



March 28, 2025

The Honorable Damon Connolly

Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials
1020 N Street, Room 171
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 532 (Ransom) Water rate assistance program – **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairperson Connolly,

The California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA) is the sponsor of AB 532 (Ransom). CMUA and the undersigned are pleased to support AB 532. CMUA represents over 60 public water agencies that serve water to 75 percent of Californians, many of which are urban retail water suppliers. The undersigned, representing public and private water agencies in California, share a common goal to ensure that low-income Californians have access to water rate assistance.

AB 532 would make significant progress toward Californians accessing low-income water rate assistance. The bill would clarify the statutory authority for urban retail water suppliers to establish low-income water rate assistance programs within their communities. The bill additionally includes reporting to the State Water Board that would highlight successes and challenges for the State to offer assistance to the right communities. Lastly, the bill establishes the California Low Income Household Water Rate Assistance Program modeled after the federally funded Low Income Household Water Assistance Program of 2020.

Recognizing the needs of low-income Californians, many public and private water agencies have created their own programs to offset financial hardship for their customers. This statutory clarification is necessary for many public water agencies that are ready to offer such programs or are looking for ways

to provide support for their low-income customers. Many more agencies are looking at those options and need the certainty that AB 532 provides. Local programs tend to be efficient and effective because they take the diverse needs of the community they serve into account. Within the existing confines of Proposition 218, the authority to offer low-income programs is the first step in providing water rate assistance.

This bill also recognizes that a local solution may not be appropriate for smaller agencies. The proposed Low-Income Household Water Rate Assistance Program would target systems serving under 3,000 connections where financial hardships are more heavily realized. State assistance for those entities is an appropriate first step in addressing affordability concerns.

For these reasons, the undersigned support AB 532. If you have any questions regarding our position, please contact Andrea Abergel at 916-841-4060 or at aabergel@cmua.org.

Sincerely,

Andrea Abergel
Director of Water
California Municipal Utilities Association

Ernesto A. Avila
Board President
Contra-Costa Water District

Soren Nelson
Senior Policy Advocate
Association of California Water Agencies

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

Sue Mosburg
Executive Director
CA-NV AWWA

Michael R. Moore, P.E.
General Manager
East Valley Water District

Aaron Avery
Director of State Legislative Affairs
California Special Districts Association

Greg Thomas
General Manager
Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District

Jennifer Capitolo
Executive Director
California Water Association

Paul Cook
General Manager
Irvine Ranch Water District

Mandip Samra
General Manager
Burbank Water and Power

David Pederson
General Manager
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

Krista Bernasconi
Mayor
City of Roseville

Deven Upadhyay
General Manager
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Anthony L. Firenzi, PE
Director of Strategic Affairs
Placer County Water Agency

John Thiel
General Manager
West Valley Water District

Jason A. Martin
General Manager
Rancho California Water District

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

Cc: The Honorable Rhodesia Ransom
Josh Tooker, Chief Consultant
Gino Folchi, Republican Caucus Consultant