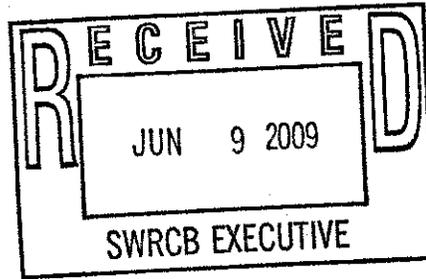




# Environmental Justice Coalition for Water

6/16/09 Bd Mtg. Item 8  
ARRA  
Deadline: 6/10/09 by 12 noon

June 10, 2009



Charles Hoppin, Chair  
State Water Quality Control Board  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Support for staff recommendation on Item 8 - revised allocation of ARRA funds**

Dear Chair Hoppin and Board members;

On behalf of the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, a coalition of more than 60 community based and non-profit organizations around the state fighting for water justice, I am writing in support of the staff recommendation on Item 8 on your June 16<sup>th</sup> Agenda. The staff recommendation to divide the additional ARRA grant dollars equally between disadvantaged community wastewater projects and expanded use projects, prioritizing urban stormwater projects in disadvantaged communities is an equitable proposal that makes the most strategic use of these funds.

While the applications for disadvantaged community wastewater projects totals more than \$250 million in projects we know that there is more than \$1 billion in need in communities with few, if any other, resources to address wastewater systems that are creating threats to public health in these communities. In several of the communities on the small community wastewater grant list that we know of community members are literally walking in their own waste particularly during heavy rain events. We strongly supported the board's initial commitment to ensuring that at least 25 percent of the ARRA funding is set aside for grants to these communities and further support the allocation of an additional 7.5%, or \$21 million, to begin chipping away at the overwhelming need.

We also support the staff proposal to allocate the remaining \$21 million in available grant funding to urban stormwater projects that benefit disadvantaged communities. Many stormwater agencies lack the revenue base to repay loans, particularly when those agencies serve predominantly disadvantaged communities. Urban flooding can create threats to public health and safety. Innovative projects like the Elmer Avenue Neighborhood project in Sun Valley, coordinated by the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council dramatically improve the quality of life in disadvantaged communities that otherwise suffer the impacts of chronic flooding in their neighborhoods.

We commend the State Water Board staff for their strategic and thoughtful proposed distribution of these funds a distribution which we believe will result in projects that could not otherwise be built, and which will produce needed jobs in those communities most impacted by the nation's economic crisis.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Debbie Davis