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July 6, 2026

VIA E-MAIL

California Water Commission
P.O. Box 924836
Sacramento, CA 94236
E-mail: cwc@water.ca.gov

Re: Support for Sites Project Draft Contract for Administration of Public Ecosystem Benefits

Dear California Water Commission,

Grassland Water District (GWD) appreciates the opportunity to provide supportive comments on the Draft Contract for Administration of Public Ecosystem Benefits for the Sites Project (“Draft Ecosystem CAPB”). Pursuant to the Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP) regulations, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) may submit a draft CAPB to the Commission, and after considering public comment, the Commission may offer comments for CDFW’s consideration prior to execution. GWD supports the Draft Ecosystem CAPB for the Sites Project, and in particular the wetland water supplies that will be provided to wildlife refuges. GWD has been involved with the Commission’s administration of the WSIP and has followed the Sites Project closely.

The Central Valley has lost 95% of its historic wetlands, with the last remnants found on state, federal, and private wildlife refuges. Wildlife refuges in the Central Valley support millions of migratory birds each year along with many other species from river otter to tule elk. Wetlands filter contaminants and recharge groundwater, which is vital to the region’s economy and to communities that depend on groundwater for their drinking supply. In dry years, wildlife refuges can receive less than half of their needed water supplies overall, and in most years, wildlife refuges receive only half of the water they need in the spring and summer months.

The Sites Authority has worked with GWD to ensure transparency in how ecosystem water will be managed. We look forward to future coordination with the Sites Authority, CDFW, and the Commission to achieve the promise of wetland water supplies for the Central Valley. Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ricardo Ortega', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ricardo Ortega
General Manager