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February 21, 2020

VIA E-MAIL

City of Patterson City Council

E-mail: cityclerk@ci.patterson.ca.us

**Re: Support for Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir Project (February 25th
Agenda Item 5)**

Dear Mayor Novelli and Members of the City Council,

Grassland Water District and Grassland Resource Conservation District support the proposed Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir Project, which will provide needed water storage and drought reliability for farmers and wildlife in Stanislaus County and surrounding areas.

Our districts provide water to state, federal, and privately owned wildlife habitat in the Grassland Ecological Area (GEA), which encompasses portions of Merced and Stanislaus Counties. The GEA is a vital network of wetlands that support migratory birds and other native plants and animals, improve water quality, and provide flood control services for the lower San Joaquin River basin. The Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir Project proposes to incorporate water supply reliability for wildlife refuges within the GEA. Water continues to be the most important resource for a healthy environment in the San Joaquin Valley.

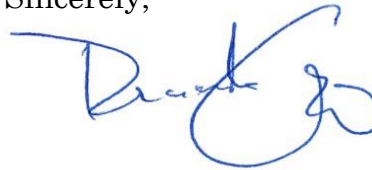
We have a positive and personal history of partnership with the project proponents, Del Puerto Water District and the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors. In addition to being competent, forward-thinking water leaders with a track record of infrastructure expertise and project delivery, these local water agencies are deeply committed to the wellbeing of our communities and the environment. There are few water agencies that we hold in such high regard. Our districts endorse these project proponents to responsibly design and construct a local water storage project that will provide multiple benefits for the region.

Del Puerto Water District was the primary driver behind the North Valley Recycled Water Program, a monumental project that will increase water resilience in this region for decades to come. The San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors were instrumental in permitting and constructing the Los Banos Creek Diversion Project, which combats seasonal flooding in our districts by better regulating runoff for beneficial use. These are two recent examples of projects in which we have partnered with the proponents of the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir Project. They have significant skills in securing public investments, cutting through “red tape,” and effectively engaging stakeholders. We believe they will continue to garner project support at the state and federal levels, and will diligently address local needs and concerns. We encourage you to place a high level of confidence in Del Puerto Water District and the Exchange Contractors with respect to this project.

Grassland Water District and Grassland Resource Conservation District also manage a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), and we share a groundwater subbasin with the City. We coordinate closely with other GSAs in the subbasin, including your Northern & Central Delta-Mendota GSP group as well as the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractor GSP group. There is an imminent need for new projects and management actions that will highlight our region’s commitment to groundwater conservation. Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir is such a project, and it will be a key part of our SGMA compliance efforts in the Delta-Mendota Subbasin.

The drought of 2014-2016 taught our districts important lessons about the importance of regional water resiliency and creative partnerships. Trust was a crucial component of those efforts. In that spirit, and as California faces another dry winter, we hope the City will support the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir Project.

Sincerely,



Ricardo Ortega
General Manager
Director of Policy & Governmental Affairs
Grassland Water & Resource
Conservation Districts