

October 9, 2013

California Department of Water Resources  
Division of Integrated Regional Water Management  
Financial Assistance Branch  
Post Office Box 942836  
Sacramento, CA 94236  
Attn: Keith Wallace

Via email



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**RE: DWR Round 2 Proposition 84 Implementation Grant draft funding recommendations**

Dear Mr. Wallace:

On behalf of the CABY region IRWM group in the Sacramento River Region, The Sierra Fund would like to commend and support DWR staff in their proposal evaluation process and funding recommendations to the board. The CABY region's implementation proposal was recommended for full funding in the Sacramento River region.

The Sierra Fund is a non-profit that has participated in CABY IRWM group since 2009. We led the proposal writing and compilation efforts for this application. We did not have a large consulting firm assist us in the proposal development.

DWR staff were faced with the difficult task of implementing 21st century water resource management principles across the State using an objective and transparent proposal evaluation process. From a close examination of the DWR scoring sheets we believe that DWR staff has successfully accomplished that goal by having detailed proposal guidelines and quantifiable proposal evaluation criteria that were clearly explained in the guidelines and at the Applicant Workshop held in February 2013. It is clear to us where our proposal was marked down and that these markdowns were justified as specified in the proposal guidelines, for example, when there was a work plan component that was not reflected in the budget, or an unpublished study cited in the technical justification section.

We would like to specifically comment on the point about project integration that was raised during the October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 public comment meeting in Sacramento. Some people in the room seemed to believe that DWR was meant to encourage innovative projects that reflect the state-of-the-art-science and are fully integrated in the region. However, we at The Sierra Fund agree with DWR that because of the region-specific and subjective nature of these criteria, what is innovative in one region may not be in another, what is integrated in one region may not be in another. These criteria are best developed and evaluated within the region and by the regional organizations and agencies. Surely that is the point of the IRWM Program? It is up to the regions to organize, innovate and integrate themselves as necessary. To

expect DWR staff to evaluate the innovative nature of projects and the degree to which they are integrated in the region is beyond what DWR can successfully do statewide.

With this letter we wish to communicate our support for the process, criteria and hard work that DWR staff have used to select this round of projects and to contribute our insight towards structuring the Round 3 project selection process. While improvements may be necessary to the guidelines and proposal evaluation process, a complete overhaul of the process would be a step backwards for regions that have built the capacity to meet DWR guidelines as they are now familiar with them.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this process. Please feel free to contact me for additional details.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth J. Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth J. Martin

CEO, The Sierra Fund