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April 14, 2016

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The Honorable Richard S. Gordon
California State Assembly
P.O. Box 942849, Room 3013
Sacramento, CA 94249-0024

RE: Long-Term Water Conservation and Management Strategy

Dear Assembly Member Gordon:



As the state's focus begins to transition from the State Water Resources Control Board's 2015 emergency regulation to a potential long-term strategy for water conservation, Bay Planning Coalition strongly believes it should be the state's policy to emphasize local investments in drought-resiliency and ongoing water-use efficiency and leave discretion with local water agencies to choose appropriate management strategies.

Bay Planning Coalition is a nonprofit, member organization that advocates for sustainable commerce, industry, infrastructure, recreation and the natural environment connected to the San Francisco Bay and its watershed. We work very closely with the water agencies and regional government entities in the Bay Area on related policy issues and see this as an important one, particularly as water is not a discretionary resource for many of our industrial members.

Since the 1990s, local water agencies have invested nearly \$20 billion in drought-resilient strategies and projects that have given today's local water managers a wide array of water supply tools to minimize disruptive shortages. These investments are widely credited with keeping California's economy intact throughout the current multi-year drought.

While well-intended, the State Water Board's 2015 emergency regulation largely overlooked these investments and required local urban water suppliers to impose mandatory reductions in water use on their customers, even where local water supply conditions did not warrant such stringent restrictions. This one-size-fits-all approach should not be the basis for the state's long-term strategy moving forward.

Rather than focusing on mandatory, across-the-board conservation that does not recognize local conditions, California's long-term strategy should demand high levels of water use efficiency established at the local level, require high levels of accountability at local water agencies, and preserve local control over water management strategies. The long-term strategy is most appropriately administered by the California Department of Water Resources, which already has the lead role under state law in California's Urban Water Management Plan / Water Shortage Contingency Plan process.

As the Legislature begins to discuss this important public policy issue, Bay Planning Coalition respectfully requests that you advocate for a more sustainable approach to water conservation that complements the critical plans for and local investments in water supply reliability actions needed to meet California's 21st century water needs.

Sincerely,



John A. Coleman
Chief Executive Officer
Bay Planning Coalition