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December 20, 2013

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
California State Capitol, Room 2136  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0063

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- Placer County Water Agency
- South Tahoe Public Utility District
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- Utica Power Authority

Re: AB1331

Dear Assembly Member Rendon:

You gave an excellent presentation at the Association of California Water Agencies conference on Friday, June 6. Thank you. I was hoping to meet with you to give you an open invitation to tour the Sierra Nevada headwaters, the primary source of water for California.

We applaud you and the Assembly Water Bond Working Group’s effort to set the tone for future water bond discussions on some of the most challenging water issues facing California today. We appreciate the commitment reflected in AB 1331 that the State’s leadership will adhere to California water rights and area-of-origin protections. For more than six decades the State has been unequivocal in its commitment 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.

AB1331 reinforces the Governor’s commitment to protect historic water rights as was stated 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.”

The proposed investment outlined in AB1331 recognizes the importance of a healthy Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. A resilient Delta can be sustainable only if it has a reliable source of clean water. The Delta’s primary source of that clean water comes from the Sierra Nevada Mountains (Sierra). The Sierra is the lifeblood for Californian’s quality of life and well-being from the crest of the Sierra to San Diego.

AB1331 is the vehicle to secure short-term and long-term funding to get California on track for a sustainable future. A sustainable future starts at the crest of the headwaters of the Sierra. While much focus is on earthquakes, flooding, and levees, catastrophic wildland fires and landslides can also have significant regional and statewide consequences. Major wildfire events in the state's largest source of water can decimate the landscape, changing soil to sediment that will negatively impact the carrying capacity of California's water supply. Fire scorched landscapes accelerates runoff and increases the potential for landslides, increase water supply maintenance costs and can place water supplies at risk. Accelerated runoff also increases the risk of downstream flooding, which puts additional pressure on the State's levee system, causing downstream public safety concerns. Proper investment and stewardship in the Sierra will help reduce these risks and help to provide a clean reliable water supply.

In addition, the State needs to add new water supply and storage starting at the crest of the Sierra to counter the effects of climate change and extended drought. It should no longer be acceptable to continue the water wars, but to work collaboratively to add new supply and increase the water carrying capacity of the Sierra. Coupled with the continued focus to improve statewide water use efficiency practices, new storage will aid the long-term water supply, water quality, hydropower, agriculture, environment, and recreation needs of this State.

To close, I have included some suggested language changes for AB 1331 to address comments in this letter. I appreciate your consideration to these complex issues surrounding California's water future. I look forward to meeting with you and to provide you and members of the Assembly Water Bond Working Group with a tour to the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range Headwaters.

Thank you for your leadership. I can be reached at 530.957.7879.

Sincerely,



John Kingsbury, Executive Director  
Mountain Counties Water Resources Association

c: The Honorable Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.  
Board of Directors, Mountain Counties Water Resources Association  
Alf Brandt, Legislative Director, Assembly Member Anthony Rendon  
Tina Cannon Leahy, Principal Consultant - State Assembly Water, Parks & Wildlife Committee

Assembly Water Bond Working Group

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