



February 6, 2015

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of the State of California
State Capitol
Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Appointment of Maria Herrera to the California Water Commission – Strong Support

Dear Governor Brown,

The listed partner organizations, most of which work directly in, or on behalf of, small and rural disadvantaged communities (DACs) throughout the state, write in strong support of Maria Herrera’s appointment to the California Water Commission (Commission). Our respective organizations take action and work both statewide and locally to achieve access to safe, clean, accessible and affordable water and a more sustainable water future for all Californians. Through our work in the Central Valley, we have witnessed Mrs. Herrera’s commitment to water and social justice issues. Mrs. Herrera’s appointment would undoubtedly improve the Commission’s ability to engage small rural communities in its mission to protect the environment, oversee the State Water Project, and develop effective, integrated and sustainable water management policies.

We are certain that Mrs. Herrera’s professional background and personal experiences would greatly enhance the Commission’s reach into DACs and the Central Valley. Mrs. Herrera’s well-rounded perspective has been shaped by her experiences raising her children in the San Joaquin Valley and growing up in a farmworker community that at times lacked safe drinking water. Without question, Mrs. Herrera knows first-hand the unique and complex water and social justice challenges faced by rural farmworker communities. She would be an informed and strategic advocate on these issues.

Mrs. Herrera is one of the foremost experts on rural community water needs in the region and beyond. She has honed her expertise on the staff of Self-Help Enterprises (SHE), which focuses on low-income DAC drinking water and wastewater needs, and through her former position as Community Advocacy Director at the Community Water Center. Her accomplishments include successfully working with local communities and statewide stakeholders on the grassroots campaign to pass the historic AB 685

Human Right to Water Bill in 2012. Her tireless activities helped shape numerous critical local and state policies including the transfer of the Drinking Water Program, which was previously at the California Department of Public Health, to the State Water Resources Control Board. This effort alone has dramatically improved the state's ability to address small community water issues. Mrs. Herrera also served as a powerful voice for environmental justice communities as a member of the Governor's Drinking Water Stakeholder Group, a multi-stakeholder task force that drafted statewide recommendations to address drinking water challenges faced by DACs. Through these successful and key efforts, Mrs. Herrera has demonstrated that her professional portfolio in policy, advocacy and grassroots organizing, when combined, can shape and move state level action on environmental and quality of life issues.

Mrs. Herrera's extensive background and expertise on water issues, her positive understanding of the critical issues impacting countless communities lacking basic water resources in the Central Valley, and her proven leadership qualities are needed now more than ever on the California Water Commission. As such, our organizations strongly support and respectfully request the appointment of Mrs. Herrera to the California Water Commission.

Sincerely,



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Senior Policy Analyst
Community Water Center



Jennifer Clary
Policy Analyst
Clean Water Action



Kathryn Phillips
Director
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