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July 22, 2013

The Honorable Frank Bigelow  
State Capitol, Suite #4116  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0005

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Twain Harte Community Services District

Utica Power Authority

Regarding: California Legislative Rural Caucus

Dear Assembly Member Bigelow;

On behalf of the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA), I wish to congratulate you on being selected as the California Legislative Rural Caucus Chairman. We appreciate your assertive leadership, determination, and focus on the challenging water issues critical to the economy and sustainability to this region and to California.

We are most pleased with the Caucus website that reflects MCWRA as a Resource. This is an honor and we plan to live up to the designation.

As the State works to solve the water crisis in California, you are acutely aware of the many water challenges that face this region. The potential for redirected impacts is acute and it is critical that we help our state and federal decision makers fully understand that this region is part of the solution to the water crisis.

We have applauded the Governor's comments that he made to the farming community in Colusa relevant to northern California water rights; "There are certain water rights that are historic and anything we do with this delta facility has to incorporate those water rights as an iron-clad legal, statutory and maybe even constitutional guarantee to ensure that they gain and not lose."

These comments reinforced the Governor's commitment to protect historic water rights in his July 25, 2012 message when he and then Secretary Ken Salazar outlined revisions to the proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The Governor's statement is significant: to "make sure implementation of BDCP will not result in adverse effects on the water rights of those in the watershed of the Delta, nor will it impose any obligations on water users upstream of the Delta to supplement flows in and through the Delta."

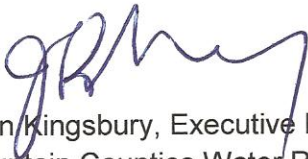
For more than six decades, the leadership at the State and Federal level have been unequivocal in their commitments to the understanding that water that originates in the area of origin must always be available to meet the needs of water users in the watershed. It is important that we hold California to these assurances.

Additionally, while the State's focus is the Delta, investment and proper management in the Sierra Nevada, and regulatory assurances will lead to water supply reliability for all of California.

The State is committed to fix the Delta. It should make a similar commitment to protect the Delta headwaters in the Sierra Nevada mountain range that provides approximately fifty percent of the source water for the Delta. Climate change and reoccurring drought in the Sierra Nevada will only increase the frequency of catastrophic wildland fires. This will lead to devastating water supply consequences for Delta inflows. Wildland fires in the state's largest natural winter reservoir, the "Sierra Nevada", can decimate the landscape, whereby the soil becomes sediment that impacts the carrying capacity of both natural and manmade storage. This changed landscape accelerates runoff and increases flooding only to put further pressure on the State's levee system. This scenario would reduce statewide water supply, degrade water quality, effect hydropower generation, the environment, recreation and tourism. The State can ill afford to wait for a catastrophic forest fire.

Leadership at the highest governmental levels must work together to develop a comprehensive statewide water solution. We look forward to working with you and the Legislative Rural Caucus to help solve California's water issues. I can be reached at 530.957.7879.

Sincerely,



John Kingsbury, Executive Director  
Mountain Counties Water Resources Association

c: Board of Directors, MCWRA  
Jim Branham, Executive Officer, Sierra Nevada Conservancy