



**MWD**

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Executive Office

May 15, 2008

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
U.S. Senate  
284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hutchison:

Support for S. 1807

I am writing to express the support of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) for S. 1807, *The Weather Mitigation Research and Development Policy Authorization Act of 2007*, which you have introduced. Metropolitan has a water delivery contract with the Secretary of the Interior for the delivery of Colorado River water, and supplies drinking water to 18 million people in its Southern California service area.

*As recommended by a 2003 National Research Council report entitled Critical Issues in Weather Modification Research, a federally-sponsored weather modification research program is desired to advance the scientific understanding of current programs, as well as increase their effectiveness through applied research. Droughts in the United States result in an average economic loss of \$6 to 8 billion per year, while severe hail producing storms result in up to \$2.3 million in damage to crops and over \$2 billion in property loss annually. Rain enhancement and hail suppression weather modification projects help mitigate these losses. Additional research in these areas is needed to make existing programs more effective and permit them to better quantify that effectiveness.*

Recent droughts have produced low lake levels at Lake Powell and Lake Mead and have led the seven Colorado River Basin states to create cooperative agreements. These agreements are in place for wintertime cloud seeding in the states of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming to pursue water augmentation to the benefit of the entire Colorado River system. Evaluations of the potential for snowpack augmentation by cloud seeding in the Colorado River Basin indicate that a significant yield in runoff can be attained through properly designed projects. A 2006 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) evaluation indicates the potential for generating significant amounts of new water – up to 800,000 acre-feet of water in an average year if the states were to implement new programs and designate new areas for cloud seeding.

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Weather modification operations and regulation currently reside within state and local governments and it is Metropolitan's belief that the federal role should be that of assistance with applied research and practical technology transfer programs. The recent USBR Weather Damage Modification Program implemented a successful model for combining local, state, and federal resources in providing a means for scientific evaluation of operational rainfall, snowfall enhancement, and hail suppression projects in California, Colorado, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah. Metropolitan supports this cooperative federal-state research model.

All seven Colorado River Basin states have contacted Secretary Kempthorne to recommend implementation of an expanded weather modification program as part of a package of actions to prepare for and respond to shortage conditions. Covering about one-twelfth the area of the coterminous United States and including parts of seven states and Mexico, the river basin is a major source of water supply for urban and agricultural areas throughout the arid Southwest. The Colorado River has historically provided about half of the imported water used in Southern California. Passage of S. 1807 in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress is key to the establishment of a comprehensive and coordinated national weather mitigation policy and to the funding of weather modification research.

Sincerely,

  
Jeffrey Kightlinger  
General Manager

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cc: Mr. Dennis Strong  
Director  
Utah Division of Water Resources  
1594 West North Temple Street, Suite 310  
Salt Lake City, UT 84116

Mr. Scott Balcomb  
Balcomb & Green, P.C.  
818 Colorado Avenue  
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

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Mr. Jay D. Bingham  
Chairman  
Colorado River Commission of Nevada  
555 East Washington Avenue, Suite 3100  
Las Vegas, NV 89101-1065

Mr. John R. D'Antonio Jr.  
State Engineer and Secretary  
New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission  
Bataan Memorial Building  
P.O. Box 25102  
Santa Fe, NM 87504-5102

Mr. Herbert R. Guenther  
Director  
Arizona Department of Water Resources  
3550 North Central Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85012

Ms. Jennifer Gimbel  
Director  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721  
Denver, CO 80203

Ms. Patricia Mulroy  
General Manager  
Southern Nevada Water Authority  
100 City Parkway, Suite 700  
Las Vegas, NV 89106

Mr. Patrick T. Tyrrell  
State Engineer  
Wyoming State Engineer's Office  
Herschler Building, 4<sup>th</sup> East  
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0370

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Mr. Don A. Ostler  
Executive Director and Secretary  
Upper Colorado River Commission  
355 South 400 East  
Salt Lake City, UT 84111-2969

Mr. Bart Fisher  
Chairman  
Colorado River Board of California  
770 Fairmont Avenue, Suite 100  
Glendale, CA 91203-1068

Mr. Lester A. Snow  
Director  
California Department of Water Resources  
P.O. Box 942836  
Sacramento, CA 94236