



The Water Bond Coalition of Northern and Coastal California

April 20, 2023

The Honorable Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Chair, Assembly Water, Parks, & Wildlife Committee
1021 O St., Ste. 6320
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: AB 1567 (Garcia) - SUPPORT IF AMENDED - Request for Increase of IRWM Funding to \$500 Million in AB 1567

Dear Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan:

We, the Water Bond Coalition, established in 2002, is an affiliation of more than 70 cities, counties, special districts and nonprofit organizations in California's northern, coastal and rural communities, write to convey our support of AB 1567 (Garcia) if amended to increase the amount for Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) in Section 80543.5 from \$200 million to \$500 million. We are requesting the increase to \$500 million as that amount is consistent with funding amounts allocated in Proposition 1.

IRWM is a valued and proven approach to water management that needs to be sustained. Investments in IRWM planning span nearly two decades and begin with the premise that integrated, multi-objective, collaborative approaches to resource management result in regionally appropriate solutions and decision-making. Statewide, water resource agencies face increasing challenges in funding critical infrastructure projects while balancing the need to protect species and create systems that are resilient to climate change and natural disasters. This is particularly true for disadvantaged communities, which often lack adequate financing mechanisms. In a time of funding constraints, this unique grant program promotes the inclusion of stakeholders throughout local communities to work together to identify resource priorities that integrate multiple objectives.

Coalition members believe local communities have the knowledge, skills and expertise to help the State realize its investments. The implementation of IRWM planning is working to ensure a future of reliable, sustainable water and watershed management throughout California, covering 87% of the state's geographic area and 99% of its population (CA DWR). The IRWM grant program is a creative way to maximize the state's return on its investment, with approximately \$1.4 billion in state grants matched by more than \$5.6 billion in local and regional investments to implement 1,500 projects in every part of California.

The IRWM program is an effective forum for local decision-making on climate, resources and water resiliency issues statewide, ***and it is for these reasons that we request the funding amount for IRWM be increased to \$500M.***

The Water Bond Coalition is grateful to Assemblymember Garcia for his continued leadership in authoring climate resilience and water focused bonds and we look forward to working with Assemblymember Garcia, you, and your committee to ensure smart investments to keep our forests and watersheds healthy, provide clean, reliable and affordable water supplies, and protect communities from catastrophic natural disasters that are exacerbated by the effects of climate change.