



April 22, 2025

Honorable Anna Caballero
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7620
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 599 Atmospheric rivers: research: forecasting methods: experimental tools-Support

Dear Senator Caballero:

The Orange County Water District (OCWD) writes to express our support of SB 599, which would require the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to include the use of experimental tools that produce seasonal and sub-seasonal atmospheric river (AR) forecasts when researching, developing, and implementing novel forecasting methods to improve predictions of ARs and their impacts on water supply, flooding, post-wildfire debris flows, and environmental conditions. This legislation seeks to enhance precipitation forecasting, which is vital for effective water resource management, especially in regions heavily impacted by atmospheric rivers.

As a special district managing the Orange County Groundwater Basin—which supplies approximately 85% of the water to 2.5 million residents—OCWD plays a crucial role in providing cost-effective water solutions. Our collaboration with the Orange County Sanitation District has led to the development of the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS), the world's largest potable reuse facility, recycling 100% of reclaimable wastewater flows.

ARs account for approximately 50% of the West Coast's annual precipitation. These systems, often described as “rivers in the sky,” can transport an amount of water vapor equivalent to up to 15 times the volume of the Mississippi River, depositing significant rainfall or snowfall across narrow geographic regions within a short period.

OCWD is collaborating with the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on a strategic project. This initiative leverages the latest advancements in weather forecasting to enhance stormwater storage behind Prado Dam, significantly increasing water supplies for Orange County. By focusing on local stormwater capture, OCWD reduces dependence on more costly, less reliable and energy-intensive imported water sources. This project could provide, on average, two billion gallons of additional stormwater capture, enough to meet the needs of 48,000 people annually. For OCWD and its ratepayers, this equates to \$6 million of alternative water supply cost savings every year.

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We are grateful for your attention to this issue and lend our support to the passage of SB 599. Please contact me or Alicia Harasty, Legislative Affairs Liaison at aharasty@ocwd.com or 714-477-3750 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Denis R. Bilodeau, P.E.



President

cc:

Senator Kelly Seyarto, 32nd District
Senator Tom Umberg, 34th District
Senator Tony Strickland, 36th District
Senator Steven Choi, 37th District
Assembly Member Phillip Chen, 59th District
Assembly Member Sharon Quirk-Silva, 67th District
Assembly Member Avelino Valencia, 68th District
Assembly Member Tri Ta, 70th District
Assembly Member Diane Dixon, 72nd District
Assembly Member Cottie Petrie-Norris, 73rd District