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September 24, 2013

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 620 (Wright) – REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the California Groundwater Coalition, I write to respectfully request your signature on SB 620 (Wright) which will protect the stability of the groundwater supply for over 10% of our state's population by ensuring that the region's groundwater agency is able to maintain sound finances to perform its groundwater management function and meet state mandates.

The California Groundwater Coalition (CGC) was formed at the urging of California State and local officials who believe that increased efforts are needed to educate and inform policy makers and the public about California groundwater resources. CGC's membership consists of experts with technical, legal, and professional groundwater and related expertise. CGC member, the Golden State Water Company, abstained from the vote on this bill.

SB 620 will allow the Water Replenishment District (WRD) of Southern California to better manage replenishment of the groundwater basin by increasing the use of local water supplies in lieu of imported water. Unlike retail water providers, WRD cannot shut off water service for nonpayment. The penalty for failure to pay the replenishment assessment for pumping water has not been increased since 1961 and no longer serves as an adequate incentive to pay the assessment. SB 620 will increase the penalty for failure to pay the replenishment assessment in order to provide an appropriate payment incentive.

Additionally, the current limitation on the use of reserves – requiring that 80% of the reserves be spent on the purchase of imported water – is inconsistent with the goals and objectives of the agency and state water plan. SB 620 will remove this statutory limitation on WRD's annual reserve fund which will provide WRD with the flexibility to adapt, as necessary.

We believe that SB 620 will help to ensure that residents have affordable water and therefore we respectfully request your signature on the bill.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Manning
President, California Groundwater Coalition

cc: Martha Guzman-Aceves, Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of Governor Brown
The Honorable Roderick D. Wright

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