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September 27, 2012

Dave Potter, Chair  
Monterey County Board of Supervisors  
168 West Alisal Street  
Salinas, CA 93901

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE FOR DESALINATION PROJECT**

Dear Chair Potter and Board Members:

LandWatch Monterey County urges you to continue your support for public ownership. The long-standing County Ordinance requiring public ownership not only assures direct accountability to ratepayers, it will provide for the lowest cost water alternative as demonstrated by the recent cost analysis prepared by the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD).

The need to assure affordable drinking water to Monterey Peninsula residents has been reinforced by the Governor's signature of AB 685 which declares water as a human right. It states, "It is hereby declared to be the established policy of the state that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking and sanitary purposes". It directs all state agencies to consider this state policy when considering regulations, etc.

The proposed governance structure which the Board has been asked to consider in fact amounts to support of the Cal-Am project. The proposed governance structure is only needed in the event a private for-profit alternative is selected. Since the Monterey Peninsula Regional Water Authority has yet to recommend a desalination alternative, its support of the proposed governance structure is untimely.

It is premature for the County to support the Cal-Am project because of many legal and technical constraints that have yet to be addressed by the applicant and the California Public Utilities Commission. The proposed governance structure is similar to the one advocated by Peninsula cities for the failed Regional Project. The new project continues on what appears to be the same dead-end path proposing to extract water from the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin and transport it to the Monterey Peninsula.

The MPWMD Board recently voted to strongly support public ownership of a desalination facility and has indicated its willingness to be the public agency. The Board of Supervisors should go on record in support of its own ordinance by recommending that the MPWMD be the public agency to own and operate the desalination facility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. White', written in a cursive style.

Amy L. White  
Executive Director