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June 10, 2015

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Assembly Member Frank Bigelow
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Senator Tom Berryhill
 Senator Ted Gaines
 Senator Jim Neilsen

RE: TB 825: Water System Consolidation Budget Trailer Bill Language -- **OPPOSE**

Dear California Assembly Member and Senator;

On behalf of the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA), I write to express our strong opposition to budget trailer bill language that would give the State Water Resources Control Board authority to mandate consolidations of public water systems in California.

Though these broad powers ostensibly are intended to address drought impacts, the language is overly broad and contains no direct link to the drought. In addition, there is no sunset provision for granting these powers to the State Water Resources Control Board, an agency with no practical local government experience or expertise in the area of consolidations.

Forced consolidations are not immediate fixes to the current drought emergency. Giving the State Water Resources Control Board broad authority to mandate consolidations could lead to significant unintended consequences. Current law provides for more effective solutions to remedy threats to health and safety during the actual drought. Voluntary, mutual assistance efforts could be utilized for immediate drought assistance in impacted communities.

Since the State Water Resources Control Board has numerous other responsibilities, including implementing emergency conservation regulations, it makes little policy sense to add mandatory consolidation of water systems to the board's regulatory "to do" list.

We are surprised that the state would choose to undertake this significant public policy shift through the budget trailer bill process without adequate public input or review, especially at a time when local water agencies are fully engaged in addressing the ongoing drought crisis.

Please vote "NO" on this trailer bill when it reaches the floor for a vote before the June 15 deadline. If you have any questions, or if I can be of any assistance, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JKingsbury', with a long, sweeping underline.

John Kingsbury, Executive Director
Mountain Counties Water Resources Association

c: Board of Directors, Mountain Counties Water Resources Association
Wendy Ridderbusch, Director of State Relations, ACWA

The Honorable:

Governor Jerry Brown
c/o State Capitol, Suite 3173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Congressman Doug LaMalfa
U.S. House of Representatives
322 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Tom McClintock
U.S. House of Representatives
2331 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515