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May 15, 2016

Felicia Marcus, Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Emailed:

commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov

Attention: Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board

Regarding: May 18, 2016, SWRCB Board Meeting (Conservation Extended Emergency Regulation)

Dear Chair Marcus:

Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA) thanks the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments to the regulatory Emergency Regulation for Statewide Urban Water Conservation.

MCWRA appreciates the SWRCB's acknowledgement that local and regional water supply conditions vary greatly across the state, and recognizes the improved hydrologic conditions in the Mountain Counties region.

The local water managers in this region take stewardship of the watershed and its resources very seriously and have demonstrated that they are the best positioned and best suited to operate their water utility. As such, MCWRA supports the SWRCB's flexibility by returning local control to the water managers and consenting to a self-certification process of their local water supply conditions. This is a forward thinking and reasonable compromise given the uncertainty of future water years.

However, MCWRA has concerns that this compromise will unravel because of pressure to push for universal permanent water conservation standards. This would directly undermine the self-certification process being proposed and send the wrong message to water suppliers and their communities. Water agencies in this region have invested in and developed best management conservation programs

to ensure their local water reliability. Using water efficiently is the overriding message in this region to stretch water supply during normal water conditions. Imposing conservation targets in this region when adequate water supplies can be demonstrated, again undermines public support for conservation measures in times of drought. Therefore, MCWRA strongly opposes any imposition of arbitrary conservation targets.

In reviewing the proposed regulation, Section 864.5, subdivision (b)(1) and Section 864.5, subdivision (b)(2) seem to be inconsistent with each other for calculating the next three years of water supply. Subdivision (b)(1) assumes three years of precipitation and Subdivision (b)(2) assumes three years of water demand, yet water supplies production average uses only two years (2013 & 2014). We suggest the SWRCB consider include 2015 in averaging water supply production.

Further, MCWRA contends, as we have constantly, that “rural environments” differ dramatically from the urban environment and should be recognized as such. As such, MCWRA proposes a modification to Section 864, subdivision (a)(3). Subdivision (a)(3) prohibits the application of potable water to driveways and sidewalks. While this restriction may seem necessary in some areas of the state, it too restrictive in rural communities. In most cases, rural communities do not have sidewalks. Driveways become soiled from farm equipment, home construction, landscape modifications, wildlife, etc., and on occasion, need to be hosed off for sanitation purposes. The SWRCB is encouraged to acknowledge the rural environment differences and support the following change to subdivision (a)(3) to read: The application of potable water on **clean** driveways and sidewalks, **and, in a manner that prevents water runoff onto another owners’ property, non-irrigated areas, private and public walkways, roadways, parking lots, or structures;**

Finally, MCWRA thanks the SWRCB’s leadership and efforts during the drought emergency and we appreciate the collaborative relationship with MCWRA and its membership.

Thank you for the consideration. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 530.957.7879.

Sincerely,



John Kingsbury, Executive Director
Mountain Counties Water Resources Association

c: Board of Directors, Mountain Counties Water Resources Association

The Honorable:

Assembly Member Frank Bigelow
Assembly Member Brian Dahle
Assembly Member Beth Gaines
Assembly Member James Gallagher

Senator Tom Berryhill
Senator Ted Gaines
Senator Jim Nielsen