

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 4, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

We are writing to request that H.R. 3877, the Salton Sea Projects Improvements Act, be included and funded in any upcoming infrastructure legislation. This bill is necessary to allow the Bureau of Reclamation to fully engage in infrastructure projects with the State of California to mitigate the environmental and public health crisis as a result of the receding shoreline of the Salton Sea.

The Salton Sea Projects Improvements Act authorizes \$250 million for the Bureau of Reclamation to undertake projects to improve air quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and water quality at the Salton Sea – projects that fit squarely within job creation and water management mission of the proposed infrastructure legislation. Not only will the inclusion of the Salton Sea Projects Improvements Act in an infrastructure bill lead to a positive public health outcome, but it will also create good paying jobs in Riverside and Imperial Counties for the construction of these projects.

The Salton Sea occupies 370 square miles in Imperial and Riverside Counties and is California’s largest lake. The Sea provides habitat to over 400 species of birds, including state and federally listed endangered species. It is sustained largely by agricultural discharges from Imperial Irrigation District and Coachella Valley Water District. Inflows to the Sea have reduced significantly, which has caused serious negative environmental, agricultural, and economic impacts in the region.

At a time when the western United States is facing one of the most severe periods of drought and water insecurity in modern history, the Bureau of Reclamation needs to have the strongest tools available to manage water resources and address water-related infrastructure challenges. In addition to owning nearly half of the land base under the Salton Sea, the Department of Interior (through Reclamation) also manages the Colorado River, which is a primary source of inflows to the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea Projects Improvements Act would provide Reclamation with the tools and financial resources needed to fulfill their responsibilities to the Sea and the region.

The Salton Sea is one of the most pressing environmental and public health challenges that our constituents face, and the federal government has a duty to invest in water infrastructure projects

that will have immense benefits for our constituents. In fact, during a House Natural Resources Committee hearing last fall, Wade Crowfoot, the Secretary of California's Natural Resources Agency, stated unequivocally that California could not meet the necessary benchmarks to protect the public's health without a substantial federal commitment to the Salton Sea.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation and the funding that accompanies it for inclusion in upcoming infrastructure legislation, and we look forward to working together to provide for the infrastructure needs of our country and our constituents.

Sincerely,



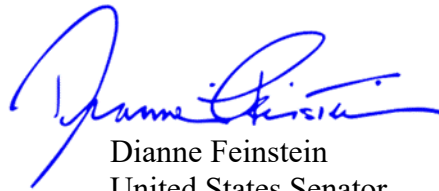
Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator