



February 18, 2025

California Water Commission
901 P Street, Suite 142A
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: 2/19/2025 Agenda Item #9, Options for Utilization of Available Proposition 1 WSIP Funding, Support for Reallocation to Additional Projects

Dear Chair Steiner and Commissioners:

I write today regarding your consideration of options for utilization of available Proposition 1 Water Storage Investment Program (“WSIP”) funds. San Bernardino County is grateful for all the awards already granted by the California Water Commission (“Commission”) under the WSIP, including the Chino Basin program in our County, and we unequivocally support the Inland Empire Utilities Agency’s request for additional inflation adjustment funds including those now available via Prop 4.

Our County and its population still face a long-term need for additional water infrastructure as we plan for climate change impacts on the State Water Project and diversify our local supplies. We therefore urge the Commission to consider a second round of solicitations to reallocate the \$447.8 million recently released by the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project so that communities across our region, particularly in underserved areas of our County, may seek support for their long-term water infrastructure needs. While under Proposition 1, Chapter 8, it is unclear whether the Commission can reallocate WSIP funding to projects not previously approved, we urge the Commission to establish a path to reallocate unused funds to regional and local water supply, storage, groundwater sustainability and recycling projects described by Chapters 5,7,9, or 10.

According to the California Department of Public Health, climate change is projected to significantly impact San Bernardino County, primarily through increased extreme heat, more frequent and intense wildfires, potential water shortages due to altered precipitation patterns, and a heightened risk of flooding. Our communities, many of which are state designated low-income disadvantaged communities, are reliant on imports over hundreds of miles from the State Water Project to replenish our groundwater basins and support existing uses. These supplies are increasingly unreliable and must be shared among expanding, competing demands across southern California, including coastal communities and urban Los Angeles fire affected areas. This year, the State Water Project has been limited to just 20% of capacity and has not delivered a full allocation in decades. It is clear our long-term planning must focus on further investments in local supply through local infrastructure improvements.



County of San Bernardino

Historically, systems within Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities (LIDACs) have not received the level of state funding provided to projects in Northern California and more populous urban areas under the assumption that smaller systems could not construct, fund or operate large infrastructure projects. The State of California and the Commission can help support these small communities and reduce demand on the overallocated state system by further evaluating local, small projects serving LIDAC communities. Every drop of water produced or conserved locally in SWP-dependent areas of Southern California reduces dependence on increasingly unreliable imported water supplies from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, providing critical ecosystem benefits to the Delta as required by Proposition 1.

I appreciate the Commission's previous support for the Chino Basin project, which will improve water supply reliability in our region, and I reiterate our support their request for additional inflation adjustment funds including those now available via Prop 4. Even with that project, it is time to further expand the portfolio of projects that can benefit from remaining funds so that all communities, particularly rural, inland LIDACs can make investments needed for their long-term security. Thank you for considering the significance of investment in local and regional water infrastructure projects as we continue to secure California's water supply.

Sincerely,

Dawn Rowe
Chairman, San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors