



CVCWA Central Valley Clean Water Association

Representing Over Forty Wastewater Agencies

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February 22, 2006

The Honorable Sheila Kuehl, Chair
Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
State Capitol, Room 5108
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: BOND FUNDING FOR WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Dear Senator Kuehl,

The Central Valley Clean Water Association (CVCWA) represents forty-nine wastewater agencies in the Central Valley. We have been working with the California Association of Sanitation Agencies and they have recently written your committee regarding placing wastewater infrastructure funds in the Governor's proposed infrastructure bond proposal. We would like to add to their comments.

In the last two years, the State Water Resources Control Board has been developing a proposed statewide Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) that, when adopted, will require every public agency in California that operates a sewage collection system (approximately 2,000), to apply for that WDR. The WDR, in turn, requires that each agency develop a Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP) that, among other things, requires them to identify public sewer system deficiencies and then correct them. For many small and low-income communities in the Central Valley and across the state, that will put a financial burden on homeowners that they may not be able to afford. The cost of preparation of the plan and implementation of the required rehabilitation will have to be borne by the property owners currently connected to the sewer system and the smaller the city or agency, the more it will cost per customer. In some cases, monthly sewer fees may be as high as \$60.00 per month on top of the cost of wastewater treatment. Such a rate would typically apply to small communities across the state, many of which have average income levels as low as 70% of the state average.

CVCWA proposes that a portion of the infrastructure bond proposal be allocated for sewer infrastructure and that it be **set aside** for grants and loans to small and low-income communities to be used for both SSMP preparation and sewer infrastructure rehabilitation. The State Water Resources Control Board currently has a Small Community Grant Program and a Revolving Fund Loan Program that is under funded and for a number of years non-existent. These two programs, especially the grant program, should be funded to assist small agencies in meeting this new State requirement.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Warren Tellefson
Executive Officer

Cc: Mike Dillon, CASA

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