July 11, 2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 307 (Roth) – REQUEST FOR VETO

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the Groundwater Resources Association of California (GRA), we write to respectfully request your veto on SB 307 (Roth), which seeks to create a new certification process for water conveyed in California’s water transportation systems.

GRA is dedicated to resource management that protects and improves groundwater quantity and quality, and our membership includes over one thousand groundwater professionals located throughout California. GRA has helped formulate statewide policy on the development, management, and protection of groundwater resources.

SB 307 seeks to impose an unnecessary and duplicative environmental review of the Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project (Project). GRA is not taking a position on the Project, however understands that since 2009, the Project has been extensively studied, publicly reviewed, and approved under California’s stringent environmental laws. Following a multi-year public California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process, the Project’s operations were determined to have no significant adverse environmental impacts of any kind.

The CEQA approvals for this project have been challenged in court numerous times, and all attempts have been denied. Questioning the validity of a project that has already been publicly reviewed and approved under CEQA should be resolved in the court system, not through the legislative process.

If enacted, SB 307 will have far reaching negative impacts on the entire California water community. The transportation of water in existing conveyance facilities is already a highly-regulated process, that must also follow CEQA. Even though this measure is targeted at this one Project, the creation of a new regulatory layer to block the Project sets a dangerous precedent that puts future water conveyance projects at risk of similar regulatory reconsideration. Considering the mandates in the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and the need for local and regional agencies to work collaboratively to meet groundwater sustainability goals, placing additional constraints on water conveyance projects could negatively impact the success of SGMA in groundwater basins throughout the state.

For these reasons, GRA strongly opposes SB 307 and respectfully requests your veto when the bill comes before you. If you have any questions regarding our position on this measure, please do not hesitate to contact us at 916-596-9163.
Sincerely,

Timothy K. Parker, PG, CEG, CHG
GRA Legislative Committee Chairman

cc: The Honorable Richard Roth
Rachel Wagoner, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
GRA Legislative Committee, Board of Directors, and Staff