

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

State Water Resources Control Board

Hearing Name IID Transfer - Phase 2

Exhibit: 10

For Ident: _____ In Evidence: _____

March 15, 2002

The Honorable Gale Norton
Secretary, Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Norton:

We are deeply concerned about the lack of progress by the Department of Interior (DoI) in making a recommendation to Congress concerning restoration of the Salton Sea. In 1998, Congress passed P.L. 105-373 directing the Secretary to complete feasibility studies and cost analyses for restoration options. Sec. 101 (b) (1) (B) of the authorization directed the Secretary to:

- i. identify any options she deems economically feasible and cost effective,
- ii. identify any additional information necessary to develop construction specifications,
- iii. submit any recommendations, along with the results of the study, to the Committees no later than January 1, 2000.

In early 2000, DoI, through the Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) and the Salton Sea Authority (Authority), prepared a draft EIS/EIR and an alternatives report. Presumably, the report identified economically feasible options. However, the report did not identify information necessary to develop construction specifications and it did not include any substantive recommendations.

We understand that since early 2000, the Bureau and the Authority have been building and operating pilot projects and have led efforts to further assess cost-effective restoration options. We applaud these efforts. However, the Congressional Salton Sea Task Force certainly intended when it authored and supported H.R. 3267 to compel the Secretary to provide Congress with recommendations. However, we are concerned that the Department will again not be making a firm recommendation to Congress when the latest alternatives' report is released in early 2002. We find this possibility inconsistent with the letter and intent of PL 105-372.

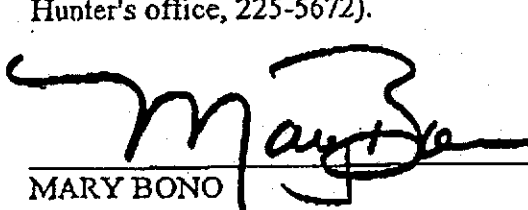
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Letter to Secretary Norton
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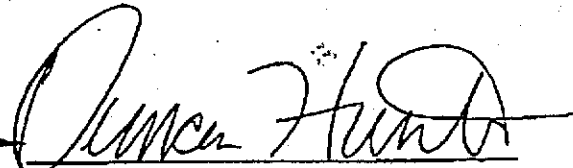
We are all aware of the challenges of restoring the Sea in light of efforts to reduce California's use of Colorado River water. This is no excuse for delaying the recommendation any further. In fact, Congress recognized the realities of potential water transfer when directing the Secretary to evaluate restoration options under reduced inflow scenarios (see Sec. 101 (b) (3)). We request that you provide Congress, and specifically the Task Force and Senators Feinstein and Boxer, with your recommendation for restoration under various inflow/water transfer conditions:

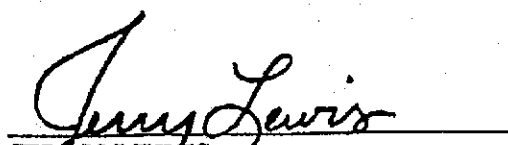
1. If inflows remain consistent with recent historic inflows.
2. If inflows are reduced slightly (e.g. due to water transfers implemented through land management/fallowing and some reductions from Mexico).
3. If inflows are reduced significantly (e.g. due to water transfers implemented through efficiency improvements and some reductions from Mexico)
4. If inflows are dramatically reduced to 800,000 af/yr as described in PL 105-372.


We request that for each scenario, a preferred approach, its cost and its performance should be presented to Congress by April 15, 2002. We believe that the Bureau and the Authority have sufficient information to enable you to provide such a recommendation to Congress. We understand that construction specifications and environmental compliance efforts will still be necessary to construct a project. However, we need your recommendation to determine a proper course of action by Congress.

Should you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact us directly or instruct your staff to contact Linda Valter (Rep. Bono's office, 225-5330) or Tom Porter (Rep. Hunter's office, 225-5672).


MARY BONO
Member of Congress


DUNCAN HUNTER
Member of Congress


JERRY LEWIS
Member of Congress


KEN CALVERT
Member of Congress