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## **NEW BUSINESS**

**ITEM C-1:  
IID Petition for Modification of Revised Water  
Rights Order**

DATE SUBMITTED	<u>02/12/15</u>	COUNCIL ACTION	(x)
SUBMITTED BY	<u>City Manager</u>	PUBLIC HEARING REQUIRED	()
DATE ACTION REQUIRED	<u>02/18/15</u>	RESOLUTION	()
		ORDINANCE 1 <sup>ST</sup> READING	()
		ORDINANCE 2 <sup>ND</sup> READING	()
		CITY CLERK'S INITIALS	()

**IMPERIAL CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA ITEM**

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION/ACTION: IID PETITION FOR MODIFICATION OF REVISED WATER RIGHTS ORDER 2002-2017.**

- 1. APPROVAL TO SUBMIT LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE IID'S PETITION.**

DEPARTMENT INVOLVED: **City Manager**

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY: The Imperial Irrigation District is petitioning the State Water Resources Control Board to act upon the State of California's obligation to move forward restoration efforts at the Salton Sea. Mitigation water currently delivered to the Salton Sea under the QSA will stop in 2017 and the potential impacts of reduced water levels on the lake bed will almost certainly be damaging to the air quality of the region. The District's petition asks the SWRCB to hold public meetings about the issue and the IID has requested letters of support to encourage action on the part of the SWRCB. A sample support letter has been provided for review.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

F.O. INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends sending a letter of support for the IID's petition.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

MANAGER'S INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_

Based on the potential environmental impacts to our region, the City Manager recommends Council approval of a letter of support.

MOTION:

SECONDED:

APPROVED ( )

REJECTED ( )

AYES:

DISAPPROVED ( )

DEFERRED ( )

NAYES:

ABSENT:

REFERRED TO:

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Nov. 18, 2014**

**CONTACT:** Jennifer Goodsell, 1-760-604-1565

**IID petitions State Water Board to take action at the Salton Sea**

The Imperial Irrigation District today submitted a petition to the State Water Resources Control Board to exercise its continuing authority over the nation's largest agricultural-to-urban water transfer and avert an emerging environmental and public-health crisis at the Salton Sea.

The new petition calls on the state board to modify its 2002 order approving what became the 2003 Quantification Settlement Agreement and the water transfers it set into motion. Those water transfers will ultimately send 303,000 acre-feet of water from the farms and fields of the Imperial Valley to urban users in San Diego County and the Coachella Valley and were predicated on the state of California's statutory commitment to fund and implement a restoration plan for the Salton Sea. That 2002 order required 15 years of mitigation water – generated through land fallowing in the Imperial Valley – to be delivered to the Salton Sea to offset the transfer's impacts and allow the state sufficient time to meet its restoration obligation.

“The mitigation water delivered to the sea under the original state board order ends in 2017,” said IID board President Jim Hanks, “and the state is no closer to implementing a restoration plan today than it was in 2003. IID and its urban partners have met all their water transfer milestones and stand ready to continue doing so in the future, but the state's failure to act, along with an already-receding shoreline and the looming deadline of 2017 pose a direct threat to not only the residents of the Imperial and Coachella valleys but to the long-term viability of the QSA.”

A recent study by the Pacific Institute on the high cost of doing nothing at the Salton Sea suggests that windblown dust emissions from as much as 100,000 acres of exposed lakebed will exacerbate the poor air quality that already exists in the Imperial and Coachella valleys. The same study places the total cost of continued inaction by the state at up to \$70 billion over the 75-year term of the QSA.

The petition submitted today asks the state board to require the state, the QSA parties and the Salton Sea Authority to participate in a facilitated dialogue that would identify the most realistic and durable funding mechanism for Salton Sea restoration. That process would last up to six months, after which IID asks SWRCB to condition the water transfers on the state satisfying its unmet restoration obligation at the Salton Sea.

“The QSA has always represented a delicate compromise and what would happen to the Salton Sea as a result of it was fundamental to reaching that compromise,” Hanks said. “A smaller but sustainable sea is both feasible and achievable but only if the state lives up to its responsibility. At this point, the last, best forum available to IID's water users and the people of the Imperial and Coachella valleys is the State Water Resources Control Board, which has the authority and the duty to act on what we believe is a matter of the highest possible importance and urgency.”

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