

# County of Riverside

RIVERSIDE OFFICE:  
4080 Lemon Street, 5th Floor  
Riverside, CA 92502-1647  
(951) 955-1040  
Fax (951) 955-2194



DISTRICT OFFICE/MAILING ADDRESS  
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 222  
Palm Desert, CA 92260-2574  
(760) 863-8211  
Fax (760) 863-8905

SUPERVISOR V. MANUEL PEREZ  
FOURTH DISTRICT

April 27, 2023

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

Dear Senator Padilla:

I am writing to respectfully raise strong objection to SB 583, which proposes to alter the governance of the Salton Sea Management Program by shifting planning away from local entities that have the knowledge and expertise to restore the Salton Sea.

Strengthening cooperation and consultation between the state and the local governments at the Salton Sea has long been a priority of my efforts on behalf of our local communities. I am concerned that this bill would undermine the proven successful partnership between local entities and the state to deliver state-funded projects at the Sea, and potentially sidestep the local priorities of the Salton Sea Authority and the County of Riverside.

The County of Riverside has land use authority and residents that are directly impacted by the Salton Sea. Unfortunately, we were not aware of the intent to craft a new governance structure for the Salton Sea through this proposed legislation. With only weeks of legislative session remaining, I am concerned that we don't have sufficient time to vet this proposal with the public.

As a State Assemblymember, I was proud to author Assembly Bill 71 (2013-2014), which directed the California Natural Resources Agency to work "in cooperation and consultation with the Salton Sea Authority." That established a successful partnership between the state and the local entities, including Tribal governments, to advance work at the Salton Sea.

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As the Fourth District County Supervisor, the County of Riverside and its partner agencies have other major concerns with SB 583:

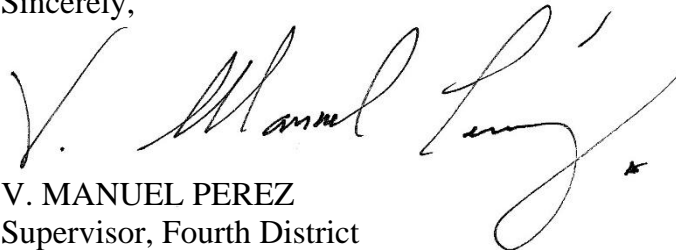
- Undefined definitions on who would be part of the “Salton Sea Conservancy Board”;
- Unclear how the new “Director” would work with the current California Natural Resources Agency Assistant Secretary on Salton Sea;
- A “Conservancy” empowered to run all the Salton Sea projects may conflict with Riverside and Imperial County Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts which would be financed with county resources requiring county oversight.

Our local governance and communities are dedicated to developing solutions for the Salton Sea that are created from thoughtful, inclusive, open, and transparent government.

As the Riverside County Fourth District Supervisor and a member of the Salton Sea Authority, I respectfully request that you work with the County of Riverside, the Salton Sea Authority, and our Tribal Nations to discuss the purpose of SB 583.

I appreciate the opportunity to strongly Oppose SB 583. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me or Pat Cooper, Deputy Chief of Staff at [PCooper@rivco.org](mailto:PCooper@rivco.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Manuel Perez", with a small asterisk at the end of the signature.

V. MANUEL PEREZ  
Supervisor, Fourth District

cc: The Honorable Eduardo Garcia



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 3, 2023

**CONTACT:**

Darin Schemmer, Office of Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez, (760) 863-8211

## **Supervisor Perez, Salton Sea Authority Raise Opposition to Bill that Could Threaten Progress on the Salton Sea**

PALM DESERT – Riverside County Supervisor V. Manuel Perez and the Salton Sea Authority are concerned about a bill, Senate Bill 583, that could stall progress and projects for the Salton Sea.

Supervisor Perez has submitted a letter of opposition to SB 583, a bill in the state legislature proposed by State Senator Steve Padilla. Last week, the Salton Sea Authority voted to formally oppose the measure.

Supervisor Perez was a member of the State Assembly a decade ago when he established, through his legislation, AB 71, the existing successful partnership between the State of California and the Salton Sea Authority, which consists of local entities: Riverside County, Imperial County, the Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District and Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians. This partnership has now led to the state's 10-year Salton Sea Management Program and active projects now happening at the Salton Sea.

*more*

SB 583 could undo years of progress to get local governments from Riverside County and Imperial County, water agencies and Tribal governments on the same page working together with the state. SB 583 proposes a “Salton Sea Conservancy,” a new governance structure, that could sidestep the local Salton Sea Authority and add an unnecessary planning layer that could delay the delivery of projects.

“It has taken years to get to where we are, where we have agreement between Imperial and Riverside counties and the local communities with the state on plans for the Salton Sea,” said Supervisor Perez. “As a result, we are now seeing projects moving forward and actually happening. This bill, SB 583, could upend the positive course that we are on for the Salton Sea and I am very concerned that the Senator has yet to reach out to local communities to discuss this bill.”

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*Supervisor V. Manuel Perez represents the Fourth Supervisorial District on the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. The largest district in the county by geography, the 4<sup>th</sup> District covers eastern Riverside County, from Whitewater, stretching across the entire Coachella Valley south to the Salton Sea, up Highway 74 to Idyllwild and the mountain communities, and heading east of the Coachella Valley to Blythe and the Colorado River.*

*Supervisor Perez’s office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.*