



CITY OF COACHELLA

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Sent via email to commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov

March 8, 2017

Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Comment Letter – Affordable, Safe Drinking Water Workshop

Dear Board Members:

We are writing to express our support of the State's Human Right to Water policy. City of Coachella recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety of drinking water. However, example, the implementation of maximum contaminate level (MCL) for hexavalent chromium has place a large burden on our rate payers. It is imperative that zero match grant funding be made available to cities like ours for projects that range from \$15 to \$35 million dollars, which is just to get enough supply to meet the City's maximum daily demands.

The Coachella Water Authority provides water services for over 40,000 residents through a little over 8,000 connections in the Coachella Valley. The City of Coachella is a disadvantaged community with a medium household income (MHI) of \$37,408. Currently, our average water bills range from \$40 to \$50 for an average customer, or 1.0% of MHI. If the City was to burden our rate payers with the entire bill, it is estimated that the rate will or 3.2% of MHI. This is not fair to our community; therefore, we ask you to please give consider how this community can afford such large increase. According to the Pacific Institute study on Water Rates: Water Affordability (Attached), the California Department of Public Health set a threshold of 1.5%, U.S.E.P.A set a threshold range of 2 to 2.5%, and United Nations set a threshold of 3%.

The City of Coachella specifically requests consideration be given to larger communities (under 50,000) that serve disadvantages communities be considered for grants to make sure that every resident of Coachella has the right to water.

If you have any questions, please contact Scott Rogers, Utilities General Manager at (760) 501-8112.

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We urge staff to reach out to disadvantaged communities like Coachella to hear how the SWRCB can help our community and thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William B. Pattinson, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

William B. Pattinson, Jr.
City Manager

Attachment: Pacific Institute Water Rates: Water Affordability