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May 13, 2014

The Honorable Loni Hancock
 California State Senate, Room 2082
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Executive Members

Amador Water Agency (AWA)

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County of Calaveras

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Nevada Irrigation District (NID)

Placer County Water Agency (PCWA)

South Tahoe Public Utility District (STPUD)

Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD)

Twain Harte Community Services District (THCSD)

Utica Power Authority (UPA)

Re: OPPOSE SB1199

Dear Senator Hancock:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA), I write to express our strong opposition to SB1199.

MCWRA advocates for the water interests of its members in all or a portion of 15 mountain counties from the southern tip of Lassen County to Fresno County.

The combined forces of population growth, rising sea level, climate change, extended droughts, and the concern for endangered species, habitat and sustainable forests to ensure reliable water supply and water quality, have put California's citizens, its economy, and its environmental resources at imminent risk of disaster. This is especially true in the Mountain Counties Overlay Area, which is mostly populated by disadvantaged communities. This bill, as written, poses a serious risk to water reliability in these disadvantaged Sierra Nevada communities, potentially precedent setting that may affect area-of-origin water rights, future water supplies, and a sustainable economy based on agriculture, hydropower generation, recreation, and tourism.

There are 383 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Mountain Counties Overlay Area under federal and California law. The dedicated in-stream flow releases at designated dams are designed to meet beneficial uses of all stakeholders downstream including environmental, agricultural and urban uses. As with previous Wild and Scenic designations, stakeholders should have the opportunity for open dialog with a collaborative and transparent process to fully understand the potential consequences of this proposed legislation. Discussion should include our community leaders, non-governments organizations, Native American Tribes, business groups, and our local and state representatives. The State also needs to comply with the provisions of the Public Resources Code to determine the suitability of this designation.

MCWRA supports a balanced, interest-based approach to resolving conflicts that provide win-win solutions. While MCWRA actively supports and advocates for a resilient watershed, now is not the time to rush through the legislative process without vetting the potential consequences of this legislation.

I am available if you would like to discuss this matter further. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 530.957.7879.

Sincerely,



John Kingsbury, Executive Director
Mountain Counties Water Resources Association

c: Board of Directors, Mountain Counties Water Resources Association

The Honorable:

Assembly Member Frank Bigelow
California State Capitol, Room 4116
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249

Assembly Member Brian Dahle
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Senator Tom Berryhill
California State Capitol, Room 3076
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Ted Gaines
California State Capitol, Room 3070
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Senator Jim Neilsen
California State Capitol, Room 4062
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