

**SALTON SEA AUTHORITY  
RESOLUTION NO. 19-06**

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
THE SALTON SEA AUTHORITY  
IN RECOGNITION OF LOCAL UNITY**

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea region is an irreplaceable environmental resource for California – providing vital habitat sustaining over 400 resident and migratory avian species, which is particularly important as California has lost over 90% of its other wetlands; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority is an organization established in 1993 for the purpose of developing local consensus for actions to revitalize the Salton Sea, with membership comprised of the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), Riverside and Imperial Counties, and Torres Martinez Band of Cahuilla Indians; and

**WHEREAS**, stakeholders including the State of California know that inaction at the Salton Sea poses an imminent threat to California's environment, human health, large-scale agricultural food supply, water security, renewable energy production and economic vitality;

**WHEREAS**, the natural resources surrounding the Imperial and Coachella Valleys, including the Salton Sea, provide unique wildlife and recreational resources and are tourism and economic drivers for all of Southern California; and

**WHEREAS**, the agricultural lands in the Coachella and Imperial Valleys play a pivotal role in our nation's food security; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea region offers vast and unique renewable energy resources, estimated to be capable of providing over 1,800 megawatts of continuously available geothermal energy plus other renewable generation opportunities to ensure California meets its clean energy goals; and

**WHEREAS**, the communities immediately surrounding the Salton Sea already suffer from some of the highest rates of air quality related illnesses in the nation; and

**WHEREAS**, tourism is the number one industry in the Coachella Valley with more than 15 million visitors each year supporting more than 46,000 (one in four) jobs and \$6.4 billion in total business sales; and generating \$952 million in tax revenues, including \$538 million in state and local revenues; and

**WHEREAS**, an impact study by Tourism Economics in 2015 on the potential impact of the Salton Sea reports that continued degradation could cost the Coachella Valley region alone between \$1.3 billion and \$6.5 billion in lost tourism spending over a five-year period; the resulting total economic loss would range from \$1.7 billion to \$8.6 billion and state and local taxes could experience up to a cumulative \$712 million loss; and

**WHEREAS**, the cost of doing nothing to improve the Salton Sea – estimated to exceed \$70 billion in a 30 years span – is by far the most costly, reckless and irresponsible of all responses to the challenges at the Salton Sea; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2003 Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA), which authorized the nation's largest agricultural-to-urban water transfer, includes commitments by the State of California to ensure that the impacts of the water transfer will be mitigated and, as articulated in Section 2940 of the Fish and Game Code, the fish and wildlife resources at the Salton Sea will be protected in the long-term; and

**WHEREAS**, mitigation water under the QSA began terminating in December 2017, at which point the Sea began to dramatically recede, resulting in negative wildlife and air quality impacts that will severely worsen unless immediate and sustained action is taken; and

**WHEREAS**, the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, is required to work with local stakeholders as articulated in Fish and Game Code, Article 2 of Section 2940 wherein the Natural Resources Agency shall lead Salton Sea restoration efforts in consultation and coordination with the Salton Sea Authority, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority has been directly involved in the development of plans that served as the foundation for Salton Sea planning efforts in accord with state law (AB 71 - M. Perez) directing the California Natural Resources Agency to “work in consultation and cooperation with the Salton Sea Authority” on matters pertaining to Salton Sea restoration; and

**WHEREAS**, in May 2015, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. created the Salton Sea Task Force and directed agencies to develop a comprehensive management plan for the Sea that will meet a short-term goal to construct 9,000 to 12,000 acres and a medium-term goal to construct 18,000 acres to 25,000 acres of habitat and dust suppression projects; and

**WHEREAS**, in March 2017, California’s Natural Resources Agency released a 10-Year Plan, which describes the first phase of the Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP), detailing the number of acres of lakebed expected to face exposure each year from 2018 through 2028, the number of acres of playa to be covered, and habitat restored, through proposed construction efforts, and the projected annual costs of the effort; and

**WHEREAS**, a petition to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) filed by IID and Imperial County, requested greater demonstration of state commitment to fulfill its contractual and legal obligations contained in the QSA, most specifically the state’s immediate actions and commitments to accomplish the goals of the SSMP; and

