



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 10, 2024

The Honorable Carlos Villapudua
Chair, Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 6340
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2757 (Garcia, Padilla) – Southeast California Economic Region – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Villapudua and Committee Members:

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.

CVWD writes in support for Assembly Bill 2757 by Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia and Senator Steve Padilla which would designate the Southeast California Economic Region for the purpose of aligning state and federal programs to benefit communities impacted by lithium and other mineral extraction and clean energy development. This bill also allows for regional collaboration to create a strategic plan for economic development in the region as the Blue-Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction in California deemed in their report's recommendations.

Economic regions in the United States are meant to promote economic development in distressed areas in the country. Currently, the Imperial Valley is grouped with San Diego as the Southern Border Region while the Eastern Coachella and Palo Verde Valleys are grouped together with the Inland Empire as part of the greater Southern California Region. Such division dilutes the interests and opportunities for constituents and developers in the Imperial, the Eastern Coachella, and Palo Verde Valleys. These Salton Sea communities all share the following hardships with each other more than they do with their current economic regional designations:

- Environmental and economic implications due to Salton Sea degradation.
- Unemployment rates higher than the state average.
- Median income rates lower than the state average.
- Lack of infrastructure.
- Decreased local revenue.

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April 10, 2024
Page 2

AB 2757 will create an economic region that prioritizes and encourages the economic development of the Salton Sea region for the benefit of the surrounding disadvantaged communities.

We urge your “YES” vote when the measure is heard in your Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. M. Barrett". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

J. M. Barrett
General Manager
Coachella Valley Water District