



June 11, 2024

Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Room 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senate President Pro Tempore Mike McGuire
1021 O Street, Room 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas
1021 O Street, Room 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
1020 N. Street, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel
Cahir, Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Room 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Opposition to Proposed Funding Cuts for Water Hauling in Rural Communities

Dear Governor Newsom, Senate President Pro Tempore Mike McGuire, Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, Senate Budget Chair Weiner and Assembly Budget Chair Gabriel:

On behalf of thousands of low-income residents of rural and disadvantaged communities of color at risk of losing access to safe and affordable drinking water in California, the undersigned organizations listed below write to express **strong opposition to the proposal in AB 107 (Gabriel) and SB 107 (Wiener) which would revert \$17.5 million previously allocated in AB 211 (Sec. 35 of Ch. 574 of Stats. 2022) to supply hauled water to households who lost water access during the drought.** The funds that are being swept are part of a critical ongoing effort to supply hauled water to refill community tanks that supply water to households who have lost access to drinking water as well as households dependent on private domestic wells. The reversions of these funds will cut off access to water for more than 20,000 people who are still awaiting a permanent solution. It is essential that the state continue to fund this ongoing program keeping households connected to water while the state, local agencies and community organizations work to implement a permanent drinking water solution for these communities.

While heavy precipitation in 2023 may have seen the majority of California move on from drought concerns, California's Central Valley is still experiencing severe drought impacts. As a result of decades of groundwater overdraft compounded by drought, more than 2,000 household wells went dry over the last three years in California. Temporary water supplies, like hauled water, were brought in to address the immediate needs of drinking water for these families. These interim solutions are funded in large part by the California Emergency Relief Fund and are still being implemented between the State Water Board and nonprofit technical assistance organizations like Self- Help Enterprises (SHE).

Organizations like Self-Help Enterprises (SHE) were allocated funding through the California Emergency Relief Fund and are working diligently with the State Water Board and affected

communities to establish permanent solutions for families whose wells have gone dry. This interim funding is vital to bridge the gap until those permanent solutions can be implemented.

The water hauling and water tank program funded through this program and implemented by SHE has already made a significant impact across Kern, Kings, Tulare, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Mariposa, Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties. The program is making significant progress in moving families off of tanks to a permanent solution. In the past 17 months alone, SHE has successfully moved 282 households off of temporary emergency water assistance, reducing the number of tanks by almost 200. Without interim solutions like the water hauling program, families relying on relief from organizations like SHE won't be able to wait for sustainable, long-term solutions and will be forced into catastrophic decisions such as walking away from their homes.

Cutting funding for such a crucial program would have devastating effects on rural and disadvantaged communities by immediately cutting them off from their sole source of water supply, and doing so with no warning. With another record breaking year of heat in the Central Valley fast approaching, these families cannot afford to lose their water.

In conclusion, we urge the Legislature to restore the funding proposed to be cut in this item. Maintaining the full allocation in the California Emergency Relief Fund for hauled water is essential to ensuring that our most vulnerable communities have access to safe drinking water. The impacts of groundwater overdraft and drought on families in the Central Valley require our continued attention and support.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Collishaw, President/CEO
Self-Help Enterprises

Ari Neumann, Chief Impact and Policy Officer
Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Michael Claiborne, Directing Attorney
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

Jennifer Clary, California Director
Clean Water Action

Abraham Mendoza III, Policy Manager
Community Water Center

Aaron Crisp, Owner
Crisp Well Drilling LLC

Adam Silveira, Co-Owner
Quality Well Drillers, Inc.

Larry Micari, Chair
Tulare County Board

Heath Harris, Owner
Yosemite Falls Well Drilling & Pump Service

Patricia Rea, Manager
Haynes & Sons Well Drilling, LLC

Abraham Valencia, Emergency Services Manager
Kings County Office of Emergency Services

Matthew Bass, Owner
Bass Well & Pump Service

Brandon Jones, Operations Manager
Jones Construction and Excavation

Mark Larsen, General Manager
Greater Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Jorge Mendes, Owner
Mendes Plumbing

Regina Markos, President
Bubba's Water Truck Service Inc.

Kevin Abernathy, General Manager
Milk Producers Council

Deanna Jackson, Executive Director
Tri-County Water Authority

Eugene Keene, Owner
NRK Services, Inc.

Aaron Fukuda, Interim General Manager
Mid-Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency

Skye Grass, General Manager
Kern-Tulare Water District

Bill Phillips, Owner
Aero Pure Water Hauling

Wesley Harmon, Owner
Big River Drilling

Eric Limas, General Manager
Pixley Irrigation District GSA and the Lower Tule River Irrigation District

Fred Youngren, Owner
BeZak Liquid Transport

Rogelio Caudillo, General Manager
Eastern Tule GSA

Sheryl Martinez, President
TL's Portable Sinks & Water Trucks

James Rees, Chief Impact Officer
Botanical Water Technologies

Jeff Torggrimson Owner/ Operator
J&O Well Drilling

Tom Krazan, Managing Member
Kings River Drilling & Pump Service

Tom Krazan
Coalition for Affordable Drinking Water in Rural Areas

Christina Beckstead, Director
Madera Ag Water Association, Inc.