

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Written Testimony of Chris Dahlstrom
Santa Ynez River Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1

I am the General Manager of the Santa Ynez River Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1 (ID No. 1). My areas of responsibility include management of all sources of water supply and water rights related activities for ID No. 1. Accordingly, I am familiar with the water rights issues involved with the Cachuma Project, as well as the efforts of ID No. 1; the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD); the Cachuma Conservation Release Board (“CCRB”); and the City of Lompoc to resolve the outstanding water rights issues on the Lower Santa Ynez River, which resulted in the Settlement Agreement among all the parties dated December 17, 2002 (“Settlement Agreement”).

ID No. 1 is located downstream of Bradbury Dam and, among other things, delivers water to a portion of the Santa Ynez Valley and acts to help ensure sufficient water is released from the dam to protect its downstream water rights. As a Member Unit of the Cachuma Project, ID No. 1 seeks to maximize the yield of the Cachuma Project for beneficial use within its boundaries. ID No. 1 is a party to the Settlement Agreement, which resolves Lompoc’s claim that Cachuma operations were negatively impacting the quantity and quality of downstream water rights releases made pursuant to WR 89-18. The Settlement Agreement signatories and the Bureau of Reclamation have agreed that the Settlement Agreement will protect the signatories’ water rights and water quality downstream of Bradbury Dam, provided that the State Board, through this hearing process, grants downstream water rights releases under WR 89-19 as modified by the Settlement Agreement.

Specifically, Exhibit A of the Settlement Agreement, ensures that steelhead habitat and maintenance flows under the NMFS Biological Opinion (“BO”) are coordinated with water releases for the Above Narrows Account (“ANA”). This will protect public trust resources pursuant to the BO above the Lompoc Narrows, while, at the same time, protecting ID No. 1’s access to ANA water storage in Lake Cachuma. Under Exhibit D of the Settlement Agreement, ID No. 1’s agrees to use good faith efforts to coordinate deliveries of its State Water Project water with those SWP deliveries being made into Lake Cachuma with the Central Coast Water Agency. In return, the Settlement Agreement expressly preserves scheduled deliveries of SWP water and Cachuma exchange water to ID No. 1. Coordinated deliveries will maximize the water quality improvement effects to Lompoc of blending Cachuma Project water with State Water Project water.

The Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1, are satisfied that the Settlement Agreement adequately protects Cachuma Project water rights and, therefore, ID No. 1’s exchange entitlement and also provides protection for public trust resources. They believe that the Settlement Agreement is in the best interest of ID No. 1, and should therefore be fully supported. The Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1 wholeheartedly support the Settlement Agreement as the appropriate means to protect its Cachuma Project water rights, WR 89-19 as modified by the Settlement Agreement, and public trust resources downstream of Lake Cachuma.