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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
ORANGE COUNTY'S GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

March 05, 2021

Via electronic mail: Ana Matosantos, Cabinet Secretary ana.matosantos@gov.ca.gov

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: Huntington Beach Seawater Desalination Project

Dear Governor Newsom:

I am writing to acknowledge your continued support for the proposed Huntington Beach Seawater Desalination Project (Desal Plant) and the ongoing efforts being made by your administration to ensure the project's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit is renewed by the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (SARWQCB) this April.

The purpose of my letter is to respectfully request your continued support to streamline the regulatory process for the Desal Plant such that the Orange County Water District (District) can ultimately deliberate and vote on a fully permitted project. After the SARWQCB vote, the Desal Plant will go before the Coastal Commission; after which our District staff, Board of Directors and Poseidon Water can finally negotiate a final Private Public Partnership.

As you may recall, in October 2017, members of the District's Board of Directors and staff presented our perspective on the importance of the project to you in your capacity as the Chairman of the State Lands Commission. Before joining your colleagues at the time in unanimously approving the desalination project's lease agreement you stated at it was the role of local water resource agencies to plan for and develop resilient supplies. The District appreciated your consideration of our statutory authority then and now, as your administration's 2020 Water Resilience Portfolio emphasizes the need for regional water resource strategies like seawater desalination that help diversify and drought-proof local water supplies.

It is the District's mission to provide the cities and retail water districts it serves with a reliable, adequate, high-quality water supply at the lowest reasonable cost in an environmentally responsible manner. The Desal Plant provides the District and Orange County with a unique opportunity to add the single largest source of new, locally controlled water supply available to the County. District policy led the Board of Directors in 2015 to approve a Water Purchase Agreement Term Sheet with Poseidon Water for the purchase the full capacity of drinking water from the proposed desalination facility.

The recent events in Texas that sidelined power and water supplies are just the latest reminder that we must plan for natural disasters by continuing to investment in new infrastructure technologies that provide resiliency. The District appreciates your support for our perspective and encourages your administration to continue its ongoing efforts to ensure the SARWQCB approves the desalination facility's amended permit in April.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen R. Sheldon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephen R. Sheldon,
President, Orange County Water District Board of Directors

cc: Christine Hironaka, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
(christine.hironaka@gov.ca.gov)
Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary, CalEPA
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Wade Crowfoot, Secretary Natural Resources Agency
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E. Joaquin Esquivel, Chair, State Water Resources Control Board
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