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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
ORANGE COUNTY'S GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

August 6, 2015

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: S. 1894 California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2015--Support

Dear Senator Feinstein:

On behalf of the Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) and the 19 cities and water districts it serves (which include City of Anaheim, City of Buena Park, East Orange County Water District, City of Fountain Valley, City of Fullerton, City of Garden Grove, Golden State Water Company, City of Huntington Beach, Irvine Ranch Water District, City of La Palma, Mesa Water District, City of Newport Beach, City of Orange, City of Santa Ana, City of Seal Beach, Serrano Water District, City of Tustin, City of Westminster, and Yorba Linda Water District) we are pleased to support congressional efforts to provide emergency drought relief assistance to California, and specifically S.1894.

The Orange County Water District manages the Orange County Groundwater Basin, which provides 70 percent of the water supply to 2.4 million people in north and central Orange County, California. OCWD is encouraged by S. 1894's focus on expediting federal permitting processes and facilitating the operational flexibility of the federal and state water projects and dams to allow for enhanced water supply while protecting our natural resources. We believe that the drought and our experiences over the past decade demonstrate the benefits of a multi-pronged approach to water reliability.

More than two decades ago, OCWD committed to finding sustainable water supplies for our region. This priority focused on ways to replace the groundwater that is pumped out of our water basin annually. OCWD implemented an internationally recognized sustainable water supply project known as the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS). The GWRS is the largest indirect potable reuse project in the world. Operational since January 2008, and with an initial expansion being completed in June 2015, this state-of-the-art water purification project can produce up to 100 million gallons of high-quality water every day. This is enough water to meet the needs of nearly 850,000 people. GWRS water is used to prevent seawater intrusion of the groundwater basin as well as to recharge the groundwater basin.

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GWRS' benefits have been especially realized during the persistent drought and the impacts that our region has experienced. This project was accomplished, in part, through a partnership with the Federal Government, specifically the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

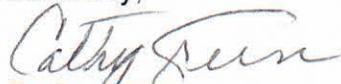
OCWD supports the provisions in S. 1894 that create well-funded federal water recycling and desalination programs to assist local agencies in developing and operating sustainable water supply projects that can return multiple benefits to municipal, agriculture and environmental needs by offsetting demands on scarce potable supplies.

In addition, OCWD supports the provisions in S. 1894 that provide flexibility to capture water at federal dams during storm events. OCWD, in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), now has the opportunity to provide an additional 30,000 acre-feet of water annually (enough water for about 250,000 people) by temporarily capturing additional stormwater at Prado Dam. Prado Dam, located on the Santa Ana River, while primarily used for flood prevention, has captured temporary stormwater for subsequent recharge of the groundwater basin for the past 25 years.

Finally, OCWD supports S. 1894's provisions for local water districts, such as OCWD, to work with the Corps and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to improve the capture of stormwater at local dams. The capture of stormwater could be maximized through modernizing weather and runoff forecasting, and by the Corps modifying its manuals to account for the latest weather and runoff forecasting capabilities.

Again, we appreciate your leadership to advance a comprehensive response to the drought emergency. Please do not hesitate to contact Alicia Dunkin, Legislative Affairs Liaison, at adunkin@ocwd.com or (714) 378-8232 if you have any questions or if we may be of assistance to you or your staff.

Sincerely,



Cathy Green
President

CC: Congressman Dana Rohrabacher
Congressman Darrell Issa
Congressman Ed Royce
Congresswoman Mimi Walters
Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez
Congressman Alan Lowenthal