



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

June 26, 2024

SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S 128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Collins, Chairman Merkley, and Ranking Member Murkowski:

RE: Support for the the Coachella Valley Water District – North Cathedral City Regional Stormwater FY25 Congressionally Directed Spending Request

On behalf of the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), I write to request your support of the North Cathedral City Regional Stormwater Project, put forward to the Appropriations Committee to be considered for FY25 Congressionally Directed Spending by Senator Alex Padilla and Senator Laphonza Butler. We know your committee has many compelling projects to choose from—we write to assure you that these funds will be used to create a positive impact in California's Coachella Valley.

Established in 1918, CVWD was formed with the core mission of safeguarding and preserving water resources, primarily for agricultural irrigation purposes. Over the years, CVWD has evolved into a multifaceted agency serving a vast area of approximately 1,000 square miles, stretching from the San Gorgonio Pass to the Salton Sea, predominantly within Riverside County but also including portions of Imperial and San Diego counties. Today, CVWD offers a wide array of water-related services, including delivering irrigation and drinking water, groundwater replenishment, storm water protection, wastewater treatment and recycling, and promoting water conservation.

In August 2023, Cathedral City, CA endured catastrophic flooding and mudslides triggered by Tropical Storm Hillary, followed by another unprecedented storm one week later, inflicting \$126 million in combined damages. The North Cathedral City Regional Stormwater Project is a critical step in CVWD's Stormwater Master planning efforts. It will manage and reduce stormwater flooding to approximately 8,000 acres downstream and provide improved stormwater protection to the lives and property of Thousand Palms which is a community of over 8,000 residents and portions of Cathedral City which is a community of over 52,000 people. The I-10 freeway at the project location has an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volume of 90,000 cars. The Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) moves as many as 100 trains every day through the Coachella Valley along this corridor carrying as much as \$1,000,000 worth of material per day. It was forecast a 100-yr storm will cause both I-10 and the UPRR corridors to shut down.

This became a reality during Tropical Storm Hilary when many stretches of I-10 were closed, which effectively eliminated a way in and out of the Coachella Valley. The Coachella Valley Water District proposes to construct a regional stormwater channel that would provide a connection from north of I-10 to the Whitewater River Stormwater Channel (WWRSC) to the south. The storm flow from the north would be conveyed under I-10 and two UPRR tracks to the existing WWRSC. The design would collect existing flows passing under I-10 and provides a reliable and engineered channel under the UPRR that will provide a long-term solution for conveying flows downstream to the WWRSC.

Particularly distressing is the disproportionate impact the disaster had on vulnerable communities, including disadvantaged communities within Cathedral City. Upon completion, the project will ease such burdens on these communities.

Thank you, once again, for your consideration of the North Cathedral City Regional Stormwater Project. This project will be transformative in protecting the Coachella Valley from future severe weather events and meeting the region's climate resilience needs. Moreover, we hope to earn your support to ensure these funds are included in the final FY25 Interior-Environment appropriations bill and enacted into law.

Sincerely,



J. M. Barrett
General Manager

Enclosures/1/as