



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

June 21, 2017

The Honorable Bill Dodd
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5064
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 252 - REMOVAL OF OPPOSITION

Dear Senator Dodd:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we are pleased to inform you that we are removing our opposition to your Senate Bill 252, which relates to well permits issued in critically over-drafted groundwater basins. We appreciate your acceptance of the amendments we offered to SB 252.

In 2014, RCRC was actively engaged in the landmark water legislation – Senate Bill 1168 and Assembly Bill 1739 – which established the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). These measures provided a framework for local agencies to develop plans and implement strategies to sustainably manage groundwater resources within a defined period.

Since being enacted, counties, agencies, and stakeholders have been working diligently to meet the June 30, 2017 deadline that requires a local agency/agencies in each high- or medium- priority groundwater basin to have officially formed one or more Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) for the entire basin. By January 31, 2020, each high- or medium-priority groundwater basin that is subject to critical conditions of overdraft must be managed under a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). And, by January 31, 2022, all remaining high- or medium-priority groundwater basins must be managed under a GSP with a final review by the Department of Water Resources by January 31, 2024. Please be assured that we are committed to facilitating the implementation of SGMA.

We appreciate that you have limited the provisions of SB 252 to critically over-drafted basins, and that it recognizes the ‘local control’ element that has been a key aspect to SGMA’s implementation. With the recent amendments, SB 252 further clarifies that the procedural steps required are themselves ministerial in nature, and that local governments retain the authority to determine whether issuance of well permits in the

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The Honorable Bill Dodd
Senate Bill 252
June 21, 2017
Page 2

critically over-drafted basins within their boundaries will be ministerial or discretionary. This measure provides for the transmittal for the applicant(s) data to the local GSA. Although requiring each applicant to individually assess the productivity of new (not replacement and/or existing) wells is unlikely to provide a complete picture of the effects of proposed wells on the aquifer, additional data could be helpful to the GSA as it undertakes the development of its GSP by January 31, 2022.

Again, we appreciate your incorporation of RCRC's amendments. Should you have additional questions or concerns, please contact me at mwarmerdam@rcrcnet.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Mary-Ann Warmerdam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MARY-ANN WARMERDAM
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: Members, Assembly Committee on Water, Parks & Wildlife
Catherine Freeman, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Water,
Parks & Wildlife
Robert Spiegel, Policy Consultant, Assembly Republican Policy Office