



August 1, 2013

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

RE: Proposed Principles for Developing a Water Bond

Dear Assembly Member Rendon:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) I want to express appreciation for the efforts taken by you and your staff to develop the *Proposed Principles for Developing a Water Bond*. The release of the principles is a positive first step and will hopefully reinvigorate discussions regarding a revamped water bond.

CSAC recognizes the complexities of water use and distribution throughout the state and has reiterated its position on this issue over the years through various policy statements, including, but not limited to support for statutory protection of counties of origin and watershed areas, support for existing water rights, the need for new and expanded water resources, and the need for local water conservation efforts. In addition, since 2000 we have supported three of the four water bonds that were placed before the voters – Propositions 13, 1E and 84. In 2002, we opposed Proposition 50 based on concern expressed by our Board of Directors over the lack of funding for the development of new water supplies, and the large amount of funding for land acquisitions and the consequential impact on local property tax revenues.

While CSAC can't at this point in time express a position, preliminary or otherwise, on a future water bond, we can indicate what elements are important to us with respect to the bond's composition. In fact, many of the elements we would like to see in a bond are addressed in the proposed principles' list of priorities for water bond funding, such as the Delta protections, regional self-reliance/integrated regional water management, safe drinking water, water conservation and water storage. All of your identified priorities are generally consistent with the policy direction we have been given over the years on this wide range of water bond and water issues.

We do however have a couple of suggested additions. First, the identified priorities omit any reference to flood management. In May of this year, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) released a public review draft of a report titled, *California's Flood Future: Recommendations for Managing California's Flood Risk*. This report, which is to be finalized in November, spotlights the potential for catastrophic flooding in California. The draft report identifies the immediate need for more than \$50 billion to complete flood management improvements and projects. The draft report also estimates that more than \$100 billion of additional investment is needed for flood management

projects that are not yet specifically identified. We bring this to your attention to demonstrate the “statewide” need for additional investment in California’s flood management system, and to note our strong support for the inclusion of a flood management element in the water bond. Clearly there is a linkage as water supplies and water quality are affected when flood events occur.

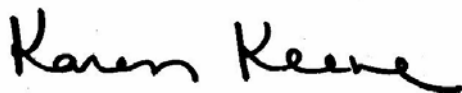
Regarding the other policy priorities, we appreciate the inclusion of a healthy watersheds priority ((1) (d)). However it is important that bond funding also be available to support restoration/management activities in the watersheds that are the source of the State’s water. And, regarding the water storage options priority ((1) (f)), we agree with other stakeholders that it should be revised to add groundwater storage and ground water protection as eligible uses for bond funding.

While we don’t have specific policy direction on the accountability principles, they seem reasonable and necessary to ensure proper oversight and management of bond funds. We only request that the process utilized for awarding bond funds not be overly complicated and instead allow for flexibility and creativity by the applicants.

Lastly, we are very supportive of the third principle that provides an assurance that the new water bond will include provisions that respect existing water rights, including area-of-origin protections. This is consistent with a long-standing CSAC policy principle.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposed principles. Should you have any questions regarding our comments, please feel free to contact Karen Keene at 916-327-7500, ext. 511, or [kkeene@counties.org](mailto:kkeene@counties.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Keene". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Keene  
Senior Legislative Representative

cc: Members and Consultant, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee