February 4, 2019

The Honorable Henry Stern  
Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5046  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 19 (Dodd) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Stern:

On behalf of the Groundwater Resources Association of California (GRA), we write to express support for SB 19 (Dodd) which will require the Department of Water Resources to deploy a network of stream gages that includes a determination of funding needs and opportunities for reactivating existing gages.

GRA membership includes approximately one thousand professionals located throughout California with technical and legal expertise in groundwater. GRA has helped formulate statewide policy on the development, management, and protection of the state’s groundwater resources.

Stream gages are devices that measure the hydrologic characteristics of a river or stream at a specific location and generate critical information about California’s water. Gaps in the stream gage network make it difficult to understand stream flow conditions, and since groundwater and surface water are closely interconnected in many basins, this can make it difficult to develop water budgets. In California, approximately 39 million people, a $47 billion agricultural industry, and a vast array of wildlife depend on reliable water sources, but our lack of data on the stream gage network impairs our ability to effectively manage our water and groundwater. There are over 3,600 locations in California where stream gages have been active at some point, but only 54% of those have recently been active.

SB 19 will help identify watersheds and groundwater basins with the most significant gage gaps, where inactive gages exist, and prioritize funding to deploy stream gages based upon the gaps in the system. This will supplement the needed information for flood forecasting, water diversions, water availability analysis, water budgets and the protection of fish and wildlife. Further, the legislature’s passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in 2014 has significantly heightened the need to obtain better stream flow data to aid with implementation of groundwater recharge projects so urgently needed to comply with the Act. Understanding the state of stream flows in California is essential in preparing for periods of drought and flooding, and protecting and sustaining our limited surface water and groundwater supplies.

For these reasons, GRA is in strong support of SB 19 and respectfully requests your "AYE" vote on this measure. If you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at 916-596-9163.

Sincerely,

Timothy K. Parker, PG, CEG, CHG  
GRA Legislative Committee Chairman
cc: GRA Legislative Committee, Board of Directors, and Staff  
The Honorable Bill Dodd  
Honorable Members, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee  
Dennis O’Connor, Principal Consultant, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee  
Todd Moffitt, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus