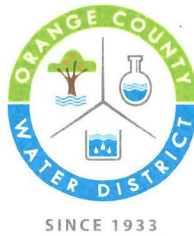


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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
ORANGE COUNTY'S GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

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August 21, 2017

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez-Fletcher:

The Orange County Water District (OCWD) opposes the inclusion of a tax on water in SB 623 (Monning).

The intent of SB 623, to help ensure that all Californians have access to safe drinking water, is laudable. However, achieving this goal by taxing water is inappropriate. In passing the Human Right to Water Act in 2012, the Legislature established that “every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.” Levying a tax on a basic human right is contrary to this policy.

Fortunately, there are viable alternatives that reflect the source and nature of the problem. OCWD supports the proposal made by the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) to provide the same level of funding from State Revolving Fund (SRF) program funds, general obligation bonds, nitrate fees, and the state’s general fund. This proposal leverages existing resources, and splits the burden of paying for safe drinking water in disadvantaged communities between a source of pollution and state revenues specifically intended to address social inequities. In particular, nitrate fees from the agriculture industry makes sense because there is a nexus between the problem of water contaminated with nitrates and agriculture, which is the source of the contamination. There is no such nexus to urban water districts.

For the reasons discussed above, OCWD respectfully opposes any tax on water, and instead urges the Legislature to pursue a more appropriate funding mechanism to help ensure access to clean drinking water.

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez-Fletcher
August 21, 2017
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Please do not hesitate to contact OCWD Legislative Affairs Liaison Alicia Dunkin at (714) 378-8232 or adunkin@ocwd.com, or me, if we may be of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denis Bilodeau". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "D" at the beginning.

Denis R. Bilodeau, P.E.
President