

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-0508

September 16, 2014

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary, Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell,

Shortly after taking office last year, I wrote to you about the proposed Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project ("Project"), which would be located in California's Eastern Mojave Desert. The Project will provide an additional 50,000 acre feet of water per year to the state's dwindling water supply. It is important to me that my constituents and the land itself are protected from significant environmental harm. For that reason, I asked in my previous letter that a federal environmental review be undertaken for the Project. Further developments have changed the dynamics surrounding the Project, calling into question the need for federal environmental review and signaling a need to allow the Project to move forward.

Recently, the Orange County Superior Court denied all six petitions challenging the Project's environmental assessment and upheld the actions of the Santa Margarita Water District and the County of San Bernardino in approving the Project.

Furthermore, San Bernardino County suffers from unemployment that far exceeds the national average. The Project is expected to employ 1,500 people during every year of construction. Indeed, I have received assurances that 80 percent of the Project's capital cost will be spent in San Bernardino County, and 50 percent of jobs have been dedicated to residents of San Bernardino County, including 10 percent for military veterans.

Project plans specify that San Bernardino County will regulate the extraction of groundwater, and 20 percent of the Project water is reserved for county water providers for the next 50 years. Perhaps most importantly, I have reviewed a study of the hydrology in the area; I believe the Project to be sustainable in terms of water recharge rates and in avoiding adverse effects on top soil.

The Project construction is expected to generate close to \$1 billion in economic activity and, over the long-term, local governments will receive \$6 million per year in new property tax revenues, including \$600,000 annually added to the budget of the Needles Unified School District.

With the court approvals in mind and with so many jobs at stake, I believe further investigation into environmental impacts to be unnecessary. However, as the project moves forward, I will continue to monitor it to ensure that no harm is done to the local environment or water supplies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Col. Paul Cook (Ret.)  
U.S. Congressman  
California District 8