



The Water Bond Coalition of Northern and Coastal California

June 19, 2023

The Honorable Dave Min
Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
1021 O St., Ste. 6710
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1567 (Garcia) SUPPORT

Dear Senator Min,

We, the Water Bond Coalition, established in 2002, is an affiliation of more than 70 cities, counties, special districts and nonprofit organizations in California's northern, coastal and rural communities write in support of AB 1567 (Garcia), which proposes a \$15.9 billion bond to enhance California's climate resilience. We thank Assemblymember Garcia for his continued leadership in authoring natural resources and climate general obligation bonds. As a Coalition, we are strong supporters of Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) planning. We appreciate and support IRWM's inclusion in Assembly Bill 1567 and the recent amendments to the measure increasing IRWM funding to \$350 million.

IRWM is a valued and proven approach to water management that needs to be sustained. Investments in IRWM planning span nearly two decades and begin with the premise that integrated, multi-objective, collaborative approaches to resource management result in regionally appropriate solutions and decision-making. Statewide, water resource agencies face increasing challenges in funding critical infrastructure projects while balancing the need to protect species and create systems that are resilient to climate change and natural disasters. This is particularly true for disadvantaged communities, which often lack adequate financing mechanisms. In a time of funding constraints, this unique grant program promotes the inclusion of stakeholders throughout local communities to work together to identify resource priorities that integrate multiple objectives.

Coalition members believe local communities have the knowledge, skills, and expertise to help the State realize its investments. The implementation of IRWM planning is working to ensure a future of reliable, sustainable water and watershed management throughout California, covering 87% of the state's geographic area and 99% of its population (CA DWR). The IRWM grant program is a creative way to maximize the state's return on its investment, with approximately \$1.4 billion in state grants matched by more than \$5.6 billion in local and regional investments to implement 1,500 projects in every part of California.

The IRWM program is an effective forum for local decision-making on climate, resources and water resiliency issues statewide, and it is for these reasons that we support its inclusion in AB 1567 in the amount of \$350 million.

The Water Bond Coalition is grateful for Mr. Garcia's leadership and looks forward to working with him, this committee, and the Legislature at large to ensure smart investments that keep our forests and watersheds healthy, provide clean, reliable and affordable water supplies, and protect communities from catastrophic natural disasters that are exacerbated by the effects of climate change. For these reasons we are proud to support AB 1567 and respectfully request your support for the measure.