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PPIC Polling Shows Drought Concern High, Big Water Bond Support Weak, Among Likely Voters

SACRAMENTO—The Public Policy Institute of California’s annual survey of Californians’ attitudes about the environment was released today and shows that the state’s continuing drought rightfully worries the majority of Californians, and that they want government action to address it.

The poll found that 54% of adults surveyed and 61% of likely voters consider water supply to be a “big problem” in their part of California. Additionally, 75% of adults and 70% of likely voters favor their “local water district making it mandatory for residents to reduce their water use,” according to the survey of 1,705 California adults conducted between July 8 and 15. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.7%.

The poll also reports that 51% of voters say they would vote “yes” on an \$11.1 billion water bond measure on the November ballot. However, the survey did not detail the contents of the current \$11.1 billion bond scheduled for that ballot, Proposition 43. Other polling has shown that when voters learn the contents of the current bond, which includes elements that harm the San Francisco Bay Delta, provides public funds for unneeded dams, and does not directly help or address drought issues, voter support falls well below that needed for the bond to pass.

Sierra Club California opposes the current \$11.1 billion bond, which the legislature negotiated nearly five years ago.

Statement from Kathryn Phillips, Director, Sierra Club California:

“The poll shows that Californians clearly understand the seriousness of the drought. They get that water managers haven’t done enough and can do more to encourage smarter water management.

“Californians also want a water bond, but voters are *not* overwhelmingly in favor of a big water bond, according to the poll. And, as we know from other polling, once voters find out just how out of step the current bond is with what people around the state need, they’ll reject it.

“The current bond’s proponents will crow that their pile of pork is acceptable. But the reality is far different. We hope the clearer minds in the state legislature will negotiate a replacement bond that truly addresses the drought and that doesn’t spend public money on certain water buyers’ useless pet projects.”

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Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the Sierra Club’s 13 chapters and more than 380,000 members and supporters in California.