**WHEREAS**, an ensuing productive negotiation between the state, IID, Imperial County, San Diego County Water Authority and other Salton Sea stakeholders resulted in a Draft Stipulated Order Revising WRO 2002-0013 that was subsequently adopted by the SWRCB to provide improved assurance and performance standards related to the state's commitment to fulfill the QSA through the SSMP; and

**WHEREAS**, the Stipulated Order provides that SWRCB assert guidance and authority over the implementation of the 10-Year Plan as a means to fulfill the state obligations under the QSA, and the Stipulated Order provides empirical milestones and timelines designed to incrementally address the critical environmental and public health issues integral to managing the Sea as it is reconfigured to account for water loss and rising salinity; and

**WHEREAS**, while the Stipulated Order is readily acknowledged by all parties to fall short of their ultimate expectation for the state's contribution to restoring the Salton Sea, the Stipulated Order is at long last a credible and accountable start for a long journey toward recovery; the Order marks a unique moment in the history of the Salton Sea by defining minimal state commitments to Salton Sea management under QSA; and

**WHEREAS**, the Boards of Supervisors of both Riverside and Imperial Counties have signed a MOU in support of cooperative land use planning necessary to achieve a Perimeter Lake project at the Salton Sea that will provide a significant vehicle to fulfill and sustain the objectives of the SSMP and the Stipulated Order; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority has adopted a position of support for this cooperative action supporting a Perimeter Lake, and has worked diligently with both Counties to ensure all other local governments, tribes and stakeholder groups understand and support this position; and

**WHEREAS**, every city council in the Imperial Valley has adopted a position of support for the Perimeter Lake, including the cities of Brawley, Calexico, Calipatria, El Centro, Imperial, and Westmoreland; and

**WHEREAS**, every city council in the Coachella Valley has adopted a position of support for the Perimeter Lake MOU, including the cities of Cathedral City, Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, Indio, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, and Rancho Mirage; and

**WHEREAS**, the state's largest Colorado River water importing agencies have adopted a position of support for the Perimeter Lake MOU, including the Coachella Valley Water District and the Imperial Irrigation District; and

**WHEREAS**, numerous sovereign tribal nations in the watershed have adopted a position of support for the Perimeter Lake MOU, including the Torres Martinez Band of Cahuilla Indians, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, and Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians; and


**WHEREAS**, Coachella Valley Association of Governments, a joint powers authority comprised of all local governments in the Coachella Valley, has adopted a position of support for the Perimeter Lake MOU; and

**WHEREAS**, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supporting deep water habitat elements of a North Lake, specifically supporting the early phase of this concept in the northern portion of the Perimeter Lake, including Alianza Coachella Valley, Audubon California, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Defense Fund, Kounkuey Design Initiative, Pacific Institute, and Sierra Club California; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salton Sea Authority Board in accord with its Guiding Principles desires to provide leadership in maintaining consensus and building momentum to accomplish the Salton Sea Authority's objective of a Salton Sea that will be healthier for habitat and humans, and potentially more prosperous than the tragic situation that will occur if local, state, federal, and sovereign native tribes do not work cooperatively to honor statutory, contractual, legal and moral commitments and obligations at the Salton Sea.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Directors of the Salton Sea Authority recognizes this historic gathering of support for the Perimeter Lake, including the Species Conservation Habitat and the North Lake, to include each and every local government and tribe located in the watershed of the Salton Sea; and further applauds the momentum created by this unity to integrate and without delay launch the Perimeter Lake as an integral component of the state SSMP capable of sustaining a healthier and more prosperous Salton Sea.

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED** this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May 2019.

  
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Thomas Torte, Jr.  
President

STATE OF CALIFORNIA    )  
  ) ss.  
SALTON SEA AUTHORITY )

I, Alex Cardenas, Secretary of the Board of Salton Sea Authority, a Joint Powers Agency of the State of California, do hereby attest that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Resolution No. 19-06 adopted by the Board of Directors of said Salton Sea Authority at a regular meeting thereof duly held and convened on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May 2019, at which meeting a quorum of said Board was present and acting throughout.

Dated this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May 2019.

  
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Alex Cardenas  
Secretary of the Board of  
Salton Sea Authority