

California Legislature

October 7, 2010

Katherine Hart
Chair, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Sacramento Office
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6114

RE: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit
Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District
APPROVE STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Dear Chairwoman Hart:

The water system and ecosystem in crisis in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta continues to have a direct impact on water supplies for millions of acres of agriculture and 25 million Californians, including those who live in our district. Despite severe water supply curtailments that are now in place to address endangered species such as the Delta smelt, there continues to be a decline in the Delta ecosystem and environmental problems persist. Meanwhile, there is an ongoing threat to the water supplies that our communities and much of California depend upon. It is absolutely essential to address the Delta crisis effectively and comprehensively. It is with this need in mind that we urge you to follow the staff recommendation and approve new, advanced treatment standards for the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) wastewater facility.

The growing body of scientific evidence points to a Delta that is struggling due to many stressors, including in-Delta and upstream water diversions, invasive species and wastewater discharges. Water quality experts, including those at the California Department of Public Health, are concerned about large wastewater facilities such as the one near Sacramento that do not remove pathogens from the waste stream, meaning that recreational users of the Delta downstream, and all those who drink from a downstream supply, face this water quality challenge.



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We recognize that there is an ongoing debate on the relative role of the many stressors on the Delta and the precise role that wastewater that contains ammonia is playing on the food web of the ecosystem. But there is no question that SRCSD is the largest wastewater discharger in the Delta. There is no question that its secondary method of treatment has not been improved in a generation. And there is no question that SCRSD is now releasing tons of ammonia into the Sacramento River every day, and allows discharges containing human pathogens, that are of growing concern to the regulatory community and that are above the new, emerging federal recommendations.

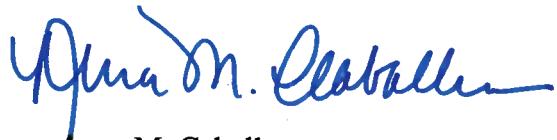
It will take a tremendous investment by water districts and other public funds in order to reverse the decline of the Delta and regain a reliable water supply system for California. The proposed treatment advances for this facility represent a very small fraction of the coming investments and are well within community affordability standards.

We urge you to keep in mind the millions of Californians who are directly affected by the Delta crisis as you begin your deliberations for this facility's new NPDES permit. Requirements for advanced treatment for ammonia and pathogen removal are an essential part of an overall regulatory response to ensure that the environment of the Delta and the economy of California are no longer threatened by the ongoing crisis in the estuary.

Sincerely,



Jean Fuller
Assemblymember, 32nd District



Anna M. Caballero
Assemblymember, 28th District

JF:rc