

January 8, 2001

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Mr. Jack Safely, Project Manager
Metropolitan Water District
Water Resources Management Group
PO Box 54153
Los Angeles, CA 90054-0153

via fax: 213-217-6949

Dear Mr. Safely,

This is a letter to protest the continuance of the water project devised by Cadiz, Inc. and the Metropolitan Water District to store and extract surplus public water in the Mojave Desert. Despite MWD's mandate to supply water for Southern California, and the district's experience in banking water, there are serious questions left unanswered in the current document about potential health problems, decimation of public lands, and threats to the Mojave's ecosystem. In short, this plan is in violation of the California Public Trust Doctrine.

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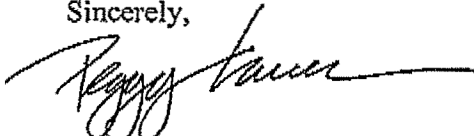
It appears that the science behind the projections is skewed toward political paybacks. In recent history, the MWD seemed to rise above more base concerns with its intelligent conservation and other programs to fulfill its mandate for all the people of Southern California. But now it seems hubris could again have a great cost for the public and the environment. What if other science-based predictions come true? No matter how advanced MWD is in treating polluted water for consumption, there are some other obstacles you can't surmount. It is highly feasible, for instance, that pumping water from underground will cause subsidence of soils, which will cause compaction and loss of porosity. If there is increased water runoff in the desert, its drying can lead to dust storms, which will carry bacteria to huge numbers of people, as happened with the Owens Valley project.

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Two national parks and five wilderness areas are involved in this project. They were set aside by Congress for protection by the State, which is the trustee for resources held in common by *all* the people of this state. Over the past few decades, the public has gained a greater understanding of collective rights. We hope that the MWD and the BLM will follow the requirements for protecting public resources and reject this plan as proposed for private gain.

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Sincerely,



Peggy Lauer
President
The Public Trust Alliance