

JERRY LEWIS
4TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

Economic
Agriculture
Subcommittee
Energy
Conservation
Foreign Affairs
Legislative Branch
House of Representatives
On Intelligence

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0540
August 30, 2002

Mr. Phillip J. Pace
Chairman of the Board
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
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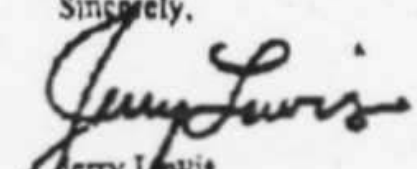
Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to share with you my opposition to the Cadiz Groundwater Storage and Dry-Year Supply Program. I have been following the development of this project with great interest, and continue to have questions about its economic and environmental viability as a water resource for Southern California residents. Therefore, on behalf of the constituents of the 40th Congressional District, I respectfully request that you and the members of Metropolitan Water District's (MWD's) Board of Directors oppose participation in the Cadiz Program at this time.

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and its Member Agencies are to be commended for the efforts you have made to pursue innovative solutions to meeting the demands of a growing population. The proposal to utilize the Cadiz groundwater as part of the MWD system has generated considerable local controversy, however.

I must respect the questions that many of my constituents are raising about the Cadiz project's possible impact on desert wildlife and the nearby Mojave National Preserve. I also believe that it is not in the best interest of your Southern California customers to become dependent on desert groundwater.

Although the Interior Department believes it can manage the groundwater usage, the U.S. Geological Survey has found that Cadiz has overestimated the recharge rate for the aquifer by as much as 25 times the natural rate. I am also concerned that MWD, an agency answerable to water consumers, has the responsibility to make judgments about the sustainable recharge rate of that aquifer. The monitoring plan appears extensive, but desert recharge rates must be based on years of evidence that will not be available for a decade. By the time we find that the recharge is not adequate, it may already be too late to prevent irreversible damage. Because of these lingering grave concerns, I believe this project must be opposed.

Sincerely,

Jerry Lewis
Member of Congress