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January 29, 2016

Mr. Campbell Ingram, Executive Director
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
1450 Halyard Drive, Suite 6
West Sacramento, California 95691

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the Port of Stockton/Ad-Hoc Water Hyacinth Committee’s BIOFUEL Demonstration Project Grant Application

Dear Campbell Ingram:

At their January 22, 2016 meeting, the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA) Board of Directors authorized this “Letter of Support” for the Port of Stockton/Ad-Hoc Water Hyacinth Committee’s BIOFUEL Demonstration Project Grant Application.

MCWRA advocates for the water interests of its members in all or a portion of 16 counties from the southern tip of Lassen County down to Fresno County. Members include water and irrigation districts and agencies, counties, cities, power utilities, water associations and those interested in water. The Mountain Counties area include ten major watershed areas and accounts for about 25% of all natural runoff in California, over half of all snowmelt runoff in the State, and 40% of the state’s developed water supply. Significant to California is that water stored behind reservoirs in the ten major watershed areas have dedicated in-stream flow releases designed to meet the many beneficial uses for the environment, recreation, agriculture, and urban needs and provides storage capacity to reduce the magnitude of flood flows and pressure on our stressed levee system, and provides for hydroelectricity to supply homes and businesses in the western United States.

This letter of support serves to inform the Delta Conservancy Board members and management team that my Board of Directors is aware of the Port of Stockton/Ad-Hoc Water Committee’s BIOFUEL grant application and believes that this innovative private-public partnership with Pacific Ethanol Inc. (PEI), Metropolitan Water District, California Department of Water Resources and other state and local agencies will advance the goals of restoring the aquatic ecosystem in the Delta through the removal and beneficial reuse of the invasive water hyacinth (WH).

There are several invasive plant (e.g., various filamentous green algae, creeping primrose) species that also can be problematic for some of our member agencies in the foothills that use canals and natural sloughs for conveyance of raw water to our customers.

The proposed BIOFUEL demonstration project seeks to demonstrate that harvested water hyacinth and potentially other invasive aquatic plants (Arundo, South American spongeplant, Brazilian water weed, creeping primrose, Eurasian milfoil, and others) found presently in the Delta maybe used as a feedstock at the PEI refinery for generating methane gas (via anaerobic digestion processes). This gas would then be used to power a natural gas power plant at the PEI refinery or be sold on the natural gas spot market to local utility customers. The project is anticipated to have multiple environmental and stakeholder benefits including:

- Substantial reduction in aquatic herbicide applications and associated Delta foodweb impacts,
- Reduce impacts to upstream water supplies from water consumption from the very large mass of water hyacinth in the Delta (estimated at 11,000 acres in 2015),
- Improve Delta water quality conditions by reducing the decaying biomass load that depletes dissolved oxygen in Delta waters from decaying water hyacinth,
- Reduce methane emissions to the atmosphere from current WH waste management practices,
- Provide a reliable supply of natural gas to generate power,
- Remove floating plant biomass that has caused serious operational challenges for municipal and industrial water providers in the Delta and navigation problems for the Port of Stockton.

We understand the concept proposal was approved by your Board on January 27, 2016, and will be considered for funding with a more detailed proposal in March, 2016. The MCWRA members look forward to this demonstration project implementation and potentially providing a real-world solution to removing invasive plant species in the Delta and reducing impacts to Delta water quality and on upstream water supplies.

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: Paul Koelher, Vice President, Pacific Ethanol Inc.
Jeff Wingfield, Director of Environmental, Government & Public Affairs, Port of Stockton
Roger Patterson, Assistant General Manager, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Mark Cowin, Director, Department of Water Resources
Chuck Bonham, Director, Department of Fish & Wildlife
Randy Forini, Chair, Delta Stewardship Council
Felicia Marcus, Chair, State Water Resources Control Board
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