Salton Sea Authority

(3/18/15) Public Workshop
Salton Sea
Deadline: 3/11/15 by 12:00 noon

RECEIVED
2-5-15
SWRCB Clerk

February 5, 2015

The Honorable Felicia Marcus
Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Imperial Irrigation District Petition

Dear Chairwoman Marcus:

The Salton Sea Authority is writing to extend its support for the Imperial Irrigation District's petition requesting your board to convene key stakeholders and prioritize Salton Sea restoration efforts.

The Salton Sea Authority is a joint powers authority composed of Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial County, Imperial Irrigation District, Riverside County, and the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians. The Authority has been at the forefront of Salton Sea restoration efforts for more than two decades. It is currently co-lead with the Natural Resource Agency in a Salton Sea Funding and Feasibility Study intended to provide a comprehensive factual basis for restoration planning.

The Salton Sea is our state's largest lake and one of its most significant natural and environmental resources. It supports a diverse wildlife habitat for over 400 species of birds and serves as a critical link on the 5,000 mile international Pacific Flyway. The Sea is also home to the Sonny Bono National Wildlife Refuge and the Salton Sea State Recreation Area, both serving as recreational destinations and attracting thousands of visitors annually. Renewable energy development and real estate development around an appropriately-restored Sea will be crucial economic development drivers for the region.

As you know, mitigation water currently delivered to the Salton Sea under the Quantification Settlement Agreement will stop in 2017. This will result in further decline of current water levels and exposure of thousands of acres of likely emissive lakebed. It is crucial that all stakeholders begin immediately to plan and implement mitigation and restoration plans so that human health, economic development, and important ecological values are not further compromised.

The Salton Sea Authority is committed to providing leadership in mitigation and restoration planning and strongly urges the State Water Resources Control Board to act quickly to convene a stakeholder process that includes the Salton Sea Authority.

We look forward to your board's involvement in this important matter and we thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Roger Shintaku
General Manager, Salton Sea Authority

cc: Steve Benson, Imperial Irrigation District

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