



March 6, 2018

Dear OCWD Board Members,

The cities of Anaheim, Fullerton and Santa Ana serve approximately 835,000 residents with drinking water supplied from the Orange County Basin. Each of our agencies have had little choice but to significantly increase water rates to keep up with the rising water replenishment rate for groundwater. The Orange County Water District (OCWD) has effectively managed the groundwater basin; however, we are concerned about the impacts of another substantial increase in the proposed budget and replenishment assessment.

The cities share a common history and growth over the past 120 years. Approximately 30% of our residents live in disadvantaged communities and struggle with basic housing needs. Keeping up with rising costs is a daily battle for our low-income residents who are working multiple jobs in many cases as water rates increase their overall cost of living. Many of the struggling residents are renters that can't conserve their way to an affordable water bill, as landlords pass through rate increases through higher rents.

The cost of our water supply from our water wholesalers has been a primary cause of water rate increases over the past five years. OCWD alone has increased the replenishment assessment 72% over the past five years, causing the three cities to pass that cost along to our residents and local businesses. As Mayors and Board Directors, we understand the value in maintaining adequate water levels to protect groundwater pumping, but we cannot ignore the needs of our communities. ***We are requesting that OCWD not increase the replenishment assessment next year.*** We are in need of much-needed financial relief on wholesale water costs for our respective customers.

OCWD has been effective in managing the water levels in the basin through our recent drought. We thank the Board and staff for their diligent work to protect this important water supply. We appreciate you keeping this resource affordable for our customers, as we face future water supply challenges.

Sincerely,

Tom Tait
Mayor, City of Anaheim

Doug Chaffee
Mayor, City of Fullerton

Miguel Pulido
Mayor, City of Santa Ana

James Vanderbilt
OCWD Director

Bruce Whitaker
OCWD Director

Vincent Sarmiento
OCWD Director