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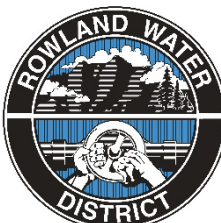
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March 26, 2025

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear
Chair, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Capitol Office, Suite 7720
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 454 (McNerney) – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Blakespear:

On behalf of the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), and the undersigned organizations, we are writing to express our strong support for SB 454, which would establish a statewide PFAS Mitigation Fund intended to help local water agencies, including cities, leverage funding to pay for cleanup of manmade PFAS contamination in drinking water and wastewater. This much-needed funding tool would help water and wastewater agencies pay for costs that would otherwise be covered by local ratepayers on their water and wastewater bills to help maintain water affordability.

Public water agencies are responsible for delivering safe, clean, and affordable drinking water throughout California. To fulfill that responsibility, public water agencies must comply with federal and state drinking water standards. Drinking water standards can have significant financial impacts on public water agencies, which are passed on to water ratepayers and ultimately, impact water affordability.

PFAS, characterized as “forever chemicals” due to their stability in the environment and resistance to breaking down, are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been used extensively since the 1940s and can today be found in our food system, drinking water supplies, and air. Despite legislative efforts, PFAS are still manufactured, distributed, and used globally and continue to passively contaminate water supplies and wastewater systems. Local water agencies are not the source of PFAS or responsible for the development of the products that introduced PFAS into the water supply and wastewater systems, yet they are responsible for the costs of monitoring for their presence, treating the water, and disposing of the contamination.

In April 2024, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced new national, legally enforceable maximum contaminant levels (MCL) of 4.0 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA and PFOS as individual contaminants and a standard of 10 ppt for three other chemicals – PFNA, PFHxS, and HFPO-DA (commonly referred to as GenXChemicals). The EPA estimates that the nationwide cost for public water agencies to comply with the proposed PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR) will be between \$772 million and \$1.2 billion annually. The specific cost for California’s public water agencies to comply with the NPDRWs is currently unknown.

This year, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is expected to initiate a formal rulemaking process to set a drinking water standard for PFAS. Existing law requires a contaminant’s MCL to be established at a level as close to its public health goal as is technologically and economically feasible. Existing law also requires state drinking water standards to be at least as stringent as federal standards set by the EPA. **With California’s MCL anticipated to be at least as protective as the federal MCL, the costs associated with treating California’s water supplies will be significant.**

SB 454 would propose the development of the PFAS Mitigation Fund to leverage current and future state, federal, and private funding sources to dedicate funding for the State Water Board to support local water agencies in addressing the critically important infrastructure costs to treat for PFAS and help ensure safe drinking water supplies for communities.

For the reasons above, ACWA, Cal Cities, and the undersigned organizations strongly support SB 454 and respectfully request your “AYE” vote when the bill is heard in the Senate Environmental Quality Committee. If you have any questions about our position, please contact Chelsea Haines at chelseah@acwa.com or Melissa Sparks-Kranz at msparkskranz@calcities.org.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Haines
State Regulatory Director
Association of California Water Agencies

Cathy Lee
General Manager
Carmichael Water District

Melissa Sparks-Kranz
Legislative Advocate
League of California Cities

Chris Berch, P.E.
General Manager
Jurupa Community Services District

Aaron Avery
Director of State Legislative Affairs
California Special Districts Association

Craig Miller, P.E.
General Manager
Western Municipal Water District

Andrea Abergel
Director of Water
California Municipal Utilities Association

David Coxey
General Manager
Bella Vista Water District

Brian Olney
General Manager
Helix Water District

David McNair
General Manager
Scotts Valley Municipal Water District

Carlos Quintero
General Manager
Sweetwater Authority

David Stoldt
General Manager
Monterey Peninsula Water Management District

Catherine Cerri
General Manager
Lake Arrowhead Community Services District

Devon Upadhyay
General Manager
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Elizabeth Salomone
General Manager
Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control
& Water Conservation Improvement

Hannah Davidson
Project Manager
Hidden Valley Lake Community Services District

J.M. Barrett
General Manager
Coachella Valley Water District

James Peifer
Executive Director
Regional Water Authority

James Lee
General Manager
Crescenta Valley Water District

James Prior
General Manager
San Gabriel County Water District

Jason Martin
General Manager
Rancho California Water District

Jennifer Spindler
General Manager
Crestline-Lake Arrowhead Water Agency

Jessica Gauger
Director of Legislative Advocacy & Public Affairs
California Association of Sanitation Agencies

Joe Mouawad, P.E.
General Manager
Eastern Municipal Water District

Justin Hopkins
General Manager
Stockton East Water District

Justin Scott-Coe
General Manager
Monte Vista Water District

Kat Wuelfing
General Manager
Mid-Peninsula Water District

Kimberly Thorner
General Manager
Olivenhain Municipal Water District

Krista Bernasconi
Mayor
City of Roseville

Kristine McCaffrey, P.E.
General Manager
Calleguas Municipal Water District

Mandip Samra
General Manager
Burbank Water and Power

Matt Stone
General Manager
Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency

Matthew Litchfield
General Manager
Three Valleys Municipal Water District

Michael Moore
General Manager/CEO
East Valley Water District

Norman Huff
General Manager
Camrosa Water District

Paul Shoenberger, P.E.
General Manager
Mesa Water District

Randall James Reed
President
Cucamonga Valley Water District

Sheryl Shaw, P.E.
General Manager
Walnut Valley Water District

Steve Johnson
General Manager
Desert Water Agency

Sue Mosburg
Executive Director
California-Nevada Section American Water
Works Association

Tom Coleman
General Manager
Rowland Water District