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October 22, 2015

The Honorable John C. Fleming, Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: H.R. 1296 – Congressman Duncan Hunter’s Bill to  
Implement the San Luis Rey Indian Water Rights Settlement

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Vista Irrigation District (VID) in Vista, California, appreciates you and the distinguished Members of the Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee for conducting the October 28, 2015 hearing regarding an important amendment to the San Luis Rey Indian Water Rights Settlement Act. VID supports passage of H.R. 1296. Please accept this letter as written testimony for the hearing record.

Enactment of H.R. 1296 will approve and ratify the San Luis Rey Indian Water Rights Settlement Agreement as executed by all of the parties: VID; the City of Escondido (Escondido); the Pala, Pauma, Rincon, San Pasqual and La Jolla Bands of Mission Indians (Bands); and the Department of the Interior and the Department of Justice.

The Settlement Agreement, together with the unique comprehensive Implementing Agreement among VID, Escondido and the Bands, will forever resolve the 46-year old dispute over the waters of the San Luis Rey River and secure water supplies not only for the Bands but for the more than 300,000 residents of north San Diego County served by VID and Escondido. It will also save potentially tens of millions of dollars of additional legal fees that would come from protracted litigation, and finally gives VID and Escondido a clear picture of their own futures regarding improving long term water supply and efficiency.

I would like to emphasize that there are no appropriations, earmarks or any other financial considerations contained in this bill. This legislation merely seeks to implement the terms of the San Luis Rey Indian Water Rights Settlement Act which was sponsored by Congressman Ron Packard and was enacted into law in 1988. The provision of supplemental water authorized and the financial contribution appropriated under the authority of the 1988 Act are sufficient to satisfy the terms of the Settlement Agreement now and in the future without any future legislation by Congress or additional contribution of water or money by the United States. Indeed, the Settlement Agreement shields the United States from potential future expense by providing waivers and releases of liability in favor of the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this important legislation.

Sincerely yours,

Roy A. Coox  
General Manager

*A public agency serving the city of Vista and portions of San Marcos, Escondido, Oceanside and San Diego County*