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September 12, 2013

Secretary John Laird
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

VIA FAX: 916-653-8102

Re: Bay Delta Conservation Plan

Dear Secretary Laird,

Olivenhain Municipal Water District (OMWD) is a public agency in northern San Diego County that provides 80,000 customers with water, wastewater, recycled water, hydroelectric, and recreational services. On OMWD's behalf, I am writing to express support for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP), a regulatory vehicle that would protect the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta and thereby ensure long-term water supply reliability for Southern Californians.

Over 25 million Californians rely on the delta as a water source. In 2012, water from the delta represented nearly two-thirds of the potable water served to OMWD customers. Water exports from the delta, however, are increasingly threatened and unstable. Ongoing dry climatic conditions and the presence of endangered species in the delta have led to severe restrictions on delta water exports such that State Water Contractors have been allocated this year only 35% of the State Water Project water to which they are contractually entitled.

Water exports from the delta are also reliant upon 1,100 miles of levees, some of which date to the mid-1800s, that surround delta islands. Floods, earthquakes, subsidence and climate change all pose serious risk to these levees, and should they fail at a large scale, saltwater intrusion would render the delta completely useless as a source of fresh water.

OMWD and its partners in the San Diego region have diligently pursued over the last two decades local water supply sources—such as groundwater, recycled water, and desalinated seawater—in order to reduce dependence on the delta. Even given our expanding water supply portfolio, however, the delta continues to meet a significant portion of San Diego County's demand for water. Without a comprehensive solution to delta issues, water available to Southern California is expected to be reduced by 40%, or up to 100% in the event of a large



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earthquake or other disaster. It is thus imperative to engage without delay the ecological and infrastructural challenges presented by the delta.

Work began on the BDCP in 2006 in order to address these challenges, and drafts of the plan have been under review since 2010. Sixteen project alternatives have been explored in the BDCP and its environmental documentation in order to best balance the needs of the delta, communities in and around the delta, agricultural users in the Central Valley, and urban water users throughout Southern California. New conveyance facilities resulting from the BDCP are expected to improve water quality in the State Water Project while greatly reducing the delta's vulnerability to the potentially cataclysmic impacts of emergencies and of climate change. Ecological improvements in the delta, meanwhile, will prevent restrictions on water exports associated with endangered species.

Though the current cost projections to implement these protections of the delta as a water source—approximately \$24.54 billion over 50 years—are not dismissible, the investment will drastically increase the reliability of draws from the delta that currently average 5.2 million acre-feet annually, and will also represent a cost-effective water supply solution when per-unit costs are considered against currently available alternatives. Additionally, an economic study of the BDCP projects that the improvements as they are currently conceived would net a benefit in statewide economic welfare of up to \$5.4 billion.

OMWD thus strongly supports a fix for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta to protect its ecological health and to ensure its ongoing viability as a water source for Southern California. The BDCP is a realistic and well-reasoned vessel by which to initiate these historic improvements to habitat and water conveyance infrastructure in the delta. We applaud your support for the BDCP planning process and for the improvements it ultimately prescribes, which are vitally important to all Californians.

If you or your staff should need any additional information regarding our assessment of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, please contact me or OMWD's General Manager, Kimberly Thorner, at 760-753-6466.

Regards,



Lawrence A. Watt
President

CC: Dr. Jerry Meral, Deputy Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
Maureen Stapleton, General Manager, San Diego County Water Authority