

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown
Governor, State of California
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Felicia Marcus, Chair
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dayna Bochco, Chair
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street #2000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Gavin Newsom, Chair
California State Lands Commission
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South
Sacramento, CA 95825

William Ruh, Chair
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Santa Ana Region
3737 Main Street, Suite 500
Riverside, California 92501-334

July 24th, 2017

RE: OPPOSITION - Poseidon / Huntington Beach Desalination Project

Dear Governor Brown and Honorable Chairpersons:

We are writing in strong opposition to the billion-dollar desalination plant proposed for Huntington Beach. Poseidon, the company behind this proposal, wants to profit by privatizing a public resource. They have tried to prey on drought fears to build support among the communities least well served by current infrastructure, but we know that Orange County has better options for meeting its long-term water needs. Desalination is a bad deal for ratepayers, and its high cost and outsized energy use will hit low income communities and communities of color hardest.

Access to clean, safe, reliable and affordable water is a basic human right, and one affirmed by California state law. We appreciate that state and local officials take this mandate seriously. We applaud the progress that has been made to date in water conservation, efficiency, and recycling. All the facts indicate that we simply don't need desalination. [Orange County's most recent water plan](#), published April 2016, projects a healthy surplus through 2030. From May 2015 to May 2016, Orange County saved three times more water than the Poseidon desalination plant would produce. And, [according to the experts at Pacific Institute](#), additional water conservation and efficiency improvements could reduce water use by more than a third. Knowing all this, Poseidon wants to lock Orange County residents into a 50-year take or pay contract with no escape hatch.

Orange County's state-of-the-art water recycling facility produces 100 million gallons of fresh, clean water per day, twice the capacity of Poseidon's proposed plant. [It cost just \\$142 million](#) to expand its capacity by 30 million gallons per day in 2015, compared with the billion-dollar price tag of Poseidon's plant. Orange County still discharges about 100 million gallons of water into the ocean every day, so we are far from maxing out our potential for water reuse.

Many of our constituents are already suffering from poor air quality and climate impacts like heat islands, so we are particularly concerned about the high energy cost of desalination. It is by far the [most energy intensive](#) option, using about three times as much energy as recycling. All of that energy has to come from somewhere, and powering this huge plant will undermine much of the climate progress California has made, fueling more drought in the long term. Furthermore, the proposed location is vulnerable [to floods from rising seas](#), as well as earthquakes and tsunamis.

We are calling on you to deny the permit for this costly boondoggle. Orange County Water District should focus on water efficiency, recycling and stormwater projects that can meet future water needs without compromising the health or economic well-being of our people.

Sincerely,

Victor Valladares
Co-Founder
Oakview ComUNIDAD
Huntington Beach, CA

Oscar Rodriguez
Co-Founder
Oakview ComUNIDAD
Huntington Beach, CA

José Trinidad Castañeda III
Parks and Recreation Commissioner
Fullerton, CA

Olga Zapata-Reynolds
Founder
Orange County Earth Stewards

Marce Gutiérrez-Graudiņš
Founder / Director
Azul

Irma R. Muñoz
President & Founder
Mujeres de la Tierra

Colin Bailey
Executive Director and Managing Attorney
The Environmental Justice Coalition for Water

Hector Huevo
President
Alliance of River Communities