

OFA

## Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency

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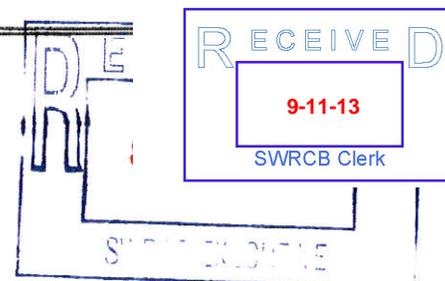
Marina D West, P.G., General Manager

[www.bdvwa.org](http://www.bdvwa.org)

A Public Agency

September 4, 2013

Thomas Howard, Executive Director  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I St.  
Sacramento, CA 95814



### Re: Hi-Desert Water District CWSRF 2014 IUP Participation

Dear Mr. Howard,

We are aware that the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) is preparing the annual Clean Water State Revolving Fund Intended Use Plan (IUP) for submission to the US EPA in October. The IUP draft identifies Hi-Desert Water District (HDWD), Yucca Valley, CA as an "A" priority.

Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency is writing to express our strong support for this urgently needed project financing, and we also believe that HDWD has a solid financing plan for the loan funds.

For financing beyond what can be achieved through state, federal and other grants, we understand the financing plan is based on the creation of an Assessment District to guarantee repayment of any funds obtained through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund program for the subsequent 30 years. This option is an ideal way for this disadvantaged community, HDWD's customer base, to afford this necessary wastewater infrastructure project.

We also write to express our appreciation to both the Water Board headquarters staff and to the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Board (CRB-RWQCB) members and staff. We have observed this collaborative process for several years within the community of Yucca Valley and with HDWD to ensure that groundwater will be protected. This, in turn, protects public health and helps drive the local economy. I am, in fact, a member of the HDWD Wastewater Public Advisory Committee.

A few salient details for the record:

- HDWD is 99% septic, the highest in California and well above the highest state, Vermont at 55% as well as the California average, at 10%, according to the US EPA.
- The US EPA in 2011 found that septic percolation in Yucca Valley violated drinking water safety standards for nitrates and other materials. The percolation of septic effluent is apparently accelerated via a predominance of coarse grained alluvial materials underling the area.
- Monitoring well data demonstrates that septic effluent is making its way to groundwater, which has resulted in a formal CRB-RWQCB Cease & Desist Order with specific compliance deadlines.

The complex regulatory "heavy lifting" is complete, and the project is "shovel ready". The Warren Basin is adjudicated and HDWD is the court appointed Watermaster. Engineering studies and phased project budgets are complete and the collection system design is underway. A local ratepayer survey has been completed and many community meetings have been held. HDWD has executed a Memorandum of Agreement with other major local entities.

As we understand it, the project is designed in 3 phases in compliance with the Cease and Desist Order, building outward from Phase I which encompasses the backbone or central corridor of this disadvantaged community.

Furthermore, this project fits the spirit and letter of revisions underway in California Water Policy to encourage remediation of groundwater impacted by nitrates and other contaminants emanating from septic systems in disadvantaged communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have further questions regarding our support for SRF funding for the Hi Desert Water District's wastewater treatment program.

Sincerely,

  
Michael McBride, President  
Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency

cc:

Felicia Marcus, SWRCB Chair  
Liz Haven, SWRCB Deputy Director  
Robert Perdue, CRB-RWQCB Executive Officer  
Jackson R. Gualco, The Gualco Group, Inc.

