



# COACHELLA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

*Established in 1918 as a public agency*

GENERAL MANAGER  
Jim Barrett

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
Robert Cheng

CLERK OF THE BOARD  
Sylvia Bermudez

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
Dan Charlton

April 4, 2024

The Honorable Kelly Seyarto  
United States Senate  
1021 O Street, Suite 7120  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 1034 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Seyarto:

The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) serves approximately 300,000 residents in its 1,000 square miles of service area ranging from the San Geronio Pass to the Salton Sea, mostly within the Coachella Valley area of Riverside County, including small areas within Imperial and San Diego counties. Our services include domestic water, wastewater collection and treatment, agricultural water, regional stormwater protection, recycled water, and groundwater replenishment of imported water.

We are pleased to support Senate Bill (SB) 1034, which would clarify that a declared state of emergency is an “unusual circumstance” that may justify a delay in responding to a request for public records.

As a provider of water-related services across a vast region, CVWD can be impacted by natural disasters. Our service area straddles the San Andreas Fault which could cause significant disruption to our operations during earthquakes. While the public is familiar with a water agency’s role in responding to natural disasters with utility trucks and emergency crews, less known is the role that administrative personnel fulfill in managing emergency communications and many other unseen support functions. These unusual demands can strain staff availability and cause delays in responding to requests for public records, which can result in penalties despite our best efforts.

SB 1034 recognizes that forces beyond our control can cause administrative delays and that recovering from a disaster is a higher priority than an individual’s need to view a public record. For these reasons, CVWD strongly supports SB 1034.

Sincerely,

J. M. Barrett  
General Manager