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December 10, 2021

Teresa Alvarado  
Chair, California Water Commission and Commissioners  
P.O. Box 942836  
Sacramento, California 94236-0001

RE: Water Storage Investment Program: Support for Continued Eligibility and Feasibility Determination of the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project

Dear Chair Alvarado and Commissioners:

I write in support of the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project (Pacheco Project) and urge the California Water Commission (Commission) to make the appropriate finding for eligibility and feasibility as required by Water Code Section 79757 established by Proposition 1. The Pacheco Project delivers critical emergency water supply and environmental benefits to Santa Clara, San Benito, Monterey, and Santa Cruz counties. It also provides incidental flood protection benefits for disadvantaged communities along the Pajaro River.

California is experiencing devastating impacts due to climate change, from unprecedented wildfires, rising sea levels, and a reduced and sometimes non-existent Sierra snowpack. Increased water storage will help increase resilience to drought and ensure that communities get the water they need. The Pacheco Project will provide longterm benefits to the region by expanding the amount of water storage available from 5,500 to 140,000 acre-feet.

The Pacheco Project would also increase flood protection for downstream, disadvantaged communities. These communities experienced flooding in 2017, and the Pacheco Project would help prevent future flood damage in the region. In addition, this project will solve raw water quality issues impacting Santa Clara and San Benito Counties by addressing the San Luis Low Point problem.

The environmental benefits go beyond providing new habitat for threatened steelhead. The expanded Pacheco Reservoir will enable the participating agencies to import Central Valley Project (CVP) water supplies at times most supportive for Delta fish species and store that water

for future use. The increased storage also will help address unmet water demand for South-of-Delta wetland wildlife refuges through dedication of a portion of Valley Water's CVP supply to the Grasslands Water District. This 2,000-acre-foot designation will provide water supplies necessary for optimal management of refuges and supporting birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway.

The Pacheco Project improves the regional water supply, while also reducing flood risk for disadvantaged communities, supporting sustainable groundwater recharge, and expanding habitat for wildlife, including threatened species. I urge the Commission to continue their full support of the Pacheco Project and make the appropriate finding for continued eligibility and feasibility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Lee', is written over a thin vertical line.

Assemblymember Alex Lee  
25<sup>th</sup> Assembly District