

FILE COPY

Received - 4, 22, 02

Imperial Valley United Statement

Imperial Valley United is a broad and diverse coalition of agriculture, business and local government dedicated to the preservation and protection of this area's water rights. We remain committed to forging a regional solution to meet California's long-term water needs, but not at the expense of our economy, or our way of life.

We support, in concept, agricultural-to-urban water transfers which are based on mutual benefit and economic reciprocity, but we will oppose any agreement that saddles our water users and citizens with the enormous cost of "saving" the Salton Sea.

In light of the staggering price associated with Salton Sea mitigation, as identified in the EIR draft document, we believe the 1998 water transfer agreement between the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) and the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) must be renegotiated.

Further, we call on the state and federal governments to assume all financial and environmental responsibility for the Salton Sea, holding the IID harmless, in perpetuity, and providing a legal framework for completion of its water conservation and transfer plans, without compromising either its historical standing or its water rights.

As we have since 1999, when Imperial Valley United was formed to provide a regional voice from among many competing voices, we believe a viable water transfer agreement between the IID and SDCWA can only be achieved through open dialogue and ongoing discourse, a public process of advice and consent.

The IID should be an active participant in that process, but its most important charge must be to ensure the Imperial Valley does not become a victim of it.