



Sacramento Groundwater Authority
*Managing Groundwater Resources
 in Northern Sacramento County*

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Edward D. Winkler
 Executive Director

September 12, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE

California-American
 Water Company

The Honorable Duncan Hunter
 U.S. House of Representatives
 2265 Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20515
 (202) 225-0235 fax

The Honorable Howard McKeon
 U.S. House of Representatives
 2351 Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20515
 (202) 226-0683 fax

Carmichael
 Water District

Citrus Heights
 Water District

City of Citrus Heights

City of Folsom

City of Sacramento

County of Sacramento

Del Paso Manor
 Water District

Fair Oaks Water District

Natomas Central Mutual
 Water Company

The Honorable George Miller
 U.S. House of Representatives
 2205 Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20515
 (202) 225-5609 fax

The Honorable Richard Pombo
 U.S. House of Representative
 2411 Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20515
 (202) 226-0861 fax

Orange Vale
 Water Company

Rio Linda / Elverta
 Community Water
 District

Sacramento Suburban
 Water District

The Honorable Bill Thomas
 U.S. House of Representatives
 2208 Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20515
 (202) 225-8798 fax

The Honorable Maxine Waters
 U.S. House of Representative
 2344 Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20515
 (202) 225-7854 fax

San Juan
 Water District

Southern California
 Water Company

Agricultural and
 Self-Supplied
 Representative

The Honorable Henry Waxman
 U.S. House of Representatives
 2204 Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20515
 (202) 225-4099 fax

Re: URGENT – Oppose Exemption of Fuel Manufacturers from Liability for Groundwater Contamination by MTBE and Ethanol

Dear Energy Bill Conferee:

The Sacramento Groundwater Authority (SGA) urges your opposition to Energy Bill provisions which exempt fuels manufacturers from liability for groundwater contamination by Methyl Tertiary-Butyl Ether (MTBE) and ethanol.

SGA is a joint powers authority created to collectively manage the Sacramento region's north area groundwater basin. Member agencies are responsible for providing high quality drinking water to more than a half-million residents in the greater Sacramento region. SGA is committed to aggressively protecting the north area groundwater basin from contamination.

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MTBE was blended into gasoline without consideration of its impact on groundwater, which we now know to have fouled drinking water in several areas in California and throughout the country. The “safe harbor” language in Sections 820 (Senate version) and 17102(a) (House version) of HR 6 exempts producers from responsibility for these cases, leaving little or no incentive for polluters to clean up water supplies contaminated by these products. Providing a “safe harbor” such as this will compound this costly mistake and place a new unfunded fiscal mandate and burden on local water agencies and water customers to clean up pollution they did not create.

The members of SGA and water districts across California face the very real prospect of losing scarce water supplies due to contamination by these additives. If the parties responsible for this contamination are granted a special exemption in law, the result will be greatly reduced water quantity at greatly increased prices.

The SGA opposes this “safe harbor” provision for MTBE and ethanol and asks that you intervene to oppose it as HR 6 moves through the Conference Committee process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward D. Winkler
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Barbara Boxer
The Honorable John Doolittle
The Honorable Robert Matsui
The Honorable Doug Ose
Association of California Water Agencies
SGA Board of Directors