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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

ORANGE COUNTY'S GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

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February 22, 2018

The Honorable Grace P. Napolitano
U.S. House of Representatives
1610 Longworth House Office Blvd.
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Water Recycling Investment and Improvement Act - Support

Dear Congresswoman Napolitano:

The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) is in support of your proposed legislation, the Water Recycling Investment and Improvement Act (Act), to address the demands for sustainable water infrastructure assistance. Your leadership over the years to address a robust federal partnership with local communities to develop innovative water recycling solutions has been greatly appreciated. The District supports the Act, which in addition to providing additional funding, would also make substantive changes to the Title XVI and the Water Infrastructure for Improvements to the Nation Act (WIIN) programs and renews the Alternative Water Sources Act.

The legislative priority to make WIIN permanent and to increase the WIIN authorization to \$500 million is critical to help bridge the significant water recycling project funding gap. WIIN was enacted to address drought-plagued regional needs. At the time, this was vital to help reverse drought-related impacts in California. Today, the OCWD believes that the ability to employ WIIN to mitigate against future drought impacts demands the change you are seeking, which allows projects to be eligible regardless of whether a project exists within a drought disaster declared area.

OCWD also supports the legislation's provisions to expedite project construction through the competitive grants program, relying on the WIIN project review and funding process. The ability to allow the United States Bureau of Reclamation to select and fund projects deemed feasible will ensure timely project construction. In addition, the District supports the Act's criteria that defines project eligibility for funding assistance. The identification of criteria under the competitive grants program will ensure that the program is implemented as intended and without delay.

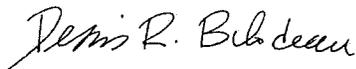
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OCWD also notes that the Act seeks to eliminate the Title XVI project cap of \$20 million. The District would support this effort provided it would apply to projects that have reached the current ceiling on federal assistance. This is important to OCWD given our efforts to expand the internationally acclaimed Groundwater Replenishment System.

Finally, the proposed renewal of the Alternative Water Sources Act represents a valuable funding source to help communities address water supply reliability. The opportunity to facilitate construction of sustainable water projects will help to promote an awareness of the value of such projects across the nation.

As you and your colleagues begin to work on developing a new national water infrastructure policy, OCWD looks forward to working with you to advance effective programs like those contained in your legislative proposal. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Legislative Liaison, Alicia Dunkin, at adunkin@ocwd.com or (714) 378-8232.

Sincerely,



Denis R. Bilodeau, P.E.
President

CC: The Honorable Senator Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Senator Kamala Harris
The Honorable Congresswoman Linda Sanchez
The Honorable Congressman Edward Royce
The Honorable Congresswoman Mimi Walters
The Honorable Congressman Luis Correa
The Honorable Congressman Alan Lowenthal
The Honorable Congressman Dana Rohrabacher
The Honorable Congressman Darrell Issa