



*Working Together to
Protect and Restore the
Salton Sea Ecosystem*

February 10, 2006

The Honorable Don Perata, President Pro Tem
California State Senate
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Audubon California

The Honorable Fabian Nunez, Speaker
California State Assembly
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Cabazon Band of Mission Indians

California Waterfowl Association

Re: Need to Include Salton Sea Restoration Funding in Bond Legislation

Center for Biological Diversity

Dear Senator Perata and Speaker Nunez:

Defenders of the Wildlife

We are writing on behalf of the many diverse members of the Salton Sea Coalition to urge you to include \$100 million in funding for Salton Sea restoration in any legislative bond measure. This funding is critical to comply with the State's obligation under the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) and related state laws requiring restoration of the Salton Sea. Restoration of the Sea is necessary to protect public health from significant air quality risks, conserve endangered species habitat, increase opportunities for local economic development and facilitate the water transfer from the Imperial Irrigation District to urban Southern California.

Desert Protective Council

National Wildlife Federation

Pursuant to the 2003 Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA), California agreed to assume responsibility for the impacts of moving 300,000 acre feet of Colorado River water from the agricultural fields of Imperial Valley to urban and suburban San Diego and Coachella Valley. This transfer, which is the largest agriculture to urban transfer in the State's history, will have a significant impact on the Salton Sea, which has served as a repository for agricultural run-off for the last 100 years. Full implementation of the water transfer will result in the exposure of more than 50,000 acres of lakebed, potentially creating an air pollution problem several times greater than caused by the draining of Owens Lake. Moreover, it would destroy habitat for hundreds of species of birds, many of which are either listed as endangered or threatened or are species of special concern, and could also jeopardize the survival of the endangered desert pupfish.

Planning and Conservation League

San Diegans for the Salton Sea

Sierra Club

If the State does not provide sufficient and timely funding for the planning and implementation of a Salton Sea restoration project, the entire QSA will be in jeopardy. We urge you, therefore, to include at least \$100 million in bond funding to continue Salton Sea restoration planning and implementation, as required by the QSA.

The Pacific Institute

Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

United Anglers of Southern California

The QSA is a complex agreement, which required several years of negotiation and is memorialized in numerous contracts, sub-agreements and state laws. If the State had not reached agreement under the QSA, the federal Bureau of Reclamation would have maintained its 43 CFR Part 417 determination to cut back California's Colorado River use by 264,500 acre feet, precipitating a major water crisis in California. One of the key issues in the QSA was the Imperial Valley water transfer agreement, in which the State agreed to eliminate the air quality impacts of the water transfer and maintain the diversity and abundance of wildlife at the Sea through a Salton Sea restoration plan.

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The Legislature passed three laws in 2003 (SB 277, SB 317 and SB 654) to implement the QSA and address the restoration planning process and goals. As a result, the Resources Secretary has led a multi-year, multi-stakeholder planning process to complete a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and select a Preferred Alternative to present to the Legislature by the end of this year. In order to proceed with a subsequent project-level EIR and take steps to mitigate and restore areas of the Sea that have already begun to recede or deteriorate, the State must continue to provide sufficient funding for restoration EIR, there is inadequate funding available to move to the project level and begin to mitigate the air, water and wildlife impacts of the water transfer.

For all of these reasons, we strongly urge you to fulfill the State's obligation to protect public health and the environment in the Coachella and Imperial Valleys, and to comply with the QSA, by including \$100 million in bond funding for restoration planning and implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

Sincerely,



Michael Cohen
Senior Associate
Pacific Institute



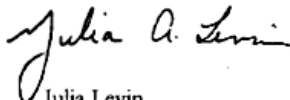
Kim Delfino
California Program Director
Defenders of Wildlife



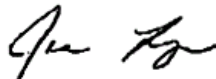
Garry George
1st VP & Conservation Chair
Los Angeles Audubon Society



Bill Karr
Editor
Western Outdoor News



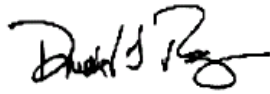
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California Audubon



Joe Loya
Councilmember
Torres Martinez Desert-Cahuilla Indians



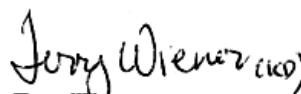
Jim Metropulos
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Donald Rogers
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Conservation Chairman



Terry Wiener
Imperial County Projects and
Conservation Coordinator
Desert Protective Council



David Younkman
San Diegos for the Salton Sea

Cc: The Honorable Wesley Chesbro
The Honorable Denise Ducheny
The Honorable Bonnie Garcia
The Honorable Sheila Kuehl
The Honorable Michael Machado
Susan Kennedy, Chief of Staff, California Office of the Governor
Mike Chrisman, Secretary, California Resources Agency
Ryan Broddrick, Director, California Department of Fish & Game
Lester Snow, Director, California Department of Water Resources
Celeste Cantu, Executive Director, California State Water Resources Control Board
Al Wright, Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation Board
Charles Hosken, General Manager, Imperial Irrigation District
Debra Mann, Interim General Manager, Metropolitan Water District
Steve Robbins, General Manager, Coachella Valley Water District
Maureen Stapleton, General Manager, San Diego County Water Authority
Members of the Salton Sea Advisory Committee