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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District
Attn: Mr. James Williams
6221 Box Springs Blvd.
Riverside, CA 92507

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Dear Mr. Williams,

I lived half my life in Southern California where I became involved in outdoor activities like hiking and backpacking. I spent my outdoors time split between the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada and the deserts in the south part of the state.

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The time I spent in the desert made me aware of its beauty and how delicate and fragile the desert ecosystems are. I became quite familiar with the history of Owens Lake and its destruction due to bad management and shortsightedness. I would look out onto the manmade dust plain where once there was a lake every time I drove from Los Angeles to the Sierra along Highway 395 and wonder how the stewards of our lands could allow that to happen.

I am very concerned that the Cadiz Project that will pump ground water from the Mojave Desert may result in equally devastating results. That is why it is imperative that a complete and accurate analysis of the ramifications of the proposed project be considered. This project could result in ecosystem damage to two national parks and five wilderness areas managed by the BLM.

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The BLM has been entrusted by Congress to permanently protect these lands. To do that correctly requires fully examining potential problems that can result from tapping the groundwater system. The issues that must be addressed include (1) the effects on plant and animal life, (2) groundwater quality, how it will be affected by pumping and is it safe for public consumption without excessively expensive treatment, and (3) is sufficient monitoring and mitigation in place to warrant proceeding.

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The issue of long term monitoring is very dear to me because I believe that it is very important that the steward of the lands, the BLM, must maintain a critical eye on what is happening should the project be allowed to proceed. The BLM should not agree to anything that does not allow, without penalty, the suspension of the project should environmental problems surface. Furthermore, the public should be invited to participate in the formation of the monitoring program.

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Thank you for your time and considerations.

Very truly yours,
Marcus Libkind
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Note: This letter was also sent to the Metropolitan Water District