

MWD

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Executive Office

May 15, 2008

The Honorable Mark Udall
Committee on Science and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
100 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Udall:

Support for H. R. 3445

I am writing to express the support of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) for H.R. 3445, *The Weather Mitigation Research and Technology Transfer 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 billion 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.

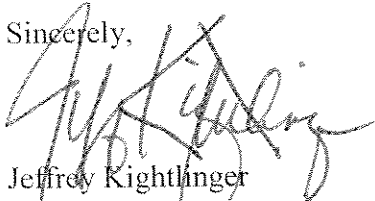
Recent droughts have produced low lake levels at Lake Powell and Lake Mead and have led the seven Colorado River Basin states to create cooperative agreements. These agreements are in place for wintertime cloud seeding in the states of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming to pursue water augmentation to the benefit 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 H.R. 3445 in the 110th 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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