



DIRECTORS
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Vice President
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JOHN H. WEED

43885 SOUTH GRIMMER BOULEVARD • P.O. BOX 5110, FREMONT, CALIFORNIA 94537-5110
(510) 668-4200 • FAX (510) 770-1793 • www.acwd.org

MANAGEMENT
PAUL PIRAINO
General Manager
ROBERT SHAVER
Engineering Manager
KARL B. STINSON
Operations Manager
WILLIAM J. ZENONI
Finance and Administration Manager

April 7, 2006

Samuel W. Bodman
Secretary of Energy
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

RE: Petition To Exempt From Preemption, California's Water Efficiency Standards For Residential Clothes Washers - docket number **EE-RM-PET-100**

The Alameda County Water District (ACWD) supports the California Energy Commission petition to exempt from preemption filed on behalf of the State of California. Sustainable water efficiency is a major aspect of our efforts to assure that a safe and reliable water supply is available to California citizens, businesses and the supporting environment. We at Alameda County Water District urge you to consider the unique characteristics of California that offer convincing reasons for this exemption. We ask that you consider the following:

California's Interests are Unusual and Compelling

California has the most extensive water importation and distribution system in the nation. Most of the water demand is more than 300 miles from the water source. ACWD's supply comes from the Bay-Delta via the State Water Project (SWP) and the San Francisco Regional Water System (SFPUC) in addition to local supplies which include groundwater from the Niles Cone Groundwater Basin. The SWP and SFPUC sources travel a significant distance to provide water for customers in ACWD's service area.

The extensive importation and distribution of water supplies not only increases costs; it greatly increases security risks. Much of California's water supply travels through the Sacramento Delta, contained and channeled to the Bay Area and Southern California through a myriad of levees. Now, these aging levees are susceptible to failure. The liability has become so great that the Governor of California has recently requested that the Delta levees be granted National Emergency status. Seawater intrusion threatens groundwater sources where over-pumping has become necessary; further surface water interruptions could cause irreparable damage. No other state is so susceptible to the catastrophic effects of natural or intentional interruptions in water supply. Water use efficiency can greatly minimize the severe negative impact of major interruptions in California's unique and precarious water supply network.

ACWD serves a population of over 324,000 and 7,500 businesses. Typically 50-60% of our drinking water supply is imported. Improving water use efficiency is a vital part of our resource planning, and is the most viable source for water needed to meet the current and future needs of our customers. In addition, water efficiency minimizes the hardships our customers will endure in the event of potential water supply crises.

California's Unique Water-Economy Situation

California's economy, equivalent to that of the fifth largest country worldwide, is dependant on an adequate and reliable water supply. Impacting California's economy with water shortages will have a negative ripple effect on the entire nation. Water efficiency offers California one of its most cost effective sources of water to feed its economy; an economy the entire nation depends on for financial stability.

Alternative Approaches Implemented

There are many alternative cost-effective methods to improve water efficiency, and we are already implementing them. Improving the efficiency of clothes washers is only part of the overall solution for reliable water supply, yet it is a vital part. ACWD evaluates water efficiency options and water supply options equally in its planning process. We implement all of the most cost-effective strategies available. Improving the efficiency of clothes washers does not supplant other reasonable means available. Our efforts to provide a reliable source of water include but are not limited to various water conservation programs targeting every water use category in our service area, public information programs, school programs, groundwater recharge, desalination, and leak detection and repair.

ACWD cannot afford to dismiss any reasonable and cost effective method to increase water supply or decrease water demand. Water availability, safety concerns and legal rights limit our ability to increase water production. Reclaimed water offers potential, but is limited to non-potable uses and requires a huge investment in dual distribution network and building design. Desalination requires development and operating costs far greater than traditional water sources. There is not a single solution to secure California's water future, and ACWD's commitment to provide a reliable source of water to meet the needs of the communities it serves.

Exemption from Preemption is Necessary

Water efficiency standards for appliances are not the only solution, but are a very important part of a large array of strategies to solve our impending water crisis. Clothes washers are a major water use in 80% of homes. High efficiency washers save more than 50% of the water wasted by traditional washers. A typical family using an efficient washer will save more than 6,000 gallons of water per year. Currently, our only available action is to promote water efficient washers through rebates to encourage the purchase of the high- efficiency washers; this method has limited effect and is very costly, compared to appliance standards. Ratepayers bear an undue burden because washer efficiency standards cannot be adopted by the State.

Therefore, we encourage you to grant the preemption necessary for California and its citizens to secure a safe and reliable water supply for the state.

Sincerely,



Paul Piraino
General Manager
Alameda County Water District