



May 23, 2016

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

Re: SB 814 (Hill) – Oppose

Dear Assemblymember Levine,

On behalf of the Regional Water Authority (RWA) I am writing to express RWA's opposition to SB 814, as amended on March 30th, relating to excessive water use during a declared drought emergency. RWA agrees that all local agencies should have a water shortage contingency plan adopted by their locally elected governing bodies that authorizes the use of fines for excessive use. However, these fining structures should be locally developed to allow for a progressive penalty structure that provides appropriate flexibility and emphasizes education, outreach and customer service.

RWA is a joint powers authority representing 22 water agencies serving approximately two million people in the greater Sacramento region. At the outset of this drought, RWA member agencies voluntarily implemented water shortage contingency plans, ahead of the Governor's emergency drought proclamation, that achieved a region-wide 20% reduction in water use. Following the Governor's emergency actions, this region's water conservation efforts saved nearly 30%. Our experience has shown that conserving water and reducing excessive use can be successfully achieved with a diverse toolbox that includes outreach, education, water use restrictions, and progressive penalties ranging from "water conservation school" to fines.

Our member agencies' focus on education and engagement with our customers to curtail excessive water use has been very effective and we believe will have a positive, long-term impact on water use efficiency. Based on our local experience, most customers are interested in conserving water, are willing to learn how to conserve and will correct situations that lead to excessive water use. In many situations, going directly to a large fine, without an appropriate progressive process to correct the issue, will lead to a time consuming appeal process, create anger among our members' customer bases, and paint water agencies as unreasonable and heavy-handed. Local programs that include the ability to fine, but allow agencies to work with customers and strive to educate the customer base are effective and more evenhanded.

Water agencies have to consider the long-term implications of any actions they take, including future customer cooperation in droughts and on long-term water use efficiency. We believe that SB 814 will cause significant damage to water agencies credibility and ability to proactively manage excessive water use in the future. SB 814 would effectively remove local water management tools that have proven successful and cost effective, in favor of this prescriptive state mandated fining regime.

Spencer Short, Chair  
Jim Peifer, Vice Chair

### **Members**

California American Water  
Carmichael Water District  
Citrus Heights Water District  
Del Paso Manor Water District  
El Dorado Irrigation District  
Elk Grove Water District  
Fair Oaks Water District  
Folsom, City of  
Golden State Water Company  
Lincoln, City of  
Orange Vale Water Company  
Placer County Water Agency  
Rancho Murieta Community Services District  
Roseville, City of  
Rio Linda / Elverta Community Water District  
Sacramento, City of  
Sacramento County Water Agency  
Sacramento Suburban Water District  
San Juan Water District  
West Sacramento, City of  
Woodland-Davis Clean Water Agency  
Yuba City, City of

### **Associates**

El Dorado County Water Agency  
Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency  
Sacramento Municipal Utility District  
Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District

RWA agrees that long-term water use efficiency and a reduction of excessive use are important to California's water supply reliability whether we are in drought conditions or not. We believe a diverse, locally controlled approach towards water management will achieve better long-term water use efficiency, a more educated customer base, and a reduction of excessive water use.

For these reasons, RWA opposes SB 814 and we respectfully request your "No" vote when the bill is heard in the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee on June 14, 2016. Please contact Dave Brent, Water Policy Advisor or myself if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



John Woodling  
Executive Director

cc: Senator Jerry Hill  
Assemblymember James Gallagher, Vice Chair, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Frank Bigelow, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Bill Dodd, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assembly member Susan Eggman, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Cristina Garcia, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Jimmy Gomez, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Matthew Harper, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Patty Lopez, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Devon Mathis, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Jose Medina, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Kristin Olsen, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember Rudy Salas, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Assemblymember William Das, Member, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
Ryan Ojakian, Senior Consultant, Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee