



# COACHELLA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

*Established in 1918 as a public agency*

## **PRESIDENT**

John P. Powell, Jr., Division 3

## **VICE PRESIDENT**

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## **GENERAL MANAGER**

Jim Barrett

May 10, 2023

The Honorable Steve Padilla  
California State Senate  
1021 O Street, Suite 6640  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## **RE: SB 583 – OPPOSE**

Dear Senator Padilla:

The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) serves approximately 300,000 residents in its 1,000 square-miles of service area ranging from the San Gorgonio Pass to the Salton Sea, mostly within the Coachella Valley area of Riverside County, as well as areas within Imperial and San Diego counties.

CVWD has considered your bill, SB 583, which would create the Salton Sea Conservancy (Conservancy); however, we must respectfully oppose this bill. CVWD appreciates your interest in restoring and improving the Salton Sea but feels that more work needs to be done before considering legislation to create a new conservancy. CVWD's concerns, in brief, are as follows:

**Impact to the work of the Salton Sea Authority.** SB 583 assigns implementation of the Salton Sea Management Program Phase I: 10-Year Plan and the Long-Range Plan (SSMP) to the new Conservancy yet fails to recognize the SSMP was the work of the Salton Sea Authority, which has already begun implementing the SSMP thanks in part to a grant of \$30 million from Proposition 68.

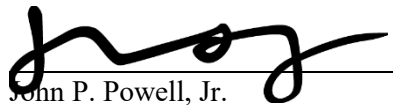
**Confusion over the role of the Conservancy.** SB 583 assigns roles to the new Conservancy that are already the mission of the Salton Sea Authority. To give just one example, SB 583 requires the new Conservancy to protect, restore, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and assist the regional economy. This is nearly identical to the mission of the Salton Sea Authority to protect human health and revitalize the environment and economy of the Salton Sea.

**Conflicting authority over water quality.** Water rights in the Salton Sea region date back to well over 100 years and involve some of the most challenging issues concerning water in the entire state. To say water supply and conservation in this region are complex issues is an extreme understatement. SB 583 directs the new Conservancy to improve water quality in the Salton Sea, but there is no unappropriated water in the region of the Salton Sea, which means anything impacting water quality unavoidably impacts the difficult work of multiple public water agencies that are responsible for providing water for irrigation and municipal use.


**Overlapping jurisdiction with multiple public agencies.** The boundaries of the proposed Conservancy cover the entire hydrological region that contains the Salton Sea, which overlap the areas served not only by public water agencies, as stated above, but also other public agencies with responsibility for environmental restoration. The most obvious one being the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy. This would inevitably lead to counterproductive competition for scarce bond and state funds.

Again, CVWD does appreciate your sincere desire to improve the environment and economy of the Salton Sea region but must respectfully oppose SB 583 per the issues outlined above.


Sincerely,




John P. Powell, Jr.  
President, Division 3



John Aguilar  
Board Member, Division 1



Peter G. Nelson  
Board Member, Division 4



Cástulo R. Estrada  
Vice President, Division 5



Anthony Bianco  
Board Member, Division 2

cc: Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia