**[Copy and paste into agency/organization letterhead]**

[DATE]

The Honorable Anthony Portantino

California Senate

State Capitol, Room 5050

Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Ben Allen

California Senate

State Capitol, Room 4076

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 45 (Portantino, Allen)**

Dear Senators Portantino and Allen,

## The [your agency or organization] thanks you for your leadership in drafting SB 45, the *Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2022*. This bill will help our local and regional communities build resilience and confront the water resource challenges we face.

[Short paragraph describing your organization. It may include the following information as it is relevant to your circumstances: type of organization (water agency, public agency, non-profit, etc.), geographic location, number of customers served, role in water management (retailer/wholesaler), and activities involved in such as drinking water, stormwater, groundwater, water reuse, etc. If this letter is being sent by a member of an IRWM Region, reference the name of the IRWM Region. Include any other compelling information such as high percent of DACs, number of Tribes, etc. Adding the amount of grant funds received, local matching funds provided, and number and type of projects implemented with IRWM grant funds to date will be extremely effective.]

Although we appreciate the inclusion of water resource funding in SB 45, we are concerned about the lack of funding in the water section for regional and inter-regional projects funded through the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) program. We are strong supporters of the IRWM Program’s creative framework and approach, and request its inclusion in SB 45, as it has been in prior bonds.

IRWM provides a stakeholder-driven structure that comprises local project planning and prioritization, and resource-based management. It has been field-tested for almost two decades and has an established record of success in locations stretching from the North Coast to San Diego. This unique planning and grant program promotes participation in water resource management planning by Native American Tribes, economically disadvantaged communities and all interested stakeholders in our local communities, rather than depending on state agencies to identify our needs. The resulting trust and collaborative relationships built have forever changed regional decision making.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you include the following amendments:

* Add language to Chapter 3 allocating *five hundred ten million dollars ($510,000.000)* for distribution via IRWM planning regions accepted by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to support projects that achieve the goals described in Section 80202(a). A maximum of 10% of these funds may be used for planning purposes. A minimum of 10 percent of the funds will be designated for implementation projects that benefit disadvantaged communities (under-represented communities) or Tribes that either are federally recognized or listed on the Native American Heritage Commission’s Tribal Consultation list.
* Amend Section 80201 (Findings) to insert the IRWM approach in the bill. Potential language:

*The integrated, multi-benefit approach employed by the 48 established Integrated Regional Water Management planning regions is a tried-and-true method to plan and implement projects that improve the resilience of regional water supplies to the impact of climate change.*

* Amend Sections 80212 (a), 80228 (a), 80231, 80233(a)(1), 80234(a), and 80235 to include IRWM planning regions *accepted by DWR* in the list of eligible applicants for funding.

Additionally, while we appreciate the inclusion of “disadvantaged communities,” many vulnerable communities are excluded from funding when CalEnviroScreen or median household income are used to define disadvantaged communities. We request that you instead replace the term “disadvantaged communities” with the term “under-represented communities” and adopt the following formal definition of “under-represented communities” from the Proposition 68 Sustainable Groundwater Management Program Proposal Solicitation Package (2020):

*Under-represented communities encompass all under-resourced groups historically excluded from regional water planning: Disadvantaged Community,  Severely Disadvantaged Community, Economically Distressed Area, Tribal Lands/Tribes, Environmentally Disadvantaged Communities and Fringe Communities.*

As climate resilience bonds evolve to meet the challenges of today, we look forward to working with you to ensure continued investment to keep our watersheds healthy; provide clean, reliable, and affordable water supplies; and help communities become resilient against the effects of climate change.

The [your agency or organization] appreciates your consideration of these comments. If you have any questions or would like any clarifications on our recommendations, please contact me at [phone number, email address, or both].

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Agency or Organization]

Attachment: [Your Region] Fact Sheet

cc: Henry Stern, Chair, Senate Natural Resources Committee

Dennis O’Connor, Chief Consultant, Natural Resources Committee, CA State Senate

Your agency’s or organization’s legislative delegation.

Julia Hall, ACWA

Lisa Renton, Water Bond Coalition

Jodie Monaghan, Network Coordinator, Roundtable of Regions