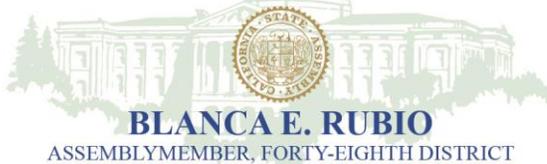


STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0048  
(916) 319-2048  
FAX (916) 319-2148

DISTRICT OFFICE  
100 NORTH BARRANCA STREET, SUITE 895  
WEST COVINA, CA 91791  
(626) 960-4457  
FAX (626) 960-1310

E-MAIL  
Assemblymember.Rubio@assembly.ca.gov

Assembly  
California Legislature



COMMITTEES  
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BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 1 ON  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor  
State of California  
State Capitol,  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

**Subject: Drought & Fire Resiliency Eligibility & Funding Priorities for the San Gabriel Valley**

As legislative representatives of the San Gabriel Valley, we unite to bring to your attention our regional water supply eligibility and priorities as we deliberate support for drought and fire resiliency by the State of California.

Foremost, we urge statewide eligibility for funding that is not contingent upon the declaration of a drought emergency for the respective counties. The San Gabriel Valley is in Los Angeles County on the coastal plain of Southern California stretching from Ventura County to San Diego County. While we have not yet been declared in a drought emergency, most of the major cities and water suppliers in our region never suspended restrictive water use requirements after the last drought ended in 2016. We have continued to invest in conservation, water recycling, and stormwater capture in cooperation with regional suppliers including those throughout Southern California's six counties. Our constituents should not be penalized for remaining vigilant and proactive.

The Main San Gabriel groundwater basin never fully recovered from the last drought despite extraordinary conservation by residents, businesses and measures taken by our area's water suppliers. Such measures included assessment of a resource development assessment (RDA) to purchase imported supplies when available and maximizing stormwater capture for groundwater replenishment. Our region also works collaboratively to capture and store over 90% of the run-off from the San Gabriel River. Yet, weather conditions have not kept pace to replenish our groundwater basin and the dry soil conditions have reduced overall run-off. In other words, the San Gabriel Valley never stopped experiencing the last drought, but our residents and suppliers have kept up the effort.

The San Gabriel Valley has been battling never ending drought conditions largely with our own financial, technical and talented human resources. Thus, it would be unfair if our share of state resources were diverted elsewhere as we try to stretch supplies stored by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, while being asked to further reduce our reliance on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta.

One of our major goals is to also stretch our local water supply as much as possible and reduce dependence on imported water from Northern California and the Colorado River. Given the current drought, and past fires that have impacted the San Gabriel River watershed, this need is more urgent than ever. Following is our list of funding priorities that will allow the San Gabriel Valley's local agencies to work with regional partners to make sure that our resources become robustly resilient.

**Replenish: Regional Water Recycling** - The San Gabriel Valley's water agencies have been coordinating with regional member agencies and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to build the Regional Recycled Water Program (RRWP) in Carson, California. This project will purify wastewater to produce sustainable, high-quality water for reuse. The Main San Gabriel Basin will benefit as RRWP could become a significant source of supplies for groundwater recharge. The San Gabriel Valley would specifically benefit from funding provisions that allow grants to local and regional agencies for the planning and funding for potentially necessary additional local treatment for potable reuse, conveyance, or related costs that could be the result of identified needs to protect wild species and habitat when the RRWP water is introduced to spreading basins.

**Protect: Wildfire and Watershed Restoration and Protection** - The San Gabriel Watershed has been impacted by several wildfires in the San Gabriel Mountains since 2015, including the "Complex Fire," making our watershed vulnerable to additional risks of flooding and erosion. Mineralization of organic matter, interruption of root uptake, and loss of shade can further impact our local forests and water quality by increasing stream temperatures and nutrient concentrations. The San Gabriel Valley would benefit from funding that is available for studies and projects to help manage threats of flooding resulting from erosion in the upper watershed, and for improving and protecting surface water quality. The eligible parties would include county agencies for necessary public works projects, as well as regional and local water agencies with facilities in threatened areas of the watershed.

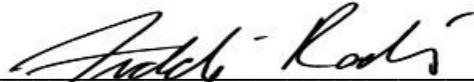
**Remediate: PFAS Treatment & Emerging Contaminants of Concern** - Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are impacting portions of the San Gabriel Valley with wells that exceed California's response level (RL) for the chemicals. Impacted local suppliers are having to turn to imported sources from Northern California and the Colorado River as a replacement supply until treatment plants can be constructed. Concurrently, the process for setting a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for PFAS substances has begun with the recent release of a public health goal (PHG) by the Office of Environmental Health and Hazards Assessments (OEHHA). Estimates are that the 30-year cost of eliminating these chemicals from water and soil in California will exceed \$29 billion. We support Assemblymember Cristina Garcia's \$250 million budget request for PFAS remediation, although it will be important to substantially increase such appropriations as data solidifies to determine the long-term cost. As such, a \$500 million revolving fund for loans dedicated to PFAS remediation should also be considered. This will facilitate interest-free bridge loans for wellhead treatment projects until funds can be recovered from corporate parties responsible for the presence of PFAS chemicals.

We appreciate all that you have already done to protect the San Gabriel Valley's water resources. We hope that this letter articulates actionable measures you can help us take to help the drought and fire resiliency of the San Gabriel Valley and all of California. We look forward to progress in the negotiations to assure all Californians benefit from any funding measures for drought and fire resiliency.

Sincerely yours,



Assemblymember Blanca Rubio, 48<sup>th</sup> AD



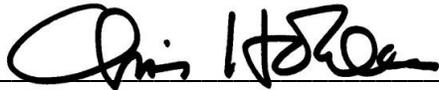
Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez, 52<sup>nd</sup> AD



Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, 57<sup>th</sup> AD



Assemblymember Cristina Garcia, 58<sup>th</sup> AD



Assemblymember Chris Holden, 41<sup>st</sup> AD



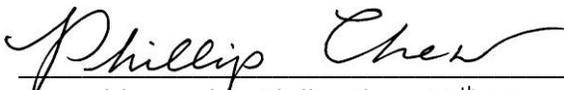
Senator Connie Leyva, 20<sup>th</sup> SD



Assemblymember Ed Chau, 49<sup>th</sup> AD



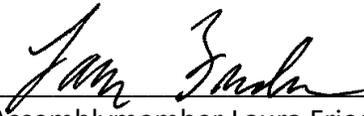
Senator Bob Archuleta, 32<sup>nd</sup> SD



Assemblymember Phillip Chen, 55<sup>th</sup> AD



Senator Susan Rubio, 22<sup>nd</sup> SD



Assemblymember Laura Friedman, 43<sup>rd</sup> AD