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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
ORANGE COUNTY'S GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

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March 14, 2019

The Honorable Jim Wood
California State Assembly
State Capitol, P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: AB 557 Atmospheric Rivers: Research, Mitigation, and Climate Forecasting Program - Support

Dear Assemblymember Wood:

Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) is writing in support for AB 557 Atmospheric Rivers: Research, Mitigation, and Climate Forecasting Program.

In 2015, California's State Legislature passed SB 758 establishing the Atmospheric Rivers: Research, Mitigation, and Climate Forecasting Program, under the Department of Water Resources (DWR). The law directs DWR to research atmospheric rivers (AR), including the causes and impacts of climate change on their behavior, and to develop related climate forecasting methods. It also requires DWR to use all of its existing authorities to operate reservoirs in a manner to improve flood protection for public safety and water supply. AB 557 would appropriate \$9.25 million from the General Fund to DWR in the 2019–20 fiscal year to operate the program.

An AR is a narrow region in the atmosphere that is responsible for most of the horizontal transport of water vapor outside of the tropics. ARs produce 30-50% of California's precipitation and more than 90% of the state's major floods with just a few storms. A Pineapple Express storm is a well-known example of an AR. Historically much-needed precipitation from ARs has ended 40% of California's droughts so it is critical to understand their impact on our water supply.

The Legislature appropriated \$3 million for DWR's AR research program in 2016. Additional funds to advance this program are now needed. OCWD respectfully requests \$9.25 million to be included for DWR's AR research program in the 2019-2020 budget as specified in AB 557. These funds will increase California's understanding of ARs to reduce flood risks, improve public safety and enhance water management. California's current operation of flood control dams is based on outdated rule curve

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developed with decades-old weather and runoff patterns, despite advances in meteorological technology and understanding of ARs. Pilot projects at several reservoirs in California are exploring forecast informed reservoir operations using watershed monitoring and modern weather and water forecasting to help water managers selectively retain or release water from reservoirs in a manner that reflects current and forecasted conditions.

DWR's support of AR research will assist local, state and federal agencies, emergency responders, and water agencies to enhance their climate resiliency, with significant social, economic and environmental benefits. The District very much appreciates your support of funding \$9.25 million in DWR's budget. Please contact OCWD Legislative Affairs Liaison Alicia Dunkin at (714) 477-3750 or adunkin@ocwd.com, or me, if we may be of assistance to you or your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vicente Sarmiento".

Vicente Sarmiento, Esq.
Board President