



COUNTY OF SAN BENITO ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

481 Fourth Street ♦ Hollister, CA 95023
Phone: 831-636-4000 ♦ Fax: 831-636-4010

www.cosb.us

Ray Espinosa, **County Administrative Officer**

Melinda Casillas, Budget Officer

Dulce Alonso, Management Analyst I

Lorena Moreno, Executive Secretary to CAO/Safety Coordinator

May 8, 2018

The Honorable Senator Monning
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 623 (Monning) -- SUPPORT

Dear Senator Monning:

I am pleased to write in **support** of your SB 623 (Monning), which would create a new Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund to ensure all Californians have access to safe and affordable drinking water.

Safe and affordable drinking water is a fundamental human right enshrined in California law, but one that is still not realized for too many Californians. Critical drinking water needs still remain unresolved, leaving families and communities across the state without safe and affordable drinking water. For example:

- The California State Water Resources Control Board has found that hundreds of communities are unable to consistently provide safe drinking water, some for a decade or longer.¹
- High treatment costs put clean drinking water out of reach for many communities, especially those with small and lower income ratepayer bases.
- Additionally, more and more families and individuals in both urban and rural portions of California are struggling to afford a basic amount of safe water due to unaffordable water rates.
- Finally, State Water Board data does not include the nearly 2 million Californians not served by a public water system, which have few regulatory requirements and are not eligible for most assistance programs, leaving them particularly vulnerable to unsafe drinking water.

The California State Water Resources Control Board has for years called for the creation of a sustainable funding source to support safe and affordable drinking water needs. In particular, the

¹ 2017 State Water Resources Control Board, Human Right to Water Web Portal.

The California State Water Resources Control Board has for years called for the creation of a sustainable funding source to support safe and affordable drinking water needs. In particular, the greatest barrier preventing communities from providing safe drinking water is the lack of an ongoing funding source to support O&M costs for drinking water treatment.

The new Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund would be authorized to provide both interim drinking water supplies and fund longer-term drinking water solutions, including operation and maintenance costs for low-income communities that need drinking water treatment. The Fund may also be used to finance a statewide low-income drinking water rate affordability program. The Fund would be administered by the Office of Sustainable Water Solutions at the State Water Board.

In the sixth largest economy in the world, we can and should ensure that all Californians have access to this most basic of human needs – safe and affordable drinking water. For this reason and the other reasons mentioned above, I am pleased to support your bill SB 623.

Sincerely,

Anthony Botelho
Chair of the Board
San Benito County

cc:

Senate pro Tem Kevin de Leon, Principal Co-Author
Kip Lipper, Office of Senate Pro Tempore Kevin de Leon
Alf Brandt, Office of Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon