



February 10, 2014

The Honorable Lois Wolk  
Member, California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 5114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 848 – The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality, and Water Supply Act of 2014 (As Proposed to be Amended)**

Dear Senator Wolk:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I appreciate the opportunity to provide preliminary comments on your Senate Bill 848 (as proposed to be amended).

RCRC is an association of thirty-four rural California counties and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from those member counties. RCRC supports the inclusion of the following provisions contained in SB 848 (as proposed to be amended) in any water bond ultimately placed on the November 2014 ballot:

- Funding for grants and loans for public water system infrastructure improvements and related actions to meet safe drinking water standards and ensure affordable drinking water, with priority given to small water systems serving disadvantaged communities whose drinking water source is impaired.
- Funding for technical assistance for eligible communities.
- Funding for grants and direct expenditures to finance urgent public health emergency actions to ensure that safe drinking water supplies are available.
- Funding for the Small Communities Grant Program for grants for wastewater treatment projects, with priority for projects that serve disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities and special consideration for small communities with limited financial resources.
- Funding for the proposed Private Well and Septic Systems Investment Fund for grants and loans to private well and septic owners to protect drinking water sources.
- Funding for competitive grants for projects associated with Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plans with a 25% local match requirement.
- Allowing the suspension or reduction of local cost share requirements for projects serving disadvantaged communities.
- Funding for groundwater management plans and projects with priority for projects that address groundwater overdraft.
- Funding for competitive grants for stormwater capture and reuse projects, as well as development of stormwater capture and reuse plans, with a 25 percent local cost share requirement.

- Funding for Delta sustainability projects including ecosystem, agricultural, community, and recreational sustainability.
- Funding for the Delta levee maintenance subventions program, special flood protection projects and emergency response and repair.
- Funding for projects to protect and improve watersheds, wetlands, forests and floodplains.
- Funding for water storage projects including surface water and groundwater projects, and for studying the feasibility of additional surface water projects.
- Inclusion of the water rights/area of origin language as found in the 2014 water bond currently on the November 2014 ballot.

While RCRC supports the abovementioned provisions, RCRC requests your favorable consideration of the following suggested changes:

- The addition of IRWM funding for the Mountain Counties Overlay as delineated in the California Water Plan;
- Increased funding for Delta sustainability and water storage;
- The addition of language specifying that the funds allocated to the California Water Commission for the public benefits associated with water storage projects are to be continuously appropriated; and,
- The inclusion of language specifying that funds allocated to the California Water Commission for the public benefits associated with water storage projects “shall not be subject to appropriation or transfer by the Legislature or the Governor for any other purpose.”

While RCRC appreciates that SB 848 proposes to make funds available to the Department of Water Resources for studying the feasibility of additional surface storage projects, the bill also specifically excludes the storage projects identified in the CALFED Bay-Delta Record of Decision. RCRC would like to bring to your attention that, due to the lack of adequate funding, the feasibility studies for CALFED identified surface storage projects have yet to be completed.

In conclusion, RCRC looks forward to working with you on your SB 848. I am available to meet with you and your staff if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Kathy Mannion  
Legislative Advocate

cc: Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee  
Committee Consultant  
Republican Consultant