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**Modesto
Irrigation
District**

Water and Power

September 28, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman,
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso:

The Modesto Irrigation District and the Turlock Irrigation District (the Districts) write to express their appreciation for the Committee's August 16, 2018 legislative hearing to "*Examine Implementation of Clean Water Act Section 401 and S. 3303, the Water Quality Certification Improvement Act of 2018.*" We also appreciate your leadership on issues related to water, public works, the environment and the economy, and in particular your efforts to achieve a balance between the Federal and state roles when securing water quality certifications under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The Districts support S. 3303.

The Districts are the owners and operators of the Don Pedro Dam and Reservoir located on the Tuolumne River in the Central Valley of California. The project provides water to irrigate some of the most productive farmland in the world, directly supporting a vibrant agricultural sector that has evolved since the Districts' formation more than a century ago. The Don Pedro Project also provides municipal and industrial water supplies to the City of Modesto, while providing clean hydroelectric power, flood control, recreation, groundwater recharge and fish and wildlife benefits for the entire region.

The Districts have been working since 2011 to relicense the Don Pedro hydroelectric facilities. During the last seven years, we have worked with project partners, state and Federal resource agencies, Tribes, and conservation groups to address economic, fishery and other environmental concerns. The Districts have spent approximately \$30 million to conduct more than 35 studies on river conditions and improvements, and to develop a suite of computer models to help inform the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's decision-making process.

As we work through the relicensing process, we are focused on the co-equal goals of protecting and improving the natural resources of the lower Tuolumne River and protecting and sustaining the water supplies to our communities and region. We believe that states play an important role in protecting water quality within their borders. However, the Districts support clarifying existing law, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, to ensure that a state may only impose those conditions necessary to ensure that discharges from the federally permitted or licensed activity comply with the Clean Water Act. Moreover, efforts to allow for a more timely, efficient, transparent and predictable state certification process are welcomed improvements.

Sincerely,



Casey Hashimoto, P.E.
General Manager
Turlock Irrigation District



Scott Furgerson
General Manager
Modesto Irrigation District

CC: Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Honorable Kamala Harris