While NLs and RLs are technically non-enforceable, these levels have real world implications. For instance, when a contaminant is present above the RL, the State Water Board's Division of Drinking water recommends that the source be taken out of service or customers notified they are drinking water exceeding the RL. For perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), the water system is required to either take the source offline immediately, treat or blend the water, or notify the public within 30 days. Depending on the contaminant, such actions can have widespread and significant impacts.

In Orange County alone, an estimated 71 drinking water wells will be taken offline at cost of approximately \$50 million per year to buy replacement imported water versus using local groundwater. For new water treatment the cost is \$200 million in capital expenditures for a total cost of approximately \$850 million including operation and maintenance costs over 30 years.

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Despite these implications, there is no public process to develop NLs and RLs. Current law authorizes DDW to set these levels without even an action by the Board members to approve them, leading to insufficient transparency and no official process for stakeholder input.

AB 2560 is a common-sense measure that simply daylights DDW's process for establishing NLs and RLs and ensures stakeholders and the public can depend on the science used to determine the levels. For these reasons we support AB 2560. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



Vicente Sarmiento, Esq.
Board President

cc: Josh Tooker, Chief Consultant, Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic
Materials Committee