



INDIAN WELLS VALLEY COOPERATIVE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Post Office Box 1329
Ridgecrest, California 93556-1329

October 15, 2013

Ms. Lorelei Oviatt, Director
County of Kern Planning and Community Development Department
2700 "M" Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2323

RE: Public Comment Period for Fremont Valley Preservation Project DEIR

Dear Ms. Oviatt,

I am writing on behalf of the Indian Wells Valley Cooperative Groundwater Management Group (IWVCGMG); a public water data sharing group consisting of most of the major local water producers, government agencies, and other water stakeholders in the Indian Wells Valley. The group is comprised of the Bureau of Land Management, the City of Ridgecrest, China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, East Kern Resource Conservation District, County of Kern Board of Supervisors 1st District, Kern County Water Agency Searles Valley Minerals, Indian Wells Airport District, Indian Wells Valley Water District and Inyokern Community Services District.

We have received the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) that the County has prepared for the Fremont Valley Preservation Project proposed by Aquahelio Resources, LLC. We note and appreciate that the original October 27th deadline for public comment has been moved back to November 18th. Given the size of this document (over 7,500 pages), the significance and complexity of the project, and the potential impact(s) it may have on the Fremont Valley basin, the IWVCGMG respectfully requests the period for accepting public comment be extended to December 31, 2013.

I have been in contact with Mr. Larry Moxley, a key partner in the Fremont Valley Project, to coordinate two meetings with his group of contributing technical partners and consultants to present an overview of the project and address questions; one with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the IWVCGMG and one with the entire group. We have tentatively scheduled a presentation to the TAC the week of October 28th and a second presentation at the public IWVCGMG meeting the afternoon of November 21st. Extending the comment period to December 31st would allow for these two important meetings to take place so the Aquahelio partnership could disseminate information to local technical experts as well as interested members of the public and provide adequate time for comments to be provided to the Planning and Community Development Department.

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Members of the IWVCGMG also respectfully request that the hearing with the Board of Supervisors for the Fremont Valley Preservation Project be held at a location in East Kern County in order to allow for maximum participation of local concerned citizens, some of whom may have difficulty making the trip to Bakersfield. The Board of Supervisors should have all of information that is available in order to make a decision whether or not this project should go forward. The project has already generated much controversy locally and we believe it is important that local citizens who will feel the impact of any adverse effects resulting from this project have the opportunity to have their concerns addressed.

I appreciate your time and consideration of these requests.

Best regards,



Don Zdeba

Chair, Indian Wells Valley Cooperative Groundwater Management Group

cc: Kern County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Mick Gleason – District 1
Supervisor Zack Scrivner – District 2
Supervisor Mike Maggard – District 3
Supervisor David Couch – District 4
Supervisor Leticia Perez – District 5