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April 26, 2023

The Honorable Juan Alanis
California State Assembly
State Capitol
1021 O Street, Room 4640
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ACA 2 (Alanis): Water and Wildfire Resiliency Act of 2023: SUPPORT IF AMENDED

Dear Assemblyman Alanis:

On behalf of the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association's Board of Directors, I am writing to notify you of our organization's "support if amended" position on your Assembly Concurrent Amendment 2, also known as the Water and Wildfire Resiliency Act of 2023. ACA 2 seeks to appropriate 3 percent of General Fund revenues each year for the purposes of supporting water infrastructure and forest health and maintenance projects. MCWRA is supportive of this goal, and requests additional language be incorporated to specify that 50 percent of the water projects funding allocation be dedicated to forest wildfire suppression facilities in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).

California has experienced the deadliest and most destructive wildfires in its history in recent years. Fueled by drought and unprecedented buildup of dry vegetation and extreme winds, the size and intensity of these wildfires caused the loss of life, destroyed thousands of homes and structures, and exposed millions of urban and rural Californians to unhealthy air.

ACA 2 would provide consistent and guaranteed funding for water infrastructure, forest health, and maintenance project funding to

demonstrate the State's commitment to addressing these critical problems in California's forested watersheds. It is important to include language specific to fire suppression facilities to help ensure that fire suppression infrastructure is improved in the WUI.

Many communities in need of fire suppression infrastructure are disadvantaged and do not have the technical expertise or resources to prepare grant applications or develop, design, or prepare estimates to make them eligible for shovel-ready grants. It would be beneficial if this legislation also included support for technical assistance to these small water systems that would allow them a pathway to be eligible and implement these much needed projects.

MCWRA advocates for the water interests of its 58 members in 12 of the mountain counties within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) of woodland and forested lands in the Sierra Nevada. These foothill and mountain areas contain the headwaters for 40% of the state's developed water supply, which also provides for hydropower production, irrigation, recreation, water recycling, tourism, and instream flows that fuel the engine of our State's economy.

We look forward to working with you on this bill and other priority issues in the future. Please feel free to reach out should you have any questions regarding our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Ratterman", written in a cursive style.

Scott Ratterman, President
Mountain Counties Water Resources Association