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12/24/00 01:02 AM

To: <james\_williams@blm.gov>  
cc:  
Subject: STOP MOJAVE WATER GRAB!

December 24, 2000

Mr. James Williams  
Bureau of Land Management  
California Desert District  
6221 Box Springs Boulevard  
Riverside, CA 92507-0714

Dear James Williams,

As a zoologist who has studied desert wildlife for over 35 years, I am writing to comment on the draft supplemental environmental impact statement on the Cadiz Groundwater Storage and Dry-year Supply Program. I am concerned about the possible impacts this project could have on the Mojave National Preserve and several desert Wilderness Areas. I do not believe that this environmental review adequately addresses the potential threats. I also feel that the safeguards outlined to protect the environment and wildlife will not be sufficient.

Specifically, I am concerned that the plan for monitoring and mitigation is not well defined and offers questionable management for environmental impacts. The plan gives too much authority for decisions affecting the desert ecosystem to Cadiz, Inc. and its customer, the Metropolitan Water District, both of which have an economic interest in extracting groundwater. Allowing profit-focused decision-makers to be in charge of the protection of our public resources does not protect the public interest.

The document needs to examine alternatives that are actually sustainable, safer, and less environmentally destructive, including water conservation measures. The review of such viable alternatives is a legal requirement. I believe much more progress should be made in water conservation before parks and natural areas are further threatened by projects such as this. Alternatives that should be considered include other existing, planned, or feasible water storage projects, and a host of easily adopted water conservation measures that have successfully reduced water demand in other areas.

The subject lands were set aside by Congress to be permanently protected for their nationally significant natural and cultural resource values. This project is likely to undo that protection for future generations. Please support the public interest and reject this proposal!

Thank you for your attention to my comments.

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Specifically, I am concerned that the plan for monitoring and

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mitigation is not well defined and offers questionable management for environmental impacts. The plan gives too much authority for decisions affecting the desert ecosystem to Cadiz, Inc. and its customer, Metropolitan Water District, both of which have an economic interest in extracting groundwater. Allowing profit-focused decision-makers to be in charge of the protection of our public resources does not protect the public interest.

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Finally, I am concerned about the possible air pollution that could result if the water table under the nearby "dry" lakes drops even a few feet. We have already seen what can happen when this occurs, namely Owens Lake. In addition to the nearby inhabitants, this pollution threatens public lands including two national parks and five wilderness areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management. These lands were set aside by Congress to be permanently protected for their nationally significant natural and cultural resource values. This project is likely to undo that protection for future generations.

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Please support the public interest and reject this proposal.  
Thank you.

Glenn Stewart  
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Pomona, CA 91768