*Dear Governor Newsom,*

*I am advocating for ocean water importation for the Salton Sea via the Pacific Ocean or the Sea of Cortez. There are numerous reasons why I feel it is the most beneficial and feasible solution to address the public health, economic and environmental challenges at California's largest lake.*

*Ocean water importation would support the objectives of the Salton Sea Management Program by supplying a reliable source of water for the environmental restoration, economic revitalization, and public health protection by eliminating dust emission. Ocean water import would:*

* *Cover all exposed lakebed eliminating hazardous dust.*
* *Eliminate release of greenhouse gasses from the playa and residual brine.*
* *Stabilize the shoreline and surface elevation of the lake.*
* *Reconnect dried out marinas restoring recreation, property, and aesthetic value.*
* *Jumpstart restoration of the aquatic environment in the main body of the Salton Sea.*
* *Create international economic opportunities and water resilience for the Southwest and Northern Mexico.*
* *Improve property values, recreational opportunities, and economic opportunities in the entire region.*
* *Enable the state to fulfill their legislative promise of genuine restoration by supplying enough water to implement a whole-Sea, long-term restoration plan.*

*An Independent Review Panel under the direction of Dr. Brent Haddad of U.C. Santa Cruz (who publicly opposed restoration of the Salton Sea in a 2002 LA Times editorial) was contracted by the State and is now reviewing proposals for restoring the Salton Sea with imported water (nearby ocean water or other ideas). The State has asked the Independent Review Panel to determine whether restoration of the Salton Sea is feasible or not. There are several bases on which feasibility might be determined:*

1. *Engineering feasibility: California already has hundreds of miles of canals and pipelines that move larger amounts of freshwater over greater distances and pump it over higher hills and mountains than what’s needed for the Salton Sea. Ocean water canals are different, but saltwater seepage into aquifers can be resolved by lining canals with marine concrete to prevent water loss to seepage. Marine concrete is used in seaports. Formulations have been around since Roman times. Some have lasted through thousands of years of ocean exposure. For Pacific Ocean water import the 2,000 to 4,000 foot pumping over the mountain range is an energy demand challenge. Tunnels under the mountains would be some of the longest water tunnels ever built. But, the major engineering firm Black and Veatch designed tunnels under the same mountains for freshwater transfer from Imperial Valley to San Diego under contract with the San Diego County Water Authority. Tunnels could deliver water in the other direction.*

1. *Political Feasibility: If water is imported from the Sea of Cortez, an international agreement with Mexico would be needed. The directors of the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission and Mexico’s equivalent (CILA) publicly described at this year’s Salton Sea Summit that cross border cooperation on water projects has an established history and CILA laid out exactly what would be required to approve cross border water delivery.*

1. *Environmental Feasibility: If ocean water is imported it will come with millions of tons of salt. This can be removed by existing desalination technology either at the ocean or at the Salton Sea. If brine were discharged to the Pacific or to the Sea of Cortez, it would need to go far out and deep and disperse very well as these are very environmentally sensitive areas. However, there are better options that have been shown to recover salt as a useful product rather than discharge it. Canals will impact the environment, so there’s a need to design in covers or wildlife bridging or use buried pipelines in places. Import routes need to be analyzed for impacts on wildlife, plants, and people. The required environmental review process in both US and Mexico do address these issues (biology, cultural, paleontology, visual, mineral, and hydrological impacts) and require mitigations where needed.*

1. *Cost Feasibility: The cost of proposals to restore the Salton Sea with water import is high, starting at about one billion dollars and up to several billion with more complex plans. However, compare the cost of no plan to the cost of the plans under analysis. Every one of the plans in front of the UC Santa Cruz Independent Review Panel has a much lower cost estimate than the $29 billion to $70 billion cost estimate of damage to the region from no restoration project published in the Pacific Institute’s “Hazards Toll” report.*

*I believe the advantages of importing water from the ocean are worthwhile and it is financially and technically feasible. I strongly urge the State to choose and implement ocean water import to restore the Salton Sea and to provide a sustainable water supply for the Western U.S. facing unprecedented drought.*

*Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.*

*Sincerely,*