



GATEWAY CITIES
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

September 18, 2009

Mr. Lester Snow, Director
Department of Water Resources
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001
Email: DWR_IRWM@water.ca.gov

Dear Director Snow:

**Request for reconsideration of the denial of the Gateway Authority as an
Integrated Water Management (IRMW) Group**

I write to you as President of the Board of Directors of the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, a joint powers authority formed in 1996 representing 27 cities in Southeast Los Angeles County, including the City of Long Beach, and over 240 square miles in area. The Gateway Cities COG was formed to deal with the unique regional issues facing Southeast Los Angeles County, including transportation, housing, economic development, air quality and environmental quality.

I have followed the IRWM process closely and am concerned that the intent of the locally elected officials who have formed the Gateway Authority as a Regional Water Management Group (RWGA) to represent the interests of the Gateway Cities is undermined by your Department's preliminary decision *not* to accept the Gateway Authority as a RWGA.

The Gateway Authority was formed after the Greater Los Angeles Area County IRWMP (GLAC) failed to address our cities' serious concerns that our region's interests are under-represented in their governance structure. In particular, the cities had strong reservations about the governance structure of GLAC. It is curious to note that your staff has identified this issue in their summary decision to dismiss the Gateway Authority's application for Regional Water Management Group status. It should also be noted that GLAC has made no overtures to solve this very real governance issue in the last three years.

In October 2007, the Gateway Authority sent a letter following a meeting with then-Director Woodling, in which the Gateway Authority leadership informed DWR of its formation as a Joint Powers Authority with the responsibility for developing an integrated regional water resources management plan. Since that time, and in the absence of IRWMP grant funding, the Gateway Authority has operated in a transparent,

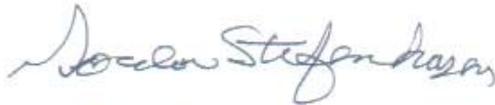
Gateway Authority Regional Water Management Group
September 18, 2009
Page 2

equitable fashion to address the Gateway Region's water resources needs. The Gateway Authority is the recipient of a \$10 million grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act through the State Water Resources Control Board's Clean Water fund. This grant will improve water quality in the Los Angeles River and will directly benefit 16 Gateway Cities. Additionally, the Gateway Authority is administering a Metals TMDL monitoring and implementation plan that will greatly improve water quality along the San Gabriel River.

The Gateway IRWM Authority clearly meets the qualification for a RWMG as defined in the State Water Code, and more importantly, exists to meet the needs of our region, instead of relying on IRWM grant funding to spur its activities. DWR's recommendation to accept the GLAC as a Regional Water Management Group ignores the years of work and the significant accomplishments of the Gateway Authority in favor of the establishment of a larger County planning effort that has historically neglected the Gateway Region. Though DWR acknowledges as much in the Recommendations for the GLAC Region, they have not proposed a remedy for this inveterate problem; in fact the approval of the GLAC region imposes no consequence if the needs of the Gateway Cities region continue to be ignored.

The vast area of the Gateway Cities region is home to more than two million people - nearly 8% of the state's population. It also represents the highest concentration of minority and disadvantaged communities in Southern California. To equitably address regional water needs, it is imperative that the region maintain strong local leadership in water management issues. I therefore urge you to reverse this arbitrary, unjust decision, and recognize the Gateway Authority as the Regional Water Management Group for the Gateway Cities region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gordon Stefenhagen".

Gordon Stefenhagen
President, Board of Directors