

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Advocacy Groups Present Outline for Commonsense \$6B Water Bond

Draft plan improves water security for all Californians, relies on proposals already vetted by Legislature and eliminates blank checks included in Governor's proposal

Sacramento – Today a coalition of environmental and responsible government advocacy organizations released an alternative outline for a pared-down \$6B water bond. The coalition has identified priority projects that would improve water security for all Californians, ensure fiscal responsibility in allocating bond funds and eliminate the special interest investments that are driving up costs in the bond proposals put forward to date.

The proposal corrects two major deficiencies in other proposals, including the governor's just-released bond outline. First, it requires accountability and competitiveness for use of taxpayers' funds. In contrast, one-third of the governor's proposal would be handed over to unaccountable political appointees for distribution.

Second, the coalition proposal is truly neutral on the big tunnels that would remove water from the San Francisco Bay Delta. It does not include taxpayer subsidies proposed by the governor to buy water that would be diverted from rivers and streams to special interests.

Friends of the River, the League of Women Voters of California, Planning and Conservation League and Sierra Club California worked together to draft the alternative bond outline. The coalition's plan ensures that residents in all parts of the state would benefit proportionally from the bond. It addresses water quality and water availability in both urban and agricultural communities.

Dubbed "The Near-Term Clean Water and Drought Response Act of 2014," the coalition's proposal suggests allocating \$6 billion in the following general categories:

- **Clean and Safe Drinking Water -- \$1 billion**, including funds for wastewater treatment and response to public health emergencies and drought.

- **Regional Self-Sufficiency -- \$1.5 billion**, including funds for water conservation and efficiency and recycling in both urban and agricultural areas as well as storm water and dry weather runoff capture and use.
- **Watershed Protection and Water Quality -- \$1.1 billion** to be invested in watershed protection and restoration projects throughout the state and fulfilling existing state funding obligations for restoration projects. Includes a stipulation that funding may not be used to buy water or for inter-basin transfers.
- **Water Supply Reliability -- \$2.4 billion** to fund groundwater cleanup and sustainable groundwater management and allocate \$1B for competitive surface and ground storage projects, with Legislative appropriation.

See the end of this press release for a complete description of funding streams available in each of these categories.

The members of the coalition advocating for this pared down and balanced bond proposal offer the following quotes for use by the media:

“When we’re talking about something as fundamental as water, we need a bond that will truly benefit all Californians – especially since all Californians will have to pay for it. This proposal strips out the pork and makes sure that there are no blank checks for special interests by insisting on a competitive process for funding surface and underground water storage projects and legislative oversight of the spending.”

- Helen Hutchison, President, League of Women Voters of California

“We're pleased the governor has publicly expressed his opposition to the water bond currently scheduled for a vote in November, Proposition 43. We share that opposition. Unfortunately, the governor’s bond proposal still contains two environmentally destructive elements. . We’re offering an alternative bond proposal that works for the environment and all Californians.”

- Kathryn Phillips, Director of Sierra Club California

“Governor Brown should ensure that a new bond is truly BDCP neutral. His latest proposal would enable massive water transfers that would benefit special interests at the expense of northern California and the San Francisco Bay Delta. By eliminating that lightning rod, our proposal is much more likely to be approved by voters.”

- Jonas Minton, Water Policy Advisor, Planning and Conservation League

“Our bond proposal protects California’s natural areas because the science shows that supporting fish and wildlife also ultimately benefits people. Allocating this \$6B according to

the priority projects we've identified provides the water Californians need to thrive in inland, coastal, urban and rural communities."

- Eric Wesselman, Executive Director, Friends of the River

"As someone whose family has farmed in the Delta for generations, I'm relieved to finally see the coalition's commonsense approach to responsible water solutions in our region and throughout the state."

- Tom Zuckerman, Delta farmer

The Near-Term Clean Water and Drought Response Act of 2014 \$6 billion

This provides a framework for a rational bond measure that is responsive to fiscal constraints and addresses real needs with near-term solutions. It draws upon the best elements put forward in legislation proposed earlier this year in the Senate and the Assembly.

Clean and Safe Drinking Water -- \$1 billion

- \$400M to SWRCB for safe drinking water projects
- \$400M for wastewater treatment
- \$200M for public health emergency actions and drought response
- Priority to disadvantaged communities

Regional Self-Sufficiency -- \$1.5 billion

- \$500M for water conservation and efficiency, both urban and agricultural
- \$500M for stormwater and dry weather runoff capture and use
- \$500M for water recycling

Watershed Protection and Water Quality -- \$1.1 billion

- \$350M to State Conservancies, including \$100M to the Delta Conservancy, for watershed protection, restoration, and water quality projects on public and NGO-owned lands or other projects approved by the local Board of Supervisors
- \$200M for watershed protection and restoration activities in watersheds outside of State Conservancy coverage
- \$50M for urban streams
- \$500M for state obligations, including Klamath, San Joaquin, Salton Sea, and wildlife refuges
- Watershed funding may not be used to buy water or for interbasin transfers

Water Supply Reliability -- \$2.4 billion

- \$900M for groundwater cleanup
- \$100M for sustainable groundwater management planning
- \$400M for Delta levees meeting the PL84-99 standard
- \$1B for competitive surface and ground storage projects, with Legislative appropriation

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