

## **SALTON SEA AUTHORITY**

### **RESOLUTION NO. 02-02**

#### **RESOLUTION OF CONCERN REGARDING THE EFFECT OF WATER TRANSFERS ON THE SALTON SEA**

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority was organized in 1993 to protect and enhance the environmental and economic qualities of the Salton Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea is a valuable economic and recreational resource of the Imperial and Coachella Valleys, receiving over 200,000 visitors per year at the State Parks alone; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea is among the most important bird resources in North America, with the greatest biodiversity of bird species in California and the second most in the Nation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea will become more saline unless a plan for salinity control is implemented and its resources as we know them, will be lost; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority understands the need and generally supports the implementation of the "California 4.4 Plan," which is designed to reduce California's use of Colorado River water in normal years to 4.4 MAF, without causing major economic and social impacts to the Imperial and Coachella Valleys; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority understands that the QSA is a time sensitive matter with an existing signature date of December 31, 2002 and that without agreement the Secretary of the Interior will limit California to 4.4 MAF which will reduce the supply to coastal Southern California or create water reallocations; and

**WHEREAS**, water transfers are a business arrangement between agencies to sell and buy water and are an essential component of the proposed "California 4.4 Plan" and the QSA; and

**WHEREAS**, in the recently released Imperial Irrigation District (IID) Water conservation and Transfer Project Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement on the water transfer of up to 200,000 acre-feet per year of water to the SDCWA and the transfer of 100,000 acre-feet to the Coachella Valley indicates that the transfer could significantly reduce flows to the Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, a major reduction of inflows to the Sea will likely lead to a reduction in sea elevation of up to 22 feet, potentially exposing over 100 square miles of seabed and diminish the vitality of the Sea; and

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**WHEREAS**, a major reduction of inflows greatly accelerates salinity increase in the Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, with or without transfers, significant changes to habitat threaten bird biodiversity and abundance at the Salton Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, the aforementioned physical changes in the Sea could lead to significant air quality, biological, and economic impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the Imperial Valley is a non-attainment area for Particulate Matter small than 10 microns ( $PM^{10}$ ) and the Coachella Valley may soon be redesignated as a  $PM^{10}$  non-attainment area; and

**WHEREAS**, particulate matter contributions from exposed lake-bed might jeopardize the Imperial and Coachella Valley's compliance efforts and lead to significant economic disruptions and health impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, major reductions of inflow will greatly increase the cost of restoring the Salton Sea and thereby risk making restoration financially and practically infeasible; and

**WHEREAS**, Congress and the California legislature have authorized studies of the Salton Sea and a plan approved by Congress and the California legislature does not exist for the restoration of the Salton Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, the IID Water Conservation and Transfer Project Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement contains several options to develop the water for the transfers including the option of fallowing land which would have less impact on the Salton Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, efforts are underway to relax environmental compliance laws to facilitate the water transfers; and

**WHEREAS**, The Salton Sea Authority acknowledges that the California "fully-protected species" laws may need to be updated to allow "take" provisions similar to the California Endangered Species Act; and

**WHEREAS**, for all of the above reasons it is prudent to proceed cautiously with those parts of the "California 4.4 Plan" which have serious economic and environmental impacts while continuing to proceed expeditiously with those parts of the Plan which are essential to meeting the California Colorado River Allotment; and

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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Directors of the Salton Sea Authority to oppose projects which significantly lower the level of the Salton Sea; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** to support efforts by Congresswoman Mary Bono to ensure that the impacts of water transfers on the Salton Sea and the Imperial and Coachella Valleys are complying with environmental laws; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** to urge the IID Board of Directors to pursue water transfer solutions which meet the terms of the QSA, which properly mitigate impacts on the Salton Sea, and which address economic and social impacts in the Imperial and Coachella Valleys; and

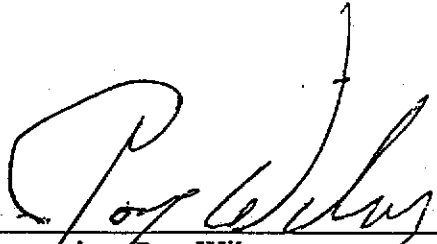
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that any mitigation identified and implemented for the transfer be done in a manner consistent with the goals and objectives of the full restoration of the Salton Sea; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** to support stringent reviews of any State and/or Federal legislation that relax environmental laws at the detriment of economic or environmental values of the Salton Sea, Imperial or Coachella Valleys; and


**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that certified copies of this Resolution be sent to Senator Dianne Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer, Congresswoman Mary Bono, Congressman Duncan Hunter, and the rest of the Congressional Salton Sea Task Force, other appropriate members of Congress, the Secretary of the Interior, State Senator Jim Battin, Assemblyman Dave Kelley, State Senator Sheila Kuehl, other appropriate members of the State legislature, the California Resources Secretary, the Secretary of the Environmental Protection Agency, other appropriate State and Federal agencies, and the member agencies of the Salton Sea Authority.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 28<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF MARCH, 2002.**

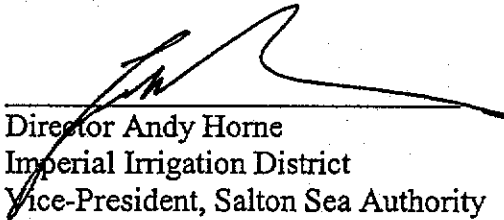
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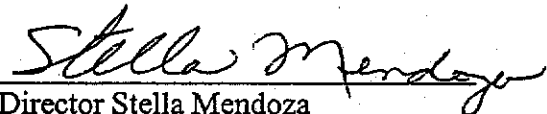
Supervisor Roy Wilson  
County of Riverside  
President, Salton Sea Authority



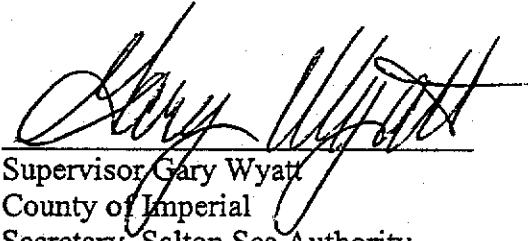
Supervisor Wally Leimgruber  
County of Imperial



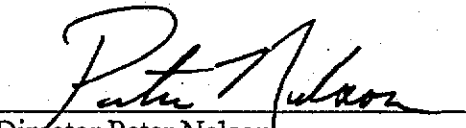
Director Andy Horne  
Imperial Irrigation District  
Vice-President, Salton Sea Authority



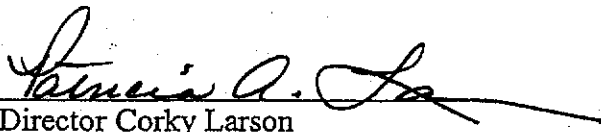
Director Stella Mendoza  
Imperial Irrigation District



Supervisor Gary Wyatt  
County of Imperial  
Secretary, Salton Sea Authority

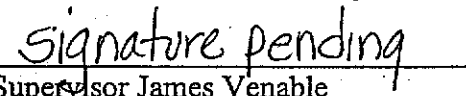


Director Peter Nelson  
Coachella Valley Water District




Director Corky Larson  
Coachella Valley Water District

signature pending



Supervisor James Venable  
County of Riverside

ATTEST: 

Tom Kirk  
Executive Director  
Salton Sea Authority