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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
ORANGE COUNTY'S GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

November 30, 2022

The Honorable Ken Calvert
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: H.R. 972 (Calvert) Wildlife Refuge Conservation and Recreation for the
Community Act– Oppose Unless Amended

Dear Congressman Calvert:

The Orange County Water District (OCWD) owns and manages 2,260 acres of land behind Prado Dam for storm water capture, wetlands nitrate mitigation, and recreational duck hunting. Our work is critical to the water supply for millions of residents within our service area. I am writing to seek an amendment to the Wildlife Refuge Conservation and Recreation for the Community Act (H.R. 972) to exclude some OCWD lands from the Act.

We appreciate your efforts to increase water supplies in Southern California and recognize that you share our concerns about the growing drought and need for more water supply. The Act may actually decrease water supply by having the unintended negative consequence of not allowing some Prado lands to be inundated during a large stormwater capture event. OCWD relies upon this inundation to recharge our groundwater. Additionally, the legislation could create accessibility challenges to maintain infrastructure or install new facilities including renewable energy facilities.

The attached amendment clarifies that water conservation agreements would not be adversely affected and ensures that OCWD could continue Prado-related activities. Also, a map is attached to specify OCWD lands that should be excluded from the Wildlife Refuge. Again, we look forward to working with you and your staff on this topic. We will follow-up on this letter with your staff and OCWD's Legislative Affairs Liaison Alicia Dunkin can be contacted at (714) 477-3750 or adunkin@ocwd.com.

Sincerely,

Stephen R. Sheldon
President

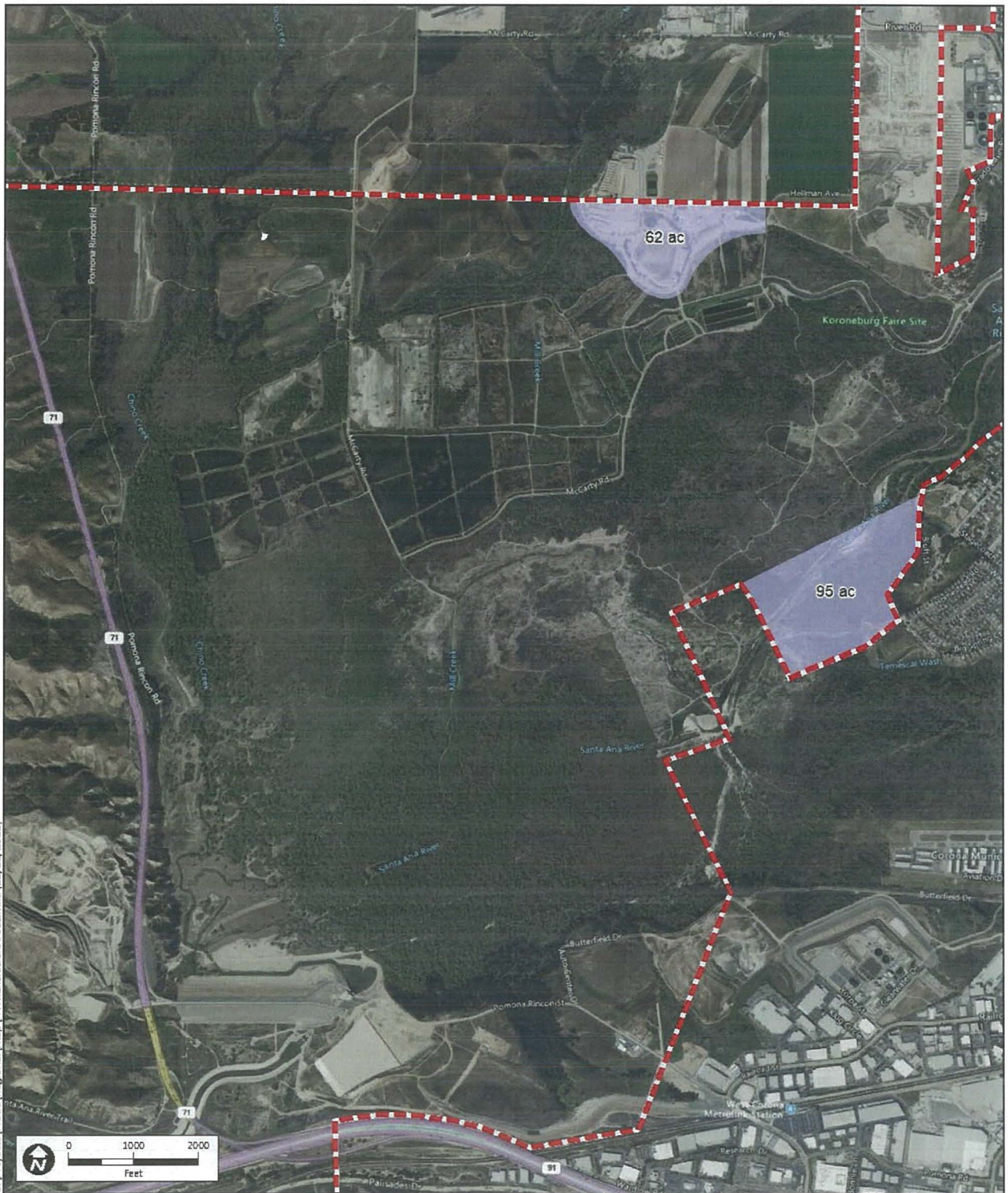
Encls: Attachment 1. Draft language and Attachment 2. Map

Attachment 1.

OCWD's proposed Amendment to the Wildlife Refuge Conservation and Recreation for the Community Act (H.R. 972)



“Savings Clause: Nothing in this Act, or in the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (or its implementing regulations), shall impact preclude or modify the following: (1) existing water supply agreements (or obligations and rights arising therefrom); acquisition or exercise of water rights; the diversion, conveyance, impoundment, recharge, treatment, or storage of water, for water supply (including recycled water), groundwater, wastewater, and flood risk management or for any other related beneficial uses, including maintenance of existing infrastructure and associated rights-of-way; (2) recreational activities currently authorized within the Refuge; (3) existing and future environmental mitigation or restoration activities; (4) existing or future public roads and rights-of-way; (5) any activity within the Refuge that is authorized by the existing Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan; or (6) establishment, operation and maintenance of new utility facilities associated with the provision of utility and related public services, and rights of way associated with such facilities.”

Attachment 2. Map.



G:\Projects\Prado\Regional\Map\NWRExclusionAreas.mxd (11/22/2022)



-  NWR Proposed Acquisition Boundary
-  Areas to be excluded from NWR acquisition boundary

Western Riverside National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Act Exclusion Areas

SOURCE: OCWD (1.0/2022); Bing (2020); USFWS (2022)