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DUNCAN HUNTER
530 DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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U.S. House of Representatives
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May 22, 2002

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The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I received a copy of your May 21, 2002, letter to the Imperial Irrigation District outlining your preference that they commence fallowing as a means of satisfying the Quantification Settlement Agreement. I must respectfully and absolutely disagree with your position.

All scientists who have addressed the Salton Sea have agreed that the increasing salinity is the greatest threat to the Sea. They further agree that when the salinity level reaches 60,000 parts per million, the Sea dies, regardless of whether there has been a water transfer or not.

Why then is the false message being sent to Californians that putting agriculture out of business on tens of thousands of acres will somehow "save the Sea?" For years, folks in Imperial County have been criticized for allegedly not conserving water. Now, your letter implies that they will be sued if they do conserve water.

Allowing the good people of Imperial County to be placed in this crossfire is patently unfair. The water transfer between the Valley and San Diego was always envisioned as a program founded on science-based water conservation, not turning Imperial County back into desert. Such a science-based conservation program means less water running into the Sea by way of the New and Alamo Rivers. Our challenge should be handling the salinity problem, which will otherwise kill the Sea, regardless of the transfer.

Arguably, pouring \$100 million worth of pure California water into the Sea each year when the scientists tell us that we must solve the salt problem makes no sense from the perspective of either the farms or the cities. Please take a look at the most recent reports on the prospects of solving the salinity problem and work with me to arrive at a solution that makes the most of California's water.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,

Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress