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COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

January 29, 2002

The Honorable Gale Norton
Secretary-- U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW Suite 7229
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Norton,

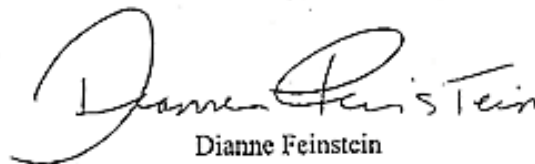
I am writing to express my continued concern about the Cadiz Water Supply Program and the disagreement between the U.S. Geological Survey and the Cadiz company over the recharge rate. The USGS believes that the Cadiz geologists have overestimated the groundwater recharge rate by 5-25 times, but feels confident that the monitoring plan will force an end to the project once it becomes evident that the aquifer is being overdrafted.

Rather than relying on a monitoring plan that has never been used before to prevent overdrawing the aquifer, why not limit the project to the water storage plus Cadiz's existing water rights and/or the USGS's assessment of a recharge rate? To be on the safe side, could the Bureau of Land Management place a temporary cap on the recharge portion of the project of about 5,000 acre-feet until this issue can be resolved?

The storage part of this project combined with the Cadiz Company's existing water rights is an essential component of California's plan to meet its water needs under the Colorado River 4.4 Water Plan. However, the project as it is laid out in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Final Environmental Impact Statement is still based on a recharge rate that the USGS believes is faulty.

This recharge rate information is vital and it is imperative that the USGS should have wide latitude to do everything possible to determine the actual recharge rate. If the USGS subsequently determines that the recharge rate is too low, this cap can be lifted and the project can be expanded to include a higher recharge rate? Without such a step there is no way to be entirely confident that the additional water for the Cadiz project is not coming at the expense of the Mojave.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

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