



State of California

925 L Street, Suite 805
Sacramento, CA 95814

PH: 916-445-2125

February 6, 2020

The Honorable Benjamin Allen
State Capitol, Room 4076
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Chairman

Sean Varner
Vice Chairman

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Assembly Member

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Cathy Schwamberger

Janna Sidley

Ethan Rarick
Executive Director

RE: SUPPORT FOR SALTON SEA FUNDING IN SENATE BILL 45

Dear Senator Allen,

The Little Hoover Commission supports the inclusion of funding for Salton Sea mitigation projects in SB 45, your proposal for the Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020. The Commission noted the inclusion in your proposal of \$165 million for habitat and air quality improvement projects aimed at mitigating the detrimental environmental effects presented by the shrinking Salton Sea, and we noted the inclusion of Salton Sea funding in similar bond proposals by Gov. Newsom and Assemblymember Garcia. We view all of these proposals as broadly responsive to the Commission's recommendations to address the Salton Sea crisis, and we hope that as the final bond issue is developed, funding for Salton Sea projects will be included.

In its 2015 report, *Averting Disaster: Action Now for the Salton Sea*, and in its 2016 letter report on the same topic, the Commission outlined the enormous impact the Salton Sea's environmental effects have upon hundreds of thousands of Californians, affecting public health, wildlife, water security and the regional economy of the Coachella Valley. In order to avoid an environmental catastrophe, the Commission recommended the creation of the Salton Sea Task Force in 2015, led by the assistant secretary for Salton Sea policy, to coordinate with stakeholders, advise the Governor, lead efforts to develop funding opportunities for restoration projects, and work with officials to cut red tape to expedite restoration projects. In 2016, the Commission recommended that additional resources be provided to the assistant secretary for Salton Sea policy to bolster the effectiveness of restoration project work as well as community outreach. Further, the Commission recommended an assessment of Salton Sea management costs to inform the development of a long-term sustainable funding strategy.

We believe the inclusion of Salton Sea funding in the pending bond proposals advances these recommendations, and for this reason the Little Hoover Commission supports the funding of these restoration projects. If I, the Commission, or our staff can provide any further assistance as this proposal moves through the legislative process, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Sean Varner
Vice Chairman

Milton Marks Commission on California State Government Organization and Economy
littlehoover@lhc.ca.gov | www.lhc.ca.gov



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C: Commissioners, Little Hoover Commission; Assembly Committee on Budget; Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review