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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
ORANGE COUNTY'S GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

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March 15, 2019

The Honorable Anna Caballero
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5052
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Small System Water Authority Act of 2019 (SB 414) - Support

Dear Senator Caballero:

The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) writes to express its support of The Small System Water Authority Act of 2019 (SB 414), and we thank you for addressing this complex and critical issue. SB 414 seeks to establish a new category of public water agency by way of merging formerly non-compliant drinking water systems in order to sustainably provide the technical, managerial, and financial capabilities necessary to ensure the consistent delivery of safe drinking water.

OCWD recognizes that water accessibility is truly a concern in a number of regions throughout the state. The State Water Resource Control Board has identified approximately 264 (as of February 6, 2019) public water systems that are chronically serving contaminated water to customers and are in violation of primary state and federal drinking water standards. A great percentage of these failing systems are primarily located in economically distressed or rural counties. Systems that fail to provide access to clean, reliable, drinking water must be held accountable and have a plan to mitigate natural contaminants, and/or manmade contaminants, or fix their under-maintained water systems.

This bill authorizes the creation of a Small System Water Authority that will be authorized to absorb, improve, and competently operate currently non-compliant public water systems with either contiguous or non-contiguous boundaries. By establishing lasting changes to the governance structures of failing water systems, the state of California will take substantial steps toward achieving the goal of making safe, clean and reliable drinking water a reality for all Californians.

Honorable Anna Caballero
March 15, 2019
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OCWD is in support of addressing water accessibility issues through SB 414. If the District could be of assistance to you in the future, 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