

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE CACHUMA WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Written Testimony of Bruce A. Wales, Ph.D., General Manager
Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District

I am General Manager of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District and have served in that capacity since 1995. As described in more detail in my resume attached to my testimony as SYRWCD Exhibit 3, I hold advanced degrees in meteorology and biology and have been employed in academic, consulting and government positions dealing with the application of environmental science for over 40 years.

The Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District encompasses most of the land located in the Santa Ynez River watershed downstream of Cachuma Reservoir (SYRWCD Exhibit 2-A attached hereto). The District was formed in 1939 for the primary purpose of protecting the water rights of the residents and landowners within the Santa Ynez and Lompoc Valleys. This continues as our principal focus to this date. Improvement District No. 1 (ID#1) and the Cities of Solvang, Buellton, and Lompoc are located within the District. In addition, there are about 27,000 acres devoted to irrigated agriculture which produce a wide variety of crops, including vegetable crops and grapes. Our economy is driven by agriculture and tourism and these industries and our small towns and cities are dependent upon the development and maintenance of our surface and groundwater resources.

As you are aware, the District is the entity under various State Board orders, culminating in Water Rights Order 89-18, which directs the Bureau of Reclamation as to when and how much water should be released from the Above Narrows and Below Narrows Accounts for the benefit of the downstream water right holders.

As Mr. Evans described in summarizing the process leading up to the Settlement Agreement, the District, along with other downstream interests, (principally ID#1 and the City of Lompoc), conducted extensive negotiations with the CCRB and the Bureau of Reclamation that lead up to the Settlement Agreement. The District sought input from other entities within the District during this process. In addition to ID#1 and Lompoc, this included the Cities of Solvang and Buellton, along with numerous landowners. Based on these consultations, the District's Board of Directors is satisfied that the Settlement Agreement adequately protects downstream water rights, in terms of both water quantity and quality. They also believe that it is the consensus of the residents and landowners of the District and various entities representing them that the Settlement Agreement is in our best interest and should be supported.

As Mr. Mills and Shahroody mentioned in describing the Settlement Agreement, it is a "package" which includes a number of items, some of which are beyond the purpose and scope of these hearings. In order for the Settlement Agreement to become effective, it is essential that the State Board make the relatively minor revisions to WR 98-19 required to provide for downstream water rights releases under WR 89-18 as modified by the Settlement Agreement.

On behalf of the elected Board of Directors of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District and its landowners or residents, we wholeheartedly support the Settlement Agreement as the appropriate means to protect the downstream water rights interests. Through the Settlement Agreement the parties support the NMFS Biological Opinion and Fish Management Plan, which require a three foot surcharge. We therefore support Alternative 3C in the State Board Draft EIR. We therefore request that the State Water Board adopt WR 89-18 as amended by the Settlement Agreement.