2/20 BdMtg Item 6
IRWM
Deadline: 2/8/07 12pm

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Noel King, Director

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February 8, 2007

State Water Resources Control Board
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Proposal to Eliminate Round 2 of Proposition 50 Funding ($220 million)

Dear Board Members:

This correspondence reflects comments by staff of the County of San Luis Obispo, who also act as staff of the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. We prepared, in collaboration with stakeholders within the San Luis region, our Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, which was fully adopted on December 6, 2005. Our region's stakeholder participation was led by the San Luis Obispo County Water Resource Advisory Committee, which includes representatives of all our cities, community services districts, other special districts, agricultural and environmental interests. The Water Resource Advisory Committee has operated for approximately 50 years.

On February 6, 2007, the Board of Supervisors took initial action on the proposal to eliminate $220 million in funding from Round 2 of Proposition 50. The SLO County Board authorized two of their members, Chairman Jerry Lenthal and District 2 Supervisor Bruce Gibson, to develop final comments to your Board after meeting with representatives of other Central Coast agencies, if possible. It is our Board's expressed desire to develop collaborative recommendations on the Prop 50 and, now intertwined, Prop 84 funding allocations with the other agencies from our region. Recognizing the short duration of the comment period, if regional comments cannot be developed, we will submit a letter reflecting our Board's position on the proposal to your Board at your hearing of February 20, 2007.

The comment period is clearly inadequate. We have barely had sufficient time to conduct one (1) staff-to-staff consultation with other agencies on the Central Coast. We know of no other agencies, at this time, that have authorized members of their Boards to meet with other agencies on the specific proposal as we are prepared to do. We believe that meeting with our region's other agencies and developing regional comments and recommendations is important since any action to the contrary will result in division within the region. Indeed, the unfortunately short comment period on the proposal already creates potential divisiveness.

- If we comment in a manner independent of other agencies in our region, and we are neutral or supportive of the proposal, then we would be foregoing the opportunity to compete for $220 million in available funding. Our Round One Step One Implementation grant proposal scored higher than other plans that were invited to Step Two – we have

never been provided an adequate explanation for our exclusion from Step Two despite our score and clear ability to compete. We believe we are duty bound to compete on behalf of our constituents.

- But if we comment to your Board in a manner opposing the current proposal so that we can compete for Prop 50 Round 2 Funding, then we are doing so to the potential detriment of some of our neighboring Counties. In essence, the inadequate comment period provides us with little hope of constructively addressing the issue with other agencies on the Central Coast in time to provide your Board with regional recommendations.

In summary, we have reviewed the development of the proposal. We have apprised our Board and they have authorized members of the Board to meet with other Central Coast agencies to address regional implications of the proposal. The proposal intertwines Prop 50 and Prop 84 funding issues. Inadequate comment period exists to develop regional recommendations, and anything short of the valid development of regional recommendations creates adversarial relations within regions. Integrated Regional Water Management rests on a cornerstone of stakeholder participation and collaboration, and among its other issues, the proposal has a nominal comment period that grossly devalues the IRWM model.

Sincerely,

Paavo Ogren by Noel King

PAAVO OGREN
Deputy Director of Public Works

c: Jerry Lenthall, Chairperson, District 3
Harry Ovitt, Supervisor, District 1
Bruce Gibson, Supervisor, District 2
Katcho Achadjian, Supervisor, District 4
Jim Patterson, Supervisor, District 5
Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee
Senator Abel Maldonado
Gail Wilcox, Deputy County Administrative Officer
Gere Sibbach, Auditor-Controller
Noel King, Director of Public Works

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