



November 16, 2021

Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief Grant Program  
California Department of Water Resources  
Division of Regional Assistance. Financial Assistance Branch  
715 P Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Mailbox 15  
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

RE: Water Agency Contractor Letter of Support for the *Russian River Watershed Water Supply Resiliency Project*

Dear Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief Grant Program Manager,

This letter is submitted by the eight Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) Water Contractors and Marin Municipal Water District who purchase water from Sonoma Water in accordance with various existing contractual agreements. The Water Contractors include the Cities of Cotati, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sonoma, Town of Windsor, and the North Marin and Valley of the Moon Water Districts. The Water Contractors and Marin Municipal Water District are collectively responsible for providing drinking water service to over 600,000 people in Marin and Sonoma Counties.

The Water Contractors strongly support Sonoma Water's grant application for the *Russian River Watershed Water Supply Resiliency Project* (Project) submitted to the California Department of Water Resources' Urban and Multibenefit Drought Relief Grant Program.

The 2020-21 drought in Sonoma County rivals the 1976-77 drought as the drought of record and has resulted in severely diminished water supplies and shortages experienced by many water users. As a result, the County of Sonoma proclaimed a drought emergency on April 27, 2021, and the State of California proclaimed a state of emergency in Sonoma and Mendocino counties due to drought conditions in the Russian River Watershed as early as April 21, 2021.

Sonoma Water's Project will result in long-term strategies to provide water supply resiliency to the Russian River in the face of exceptional drought, continuing effects of climate change, and the prospect of Pacific Gas & Electric Company's (PG&E) abandonment of its hydroelectric power plant, the Potter Valley Project. The Russian River and Potter Valley Project provide important sources of water for over 650,000 people in Mendocino, Sonoma, and Marin counties and for threatened and endangered fish in the Russian River. Goals of the project include:

- Establishing a Russian River Water Users Forum
- Investigating acquisition of key components of the Potter Valley Project from PG&E and modifying them to function as a water diversion-only facility, including estimating the cost of modifications and operations
- Analyzing and developing concepts for the projects necessary to improve water supply reliability in the Russian River

This work must be completed as soon as possible to chart a course for water supply reliability for the Russian River basin.

We recognize and are committed to the importance of sustainably managing our water resources and believe this proposal is a necessary step to effectively manage water in the Russian River basin to achieve water supply reliability for the region. Therefore, we support this proposal and highly recommend its sponsorship by the Department of Water Resources. We look forward to hearing of its success.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Harvey, City of Cotati Council Member  
Chair, Water Advisory Committee

Cc: Grant Davis, General Manager of Sonoma County Water Agency