**[Date]**

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

RE: **Co-Sponsor** - **Sunshine on Conflicts Act of 2013 (H.R. 836)**

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

On behalf of **[insert organization name here]**, we write in strong support of the Sunshine on Conflicts Act of 2013 (H.R. 836) by Congressman Gary Miller. **[Name of organization] is located in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and provides (insert services) to (describe constituents).** This legislation is vital to address the antiquated regulatory barrier to securing the most qualified individuals to serve on state water quality permitting authorities, such as the California State and regional water boards. We encourage timely enactment of this much needed measure, and we hope that you will become a co-sponsor with H.R. 836’s sponsor, Representative Gary Miller.

Current Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations preclude any individual from serving on a water quality permitting authority if that person receives “significant” income, defined as 10 percent (10%) or more of his or her income, from an entity holding or applying for a federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Because general and individual NPDES permits now cover the vast majority of local governments, school districts, and small businesses, this “income restriction” standard is an obstacle for many qualified candidates, artificially restricting the pool of qualified and knowledgeable candidates to serve in these roles.

The decades-old income standard also extends to income received by spouses, creating an unreasonable hurdle for eligibility that has no relationship to an actual or potential conflict of interest. The rule has led to numerous instances where highly qualified individuals with decades of technical experience have been prohibited from consideration to serve as state water quality regulators, despite a clear absence of any direct or indirect financial conflict of interest. **[If your agency has particular experience with this or a poignant example, insert brief description here]**

H.R. 836 would address this issue by replacing the income restriction approach with a true conflict of interest test that would protect the public’s interest and ensure the most talented individuals can be nominated and appointed. This would require individuals to recuse themselves on specific matters on which they have a financial conflict of interest, rather than excluding them from service altogether. The time has come to replace the antiquated “income restriction” standard with a true conflict of interest test.

I look forward to your support on this important issue and co-sponsorship of H.R. 836.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

cc:

Attachment: CASA Issue Paper