



May 26, 2026

President pro Tempore Monique Limón
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

Speaker Robert Rivas
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable John Laird
Chair, Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal
Review
1021 O St., Suite 8720
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 2
1021 O Street, Suite 7210
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Steve Bennett
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4
1021 O Street, Suite 4710
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for \$25 Million Allocation to Department of Water Resources for the Agreements to Support Healthy Rivers and Landscapes

Dear President pro Tempore Limón, Speaker Rivas, Budget Chairs Laird and Gabriel, and Subcommittee Chairs Gómez Reyes and Bennett:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, I am writing to express our strong support for the Governor's May Revise proposal (BCP 3860-152-BCP-2026-MR) to allocate \$25 million in support of the State's commitments under the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) Program. Local public water agencies are also committing \$680 million through self-assessed fees in support of the HRL Program which is transforming California's waterways by restoring habitat across the Bay-Delta Watershed.

The HRL Program, formerly known as the Voluntary Agreements, is anticipated to be adopted as one of the implementation pathways for an updated Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Watershed (Bay-Delta Plan) and is further expected to be formally adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) later in 2026. Adoption of the HRL Program by the State Water Board would trigger an eight-year process wherein local, state, and federal partners would be required under the State Water Board’s regulation to meet previously agreed to terms.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is the primary agency responsible for meeting the State’s obligations to implement habitat restoration projects, perform science and monitoring, and ensure certain flows. The \$25 million allocation included in the Governor’s May Revise directly correlates to the State’s responsibilities and would go toward habitat restoration, science and monitoring, securing flows, and program administration. These funds are critical and the proposal demonstrates the Governor’s continued commitment and expectation that the State Water Board will adopt the updated Bay-Delta Plan with the HRL Program as a pathway before the end of 2026.

The public water agencies that are part of the HRL Program are collaborating with state, federal, and conservation partners to deploy dedicated monitoring resources, execute water purchases, and implement diversion reductions to deliver critical flows for the environment. This approach has already accelerated fish and wildlife improvements. All together, there are 58 early implementation projects: 35 are already complete; Seven projects are currently under construction; 11 are slated to begin construction in 2026; and the remaining five will be going into construction within the next two to three years.

ACWA strongly supports the HRL Program as the preferred pathway for updating the Bay-Delta Plan. The HRL Program can be expeditiously implemented to establish a holistic and integrated approach to improving the Bay-Delta ecosystem for fish and wildlife by aligning a broad spectrum of habitat, science, and adaptive management tools. Concurrently, it would help secure water supply reliability for other beneficial uses of water, including California’s communities, farms, and recreation.

The undersigned organizations strongly urge the Legislature to support this \$25 million investment in habitat health, increased environmental flows, and science through the HRL Program. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact ACWA’s State Legislative Director, Julia Hall at JuliaH@acwa.com or 530-902-9746.

Sincerely,

Julia Bishop Hall
State Legislative Director
Association of California Water Agencies

Kristopher Anderson
Policy Advocate
California Chamber of Commerce

Andrea Abergel
Director of Water
California Municipal Utilities Association

Jennifer Capitolo
Executive Director
California Water Association

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Gail Delihant
Senior Director, CA Government Affairs
Western Growers Association

Charles Wilson
Executive Director/CEO
Southern California Water Coalition

Geoffrey Vanden Heuvel
Director of Regulatory and Economic Affairs
Milk Producers Council

Jennifer Pierre
General Manager
State Water Contractors

Kam Bezdek
Legislative Affairs Director
Northern California Water Association

Shivaji Deshmukh
General Manager
Metropolitan Water District of Southern
California

Jason A. Martin
General Manager
Rancho California Water District

Joe Mouawad, P.E.
General Manager
Eastern Municipal Water District

Willie Whittlesey
General Manager
Yuba Water Agency

Matthew Litchfield
General Manager
Three Valleys MWD

Kevin L. Alexander, PE, ACE
General Manager
Inland Empire Utilities Agency

Caity Maple
Chair, Law and Legislation Committee
City of Sacramento

Dennis Herrera
General Manager
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Valerie Pryor
General Manager
Zone 7 Water Agency

Joshua Golka
Head of State Government Relations
Valley Water

Jimi Netniss
General Manager
Modesto Irrigation District

Clifford Chan
General Manager
East Bay Municipal Utility District

Kat Wuelfing
General Manager
Mid-Peninsula Water District

David W. Pedersen
General Manager
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

Paul E. Shoenberger, P.E.
General Manager
Mesa Water District

J. Scott Petersen, P.E.
Water Policy Director
San Luis Delta Mendota Water Authority

Cary Keaten
General Manager
Solano Irrigation District

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J. M. Barrett
General Manager
Coachella Valley Water District

Dennis D. LaMoreaux
General Manager
Palmdale Water District

Jim Peifer
Executive Director
Regional Water Authority

Adam Larsen
General Manager
San Juan Water District

Brad Koehn
General Manager
Turlock Irrigation District

Kevin Phillips
District Manager
Paradise Irrigation District

Esther M. Saenz
General Manager
Desert Water Agency

Deanna Jackson
Executive Director
Tri-County Water Authority

Craig D. Miller, P.E.
General Manager
Western Municipal Water District