



March 13, 2024

Assemblymember Diane Papan  
Chair of the Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee  
California State Assembly  
P.O. Box 942846  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0021  
[assemblymember.papan@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.papan@assembly.ca.gov)

Subject: SB 867

The Honorable Assemblymember Diane Papan,

The Coachella Valley Regional Water Management Group (CVRWMG) includes the Coachella Water Authority (CWA), Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), Desert Water Agency (DWA), Indio Water Authority (IWA), Mission Springs Water District (MSWD), and Valley Sanitary District (VSD). The group represents a collaborative effort to implement the Coachella Valley Integrated Regional Water Management (CVRWM) Plan to address the water resources planning needs of the Coachella Valley. The CVRWMG's Region is located in central Riverside County, within the Colorado River Funding Area.

The CVRWMG would like to express our great appreciation for the support of Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) via SB 867. We are grateful to Senator Benjamin Allen for his continued leadership in authoring natural resources and climate general obligation bonds. We strongly support IRWM's inclusion in SB 867 and respectfully request that you, Assemblymember Papan, consider requesting that SB 867 be amended to increase the amount for grants and expenditures related to IRWM to improve climate resilience on a watershed basis from \$300 million to \$350 million. We are requesting an increase to \$350 million as that amount is consistent with funding amounts in AB 1567. We believe that this support will help the continued success of IRWM, which is a valued and proven approach to regional water management to meet State goals for climate resilience and support the most vulnerable communities.

For nearly two decades, the commitment to IRWM planning has been rooted in the belief that collaborative, multi-benefit strategies in resource management yield regionally tailored solutions that work. Throughout the State, water agencies are facing increasing challenges in securing funding for vital infrastructure projects. This challenge is compounded by the need to simultaneously protect species and establish resilient systems capable of withstanding the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. This struggle is particularly pronounced for disadvantaged communities (DACs), often lacking adequate funding.

Coachella Valley has a wide range of DACs from different demographics, including migrant and seasonal farm workers, low-income families, and others. These DACs experience several water resources issues including, but not limited to, drinking water supply reliability and water quality, sanitation needs, flooding concerns, and maintaining the affordability of water. Since 2008, CVRWMG has obtained approximately \$29 million in IRWM funding to implement water resources projects to provide safe and reliable potable water and sanitation services to communities across Coachella Valley, including DACs. In 2022, the Department of Water Resources awarded the Coachella Valley IRWM Program \$4,112,755 to implement six water resources projects, including \$300,000 to protect groundwater quality for two DACs in the region. Funding for these projects is necessary and essential to create communities that are resilient to climate change and natural disasters. IRWM is well suited to help communities become resilient through collaborative and inclusive project coordination.

The Coachella Valley IRWM region is one of 48 regions in the State, and those 48 IRWM regions represent 99% of the State's population and 87% of its land area. Over the past several years, the State has invested approximately \$1.45 billion in bond funds for IRWM, and IRWM regions have matched that amount with an additional \$5.6 billion invested locally. Projects developed cooperatively through IRWM provide resilience to the anticipated impacts of climate change, engage under-represented communities and Tribes in decision-making, and invest in the future of our watersheds, forests, and water supplies. IRWM is an effective forum for local decision making on climate, natural resources, and water resiliency issues statewide, and it is for these reasons that we request the funding amount for IRWM be increased to \$350 million.

The CVRWMG appreciates your leadership on water and climate issues and is glad to answer any questions you may have about our request. Again, we strongly urge to increase the funding amount for IRWM to \$350 million. We look forward to engaging with you further on the importance of investing in resilient and locally driven water resource management.

Sincerely,



Zoe Rodriguez del Rey  
On behalf of the Coachella Valley Regional Water Management Group  
Water Resources Manager  
Coachella Valley Water District

CVRWMG agency representatives:

Steve Johnson, Desert Water Agency  
Ron Buchwald, Valley Sanitary District  
Castulo Estrada, Coachella Water Authority  
Reymundo Trejo, Indio Water Authority  
Marion Champion, Mission Springs Water District