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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
ORANGE COUNTY'S GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

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July 14, 2020

The Honorable Alan Lowenthal
United State House of Representatives
108 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harley Rouda
United States House of Representatives
2300 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support to renew the Water Resources Development Act, WRDA 2020

Dear Representatives Lowenthal and Rouda:

The Orange County Water District (OCWD) writes in support of the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure legislation to renew the Water Resources Development Act, WRDA 2020. Specifically, we are encouraged that the bill would require the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to study the value of making water supply a core mission activity and to utilize USACE facilities to support municipal water supply needs. Our experiences over the past decade, working with USACE on this very matter, make it clear that such a study would document benefits to regions that are seeking to leverage existing facilities to bolster water supply reliability.

OCWD has worked with USACE for more than a decade to develop an approach at the Prado Dam that would capture stormwater flows that can recharge the Orange County Groundwater Basin, which is managed by OCWD and provides 77% of the drinking water for the region. This effort involved significant time and resources to ensure that the primary purpose of Prado Dam, flood protection, would not be at risk if the facility was used to conserve water. The lessons learned from this endeavor, and the success we achieved, illustrate that USACE facilities can be relied upon to deliver multiple benefits. The bill language, we believe, will document that an important mission for USACE should be to support municipal water supply needs at its facilities. Our experiences at Prado Dam and the fact that facilities constructed several years ago to address specific circumstances which have now changed can be leveraged to benefit communities on a cost-effective basis to address the needs of resiliency.

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As the House prepares to debate and pass the bill, we look forward to working with you to advance this important provision that will clarify that USACE should make water supply for municipalities a core mission activity. Again, OCWD deeply appreciates your support of our priority to provide a safe and reliable water supply to the Orange County region.

For these reasons, OCWD expresses support to renew WRDA 2020. Thank you for your leadership on this issue. If the District can provide any assistance to you or your staff in any way, please do not hesitate to contact OCWD's Legislative Liaison Alicia Dunkin at adunkin@ocwd.com or (714) 477-3750.

Sincerely,

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

Vicente Sarmiento, Esq.
President