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ON PUBLIC SAFETY

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Phil Ting, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, California 95814

Senator Nancy Skinner, Chair
Senate Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Bob Wieckowski, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee 2
State Capitol, Room 4085
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Richard Bloom, Chair
Budget Subcommittee 3
State Capitol, Room 2003

Dear Honorable Gavin Newsom:

I respectfully urge you to prioritize at least \$250 million to create a grant program to help off-set the treatment costs for PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination of water systems serving underserved communities. This group of fabricated chemicals includes PFOA and PFOS, GenX, and many other chemicals.

Chemicals within the PFAS group have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries around the globe, including the United States since the 1940s.

Of all the aforementioned chemicals, PFOA and PFOS have been the most extensively produced and studied. Both chemicals are highly persistent in the environment and in the human body – meaning they do not break down and they can accumulate over time. There is evidence that exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects such as

various types of cancer. Because PFAS chemicals are good at repelling oil and water, they are useful in many products including non-stick cookware, fast food wrappers, pizza boxes, water-repellent fabrics and fire-fighting foam. Although manufacturers have agreed to stop using two forms of PFAS in the U.S., these chemicals take so long to breakdown, they have been dubbed forever chemicals.

Setting aside funds to address the removal of PFAS in groundwater wells will be helpful if funds are allowed to go not just to DACs and the water agencies who serve the DACs, but also to severely disadvantaged communities. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) compiled a map of contamination locations throughout the nation. While there are some data available, the true extent of the contamination is not yet known; but we have reason to believe the information available is just the tip of the iceberg. In addition, no Public Health Goal (PHG) or Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for PFAS have been established. Interim Notification Levels (NL) have been adopted; however, testing, reporting, and notification, while recommended, are not required by law.

The ability of regional water authorities to help small water systems with the cost of PFAS and PFOA is not equitable across California. For example, the Orange County Water District (OCWD) is paying for the full construction cost of treatment systems and half the cost of operating and maintaining PFAS and PFOA treatment plants for the cities of Anaheim, Santa Ana, Fullerton, Buena Park, Yorba Linda, in North Orange County. By contrast, in South Los Angeles County, the Water Replenishment District of Southern California has sufficient funding only to off-set half the cost of building treatment systems for the communities of Pico Rivera, Montebello, Commerce, Downey, Norwalk, Bellflower, Monterey Park, Lomita, South Gate, La Mirada, Whittier, and La Habra Heights. As one can readily recognize, many of these communities include disadvantaged communities with limited capacity to raise water rates, especially given COVID-related hardships with unpaid billings recently reported by the State Water Board.

Water systems stretching from Bakersfield through the Central Valley to Sacramento are similarly impacted. The Central Coast, and utilities along the corridor from Sacramento to Redding are also zones of major impact. Some of the water systems impacted in both regions are small and serve farm worker communities and will not be privy to treatment plants being built in more affluent districts. As the technologies for treatment improve on this class of chemicals, regulatory standards will decrease the acceptable levels of PFAS/PFOA. This situation will further strain the technical and financial capacities of smaller, under-funded (and thus unimproved) systems that serve disadvantaged populations. Additionally, further research and analysis will continue to increase the number of Per- and polyfluoralkyl compounds that water systems must monitor and remediate.

We respectfully urge you to support state funding dedicated to PFAS remediation for smaller, poorer, and older communities throughout the state. California's Human Right to water demands that we equalize the resources across the state as much as possible, to address this long-term public health threat. All communities deserve safe drinking water.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you require additional information, please contact Assemblymember Garcia's staff.

Sincerely,



Cristina Garcia
Chair, California Legislative Women's Caucus
Assemblymember, 58th District



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Assemblymember, 65th



Bob Archuleta
Senator, 32nd District



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Senator, 37th District



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Suzette Martinez Valladares
Assemblymember, 38th



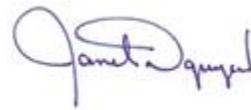
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