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August 21, 2013

The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Chair
Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee
1020 N Street, Room 160
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Rendon:

The Kings Basin Water Authority (KBWA) believes it is important to continue significant commitment to Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) funding in the Water Bond. The KBWA supports the framework and balance of the 2009 water bond, which included funding for both system-wide storage improvements as well as for IRWM Planning. For this reason, KBWA members are providing comments in response to the request by the Working Group to assist with prioritizing needs within the categories identified in the Assembly Water Bond Framework.

KBWA believes funding for Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs) in the water bond should be allocated across several of the categories identified in the Framework. IRWM integrates all facets of water supply, water quality, wastewater treatment, and flood and storm water management. IRWM crosses jurisdictional, watershed, and political boundaries and involves multiple agencies, stakeholders, individuals, and groups. IRWMP funding should not be narrowly focused on one water resource issue or stakeholder, such as increasing local storage or addressing water needs of Disadvantaged Communities. Funding should be allocated across several of the Framework categories including: Clean and Safe Drinking Water, Protecting Rivers, Lakes, Streams and Watersheds, Climate Change Preparedness & Regional Self-Reliance for Water, and Storage for Climate Change.

IRWMPs need the flexibility to address regionally specific issues as prioritized within their IRWM Plans. The KBWA, through its IRWM project identification process, currently has identified nearly 100 projects totaling over \$100 million. Types of projects currently represented on the list include groundwater recharge and banking, drinking water and wastewater treatment and recycling, agriculture and urban water conservation and water use efficiency, consolidation and intertie feasibility, flood control and storm water management, and watershed/riparian habitat restoration.

The KBWA, a Joint Powers Authority, includes nearly 60 public, private and non-governmental organizations that have joined together to prepare an IRWMP and collaboratively work to protect and improve the water resources within the Central San Joaquin Valley. The Kings Basin area is within portions of Fresno, Kings, and Tulare counties covering over 600,000 acres.

Through the regional approach provided by the IRWMP, the KBWA has been very successful in securing project funding from various grants from the State of California. California voters passed Propositions 50, 84 and 1E which allocated money specifically for IRWM related planning and projects. The KBWA and its stakeholders have leveraged over \$45 million dollars in grant funds

towards planning and construction of water supply and reliability improvement, conjunctive use, groundwater recharge, water quality protection, water conservation, flood water protection, and disadvantaged community related projects. The cumulative total for projects implemented in the region is over \$76 million dollars.

These successes are helping the KBWA implement its ambitious goals of halting, and ultimately reversing, the current overdraft and providing for sustainable management of surface and groundwater; increasing the water supply reliability, enhance operational flexibility, and reduce system constraints; improving and protecting water quality; providing additional flood protection; and protecting and enhancing aquatic ecosystems and wildlife habitat.

California has made IRWMPs an integral part of managing water resources for the State, starting with the Integrated Regional Water Management Act of 2002, funding through several propositions, and the naming of IRWM as a key initiative to ensure reliable water supplies within the California Water Plan. IRWMPs include approximately 98 percent of the population in the State. The continued commitment to IRWMPs through the water bond will allow regional water management strategies to continue to be a successful component of the State's overall water resources planning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Orth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Orth
Secretary/Treasurer

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Water, Parks & Wildlife
Honorable Members, Assembly Water Bond Working Group
Ms. Tina Cannon-Leahy
Mr. Alf Brandt
Mr. Doug Haaland
The Gualco Group, Inc.