

July 18, 2018

VIA E-Mail

Armando Quintero, Chair
California Water Commission
P. O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001
cwc@water.ca.gov

RE: LWVC Comments on Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP) Process

Dear Chair Quintero:

Since passage of Proposition 1 in 2014, the League of Women Voters of California has observed the Water Storage Investment Program process for two reasons: to evaluate the way staff and the Commission performed project assessment for funding decisions, and to observe the degree of public access during the process.

The language of the bond that voters approved required openness and transparency throughout the process, and Commission members seemed personally dedicated to meeting those requirements. We have been particularly impressed by the openness and thoughtful manner in which the Commission has conducted their meetings and decision making. Beginning with regional public workshops in 2015 explaining the Commission process and allowing public participation during the development of the quantification and technical regulations, this has been a very open process. You have been welcoming to the public, making every effort to grant the time needed to comment and ask questions. We have watched you be attentive to comments, discuss them thoughtfully, and try to answer or to direct staff to provide answers to all questions.

We are impressed with the procedures developed by Water Commission staff to arrive at the final projects. With staff's help, you saw to it that the complex process and procedures were always as clear and understandable to the layperson as possible. The website made information easy to access, and all documents and information were promptly posted. The meeting webcasts, available live and on the website, allowed the public to follow throughout a very long process.

The League did not support Proposition 1 in 2014, primarily because of our opposition to new on-stream storage and because of what we believed was the likelihood that high-profile projects would dominate the WSIP process, diverting resources from groundwater storage and other innovative projects. We understand that each qualified project had to be evaluated solely on the criteria set in the voter-approved bond content. As the process nears a close, we are happy to see that some innovative projects will be funded. Moreover, our fears about domination by high-profile projects have proven unfounded.

One of League's main goals is to promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive. Though the process has not been easy for the Commission nor the applicants, we believe that the WSIP process has been a model of good public access that all government agencies, boards and commissions could follow. We commend the Commission and staff for their example of open government.

Sincerely,



Helen L. Hutchison President

cc: Carol Baker, Vice-Chair
Andrew Ball, Commission Member
Joseph Byrne, Commission Member
Daniel Curtin, Commission Member
Joe Del Bosque, Commission Member
Cathy Keig, Commission Member
Maria Herrera, Commission Member
Joe Yun, Executive Officer