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January 31, 2006

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Lester Snow, Director
Department of Water Resources
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

RE: South Delta Improvements Program

Dear Director Snow:

The Kern County Board of Supervisors supports the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) South Delta Improvements Program (SDIP), which is a critical water supply, water quality and environmental project designed to meet California's diverse water needs. This October, DWR and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released a draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/S) for SDIP, beginning an important public review and comment process.

California critically needs a safe, reliable, and high quality water supply to keep pace with its rapidly growing population and economy. However, we have limited water supplies in our arid state, so we must use our existing water resources and infrastructure more wisely, or we will place our communities, farms, environment, and businesses at great risk. Two-thirds of California receives its water from the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Given its importance, we need better ways to manage the Delta's water delivery system, as well as the water itself. In essence, we need to make every drop count.

In 2000, the State and federal governments initiated the historic CalFed Bay-Delta Program to manage the Bay-Delta's water resources and eco-system. Environmental groups, water agencies, business advocates, farmers, and State and federal water and fish agencies supported the plan. SDIP is the next step forward in this long-term planning effort for the Bay-Delta.

SDIP is a responsible and balanced plan to better utilize and integrate our existing water management infrastructure in the Delta. Collectively, it will improve California's water supply reliability, water quality, and the overall health of the Bay-Delta ecosystem. The program will construct seasonal tidal gates to protect fish, and improve water circulation and quality in the Delta, dredge select Delta channels to improve water deliveries for local farmers, and allow State Water Project deliveries to increase modestly — only when needed and environmentally safe to do so.

Currently, the state is constrained in its ability to use surplus water supplies. We have the infrastructure to move the water, but until SDIP is approved, the state's water managers cannot fully or responsibly use the existing system. SDIP calls for only a three-to-five percent increase in the average amount of water pumped from the Delta. More significantly, SDIP will provide the flexibility to shift the timing of water deliveries when surplus is available and when environmentally safe to do so. SDIP is an ideal option for California to advance — it will not require building a new project or major new infrastructure. Moreover,

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funding for the program has already been secured through passage of voter approved bonds in 2000 (Proposition 13).

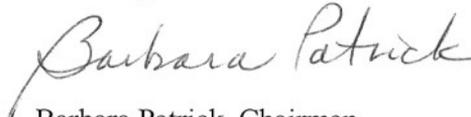
Importantly, SDIP will help protect important Delta environmental resources including fish species by providing the State greater flexibility in how and when SDIP operates its system of pumps.

Given all these points, SDIP is supported by a statewide coalition of water, agriculture, business, planning organizations, and local government officials including the Association of California Water Agencies, State Water Contractors, California Chamber of Commerce, California Business Properties Association, and the Western Growers Association.

Water is critical to California's families, farms, and businesses. It is our responsibility to use this precious resource wisely through all possible best management practices, including water conservation, recycling and storage, to ensure California's water future. It is imperative that we have a more flexible water delivery system so that we can continue to accommodate growth in our population and economy while relying on existing water supplies.

Again, we strongly support SDIP and encourage all key stakeholders to help advance this important project.

Sincerely,



Barbara Patrick, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

BP:ADK:LEGGENsouthdeltawrA
CF 1000.30.70

cc: Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Ryan Brodderick, Director, California Department of Fish and Game
Mike Chrisman, Secretary, California Resources Agency
Joe Grindstaff, Director, California Bay-Delta Authority
Kirk Rodgers, Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region,
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Dan Skopec, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Terry Tamminen, Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor