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January 21, 2009

Richard Wright
Chairman
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
9174 Sky Park Court, Suite 100
San Diego, CA 92123

RE: *Carlsbad Desalination Project [Resolution No. R9-2008-0039]*

Dear Chairman Wright:

On behalf of the San Diego County Farm Bureau, I am writing in support of the Carlsbad Desalination Project. I previously testified before the Regional Water Quality Control Board in 2006 when unanimous approval was given to the project's discharge permit. In 2008, I was pleased when the Board conditionally approved the project's Flow, Entrainment, and Impingement Minimization Plan which will help reduce marine impacts. Poseidon Resources has now submitted a Marine Life Mitigation Plan to satisfy the Board's conditions and I respectfully request that you approve it at your February 11 meeting.

It is critical for this project to move forward as soon as possible in consideration of the dire water situation in California. Due to court rulings that reduce water deliveries from the Bay Delta to Southern California, San Diego County is experiencing massive reductions in our water supplies. While water conservation has been emphasized to businesses and residents throughout the County, this cutback has disproportionately affected our agricultural industry.

Agriculture currently ranks as the fifth largest industry in San Diego County, producing more than \$1.4 billion in crops. Small family farms make up the majority of our industry and are the most vulnerable to water unreliability and price increases. To deal with the water shortages, many have substantially reduced crop production, which affects their yields for years. Sadly, many of these businesses won't be able to remain economically competitive and will sell their land, eliminating much of San Diego's agricultural heritage and open space.

It is imperative that this region develop new, drought-tolerant local sources that can supplement our diminishing imported water supplies. The Carlsbad Desalination Project is a viable and timely option for our county. Any other options would take years to develop, but our need to diversify San Diego County's water supply is urgent.

On behalf of San Diego's 5,000 farmers, I urge you to approve Poseidon's Marine Life Mitigation Plan and allow the Carlsbad Desalination Project to move forward.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Larson", written in a cursive style.

Eric Larson
Executive Director of the San Diego County Farm Bureau

cc:

David King, Vice Chairman
Eric Anderson, Board Member
Grant Destache, Board Member
George Loveland, Board Member
Wayne Rayfield, Board Member
Gary Thompson, Board Member
Kris Weber, Board Member
John Robertus, Executive Director
Catherine Hagan, Regional Board Attorney