

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

1416 NINTH STREET, P.O. BOX 942836
SACRAMENTO, CA 94236-0001
(916) 653-5791



January 21, 2015

Mr. Thomas Esqueda
Director of Public Utilities
City of Fresno
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, California 93721

Dear Mr. Esqueda:

This letter is to express support for the City of Fresno's long-term plan to improve water supply reliability by implementing a balanced conjunctive water management program. The Recharge Fresno Program is consistent with the actions outlined in the Governor's California Water Action Plan, including increasing regional self-reliance, managing for dry periods, expanding water storage capacity and improving groundwater management, as well as increasing operational and regulatory efficiency.

Foundational to the long-term success of the City's program will be securing sustainable financing for the needed capital and operational and maintenance needs of the program. There are opportunities for State support through incentive-based grant programs funded by Propositions 84 and 1, and we encourage you to pursue State assistance as an augment to the City's investments. However, State funding is highly competitive with needs far exceeding available funds. In addition, many Proposition 1 grant programs require local cost shares of no less than 50 percent.

As you know, this past year has been historic with respect to California water management with continuation of a severe drought, enactment of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and passage of Proposition 1. These times more than ever require all levels of government to work together to find solutions to the growing list of water-related challenges – declining groundwater basins, water quality degradation, aging infrastructure, prolonged droughts, lack of sustainable financing and climate change. The Recharge Fresno program will go a long way in helping address these and other challenges in the Kings sub-basin.

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In closing, I want to note that a central feature of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act is the recognition that groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally. Local agencies such as the City are in the best position to assess the conditions of their local groundwater basins and take the necessary steps to bring chronically over-drafted basins into balance and avoid undesirable outcomes. The State's primary role is to provide guidance and technical support on how to plan for a more sustainable future and to step in on an interim basis when, but only when, local agencies fail to exercise their responsibilities as set forth in this legislation. The City's Recharge Fresno program represents a huge step in the right direction.

If you would like additional information or have any questions, please contact Paula Landis, Chief of Division of Integrated Regional Water Management at (559) 230-3310 or Paula.Landis@water.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Mark W. Cowin
Director