

ORAL TESTIMONY

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

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Good morning Chairman Cantwell and Vice Chair Barrasso and members of the Committee. On behalf of Rancho California Water District, thank you for the courtesy to appear before the committee to present our views on the pending legislation, S. 1219, a bill to authorize the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians Water Rights Settlement Act.

On behalf of RCWD's Board of Directors, we deeply appreciate Senator Boxer's sponsorship of this important legislation, and Senator Feinstein' co-sponsorship, and the committee's willingness to consider the legislation.

In the interest of time, I request that my formal written testimony be entered into the record. I will summarize RCWD's views on S. 1219.

RCWD provides water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, and water recycling services to more than 134,000 people in a service area of 160 square miles with over 42,000 service connections. Our infrastructure network consists of 960 miles of water mains, 41 storage reservoirs, Vail Dam and Vail Lake reservoir, groundwater recharge facilities, and 47 groundwater wells. Currently we provide 71,300 acre feet of water for domestic, commercial, industrial, agricultural and landscape uses.

Just over two years ago, I appeared before the committee to endorse efforts to authorize a water rights settlement agreement. Today, I return to endorse this effort and to advise the committee of our interests in any final bill that can be enacted into law.

Since 2010, RCWD has worked with the Pechanga Band to clarify a limited number of outstanding issues. The key issues, we believe, are close to resolution. We hope to have these ready as the bill moves to markup.

Chairman Cantwell, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. We look forward to providing the committee with any additional information that will help to expedite final consideration of this important legislation.