



August 22, 2024

Camille Touton
 Commissioner
 US Bureau of Reclamation
 United States Department of the Interior

E. Joaquin Esquivel
 Chair
 State Water Resources Control Board
 State of California

Karla Nemeth
 Director
 California Department of Water Resources

Re: Opposition to the Cadiz Water Project & Request for Public Funding Subsidies

Commissioner Touton, Chair Esquivel, and Director Nemeth:

Our coalition of wildlife conservation organizations hereby express our strong opposition to the proposed groundwater mining Cadiz Water Project (Project), which would be disastrous to our varied and iconic California desert wildlife species that benefit from the water resources the Project is targeting.

Cadiz Inc. (Cadiz) has sought for decades to pump enormous amounts of groundwater from our state’s desert to export for sale. Though Cadiz utilizes the word ‘groundwater’, in fact the water to be extracted is an underground aquifer. We, alongside the California Department of Fish and

Wildlife, also dispute Cadiz's projection that there shall be no effect to nearby natural springs by the Project's water removal. Published research demonstrates springs, including Bonanza Spring, are fed by the underground aquifer. These springs are utilized by Desert Bighorn Sheep and other desert wildlife. Federal and State agencies, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the National Park Service, have warned that Cadiz's aggressive rate of extraction would significantly overdraft the aquifer. This would thus threaten these connected springs that provide life to our iconic desert wildlife species that live in and migrate across our arid desert landscape, and are enjoyed by Californians and all Americans

Cadiz seeks to annually extract 50,000 acre-feet of water from the aquifer underneath the Mojave Trails National Monument and Mojave National Preserve, but the US Geological Survey has determined that the aquifer's recharge rate is as low as 2,000 acre-feet a year. Also, hydrologists have estimated that the time from rain falling from nearby mountains can take up to 15,000 years to reach the aquifer, not hundreds of years as claimed by Cadiz.

Now, Cadiz has begun a campaign seeking public funding to subsidize the planning, construction and operation of the Project to help bring this scheme to fruition. The California desert ecosystem is one of America's crown jewels, representing conservation values that can – and must – be sustained for present and future generations. This was recognized by Dianne Feinstein, and through her efforts, resulted in sponsoring and passage of the Desert Protection Act of 1994. Our desert's water and wildlife are too precious, and the balance too delicate, to experiment with in determining if any water can be extracted from our state's precious underground aquifer resources so vital to our desert's natural environment.

We urge you to reject any requests for public funding that supports the development of the Cadiz project.

Sincerely,

Donald Martin, President
California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation

Steve Marschke, President
Society of the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep

John Wehausen, President
Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation

Steve Jarvis, Chief Executive Officer
California Deer Association

Chriss Bowles, President
California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association

Lori Jacobs, President
California Houndsmen for Conservation

Adam Chavez, President
California Hawking Club

Clark Smith, President
San Francisco Bay Area Chapter - Safari Club International

Gary F. Brennan, President
San Diego County Wildlife Federation

Steve Chappell, Executive Director
Suisun Resource Conservation District

Fred Harpster, President
Black Brant Group

Steve Miller, President
Tulare Basin Wetlands Association

Bob Keagy, President
Golden Gate Chapter - Safari Club International

Aimee J. Byard, Director of Operations/Biologist
Bighorn Institute

Devin O'Dea, California Chapter Coordinator
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Glennon T. Gingo
Mzuri Safari Club