DECLARATION

Of

CONCERNED SCIENTISTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS

OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

A CALL FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES

OF THE SALTON SEA BASIN AND SAN DIEGO COUNTY

WHEREAS the Salton Sea and its environs constitute a unique natural resource of regional, statewide, national and international significance and support an extraordinary diversity of migratory and resident bird species, including many endangered and threatened species, and are an important recreational and economic asset for the region;

WHEREAS the Salton Sea ecosystem and the environmental quality of Imperial and Coachella valleys are threatened by water transfers proposed as part of the California 4.4 Plan to reduce California's draw of Colorado River water to its annual legal entitlement of 4.4 million acre feet by the year 2015;

WHEREAS San Diego County is recognized as a hotspot of biological diversity of global significance, supporting over 380 rare and sensitive species, more than 40 of which are listed as federally threatened or endangered;

WHEREAS the principal causes of species imperilment in the San Diego region are the direct destruction, fragmentation and degradation of habitat caused by population growth and sprawl development; and

WHEREAS the population growth, sprawl, and increased input of wastewaters into our coastal environment induced by the proposed water transfer further threaten San Diego's wealth of natural resources;

NOW THEREFORE, on behalf of the best long-term interests of the citizens of San Diego and California,

BE IT HEREBY DECLARED by the undersigned, on this 4th day of July 2002, that:

- It has not been established that the proposed water transfer is necessary to meet the California 4.4 Plan objectives, given the many options available to San Diego County for water reclamation, water conservation, desalination, and lowering its rate of population growth;

- A thorough analysis of all options should be developed immediately and used as a basis for exploration by California of other means by which it could meet its obligations under the 4.4 Plan in better accord with principles of sustainability;

- If the water transfer is to occur it must be conducted in full compliance with state and federal environmental laws, and must fully analyze direct, indirect and cumulative impacts in the Salton Sea Basin, in the lower Colorado River Basin, and in San Diego County;

- The water transfer must not result in the significant reduction of inflows to the Salton Sea, must not degrade the air quality in the region surrounding the Salton Sea, must not result in significant adverse socioeconomic impacts, and must not undermine efforts or preclude the opportunity to eventually restore the Salton Sea; and finally,

- The appropriate parties and agencies must fully mitigate negative impacts to the bird and fishery resources of the Salton Sea, must address growth-inducing impacts in San Diego County by avoiding or mitigating negative impacts to its natural environment that may result from these transfers, and must commit to basing all future regional planning on the principles of sustainability.
CONCERNED SCIENTISTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY*

Don Adams  
*San Diego Field Ornithologists

Michael Breindl, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Deborah M. Dexter, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Allison Alberts, Ph.D.  
*Zoological Society of San Diego

Kevin J. Burns, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Edward Di Bella  
*San Diego State University

Janet Anderson  
*Desert Protective Council

Cindy Burrascano  
*California Native Plant Society

Jay Diffendorfer, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Todd Anderson, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Fred Cagle  
*San Diego Audubon Society

Alan Dixson, Ph.D.  
*Zoological Society of San Diego

Camille Armstrong  
*California Wild Heritage Campaign

Todd Cardiff  
*Surfrider Foundation - San Diego Chapter

LeRoy M. Dorman, Ph.D.  
*Scripps Institute of Oceanography

Gustaf Arrhenius, Ph.D.  
*Scripps Institute of Oceanography

Ted J. Case, Ph.D.  
*University of California San Diego

Kevin M. Doyle  
*National Wildlife Federation

Lynne Baker  
*Endangered Habitats League

Pat Castillo  
*Scripps Institute of Oceanography

Michael Dowler, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Catherine Baldridge, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Howard H. Chang, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Hugh I. Ellis, Ph.D.  
*University of San Diego

Stephen Barlow, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Mary H. Clarke  
*Friends of Hedionda Creek

Nick Ervin  
*Desert Protective Council

Kenneth J. Bart, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

James L. Coatsworth, Ph.D.  
*University of California San Diego

D. John Faulkner, Ph.D.  
*Scripps Institute Oceanography

Douglas H. Bartlett, Ph.D.  
*Scripps Institute of Oceanography

Marie F. Coe  
*San Diego State University

Meryl Faulkner  
*Project Wildlife

Ellen Bauder, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Jan Cortez  
*American Lung Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties

Anne S. Fege, Ph.D.  
*Cleveland National Forest

Michael Beck  
*The League of Conservation Voters San Diego

Jeffrey Crooks, Ph.D.  
*Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve

Richard F. Ford, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Kathryn Beeley  
*San Diego Audubon Society

Joan Dainer  
*San Diego State University

Teruko Foster  
*San Diego Audubon Society

Annalisa Berta, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Ted Daub, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Philip S. Gallo Jr., Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Kathe Bertine, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Roger Davis, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Bonnie Gendron  
*Backcountry Coalition

David Bittner  
*Wildlife Research Institute

Paul K. Dayton, Ph.D.  
*Scripps Institute of Oceanography

Richard M. Gersberg, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Rick Bizzoco, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Paul M. Detwiler  
*Institute for Coral Reef Studies

Chris Glembotski, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Colin Brauner, Ph.D.  
*San Diego State University

Michael Golden  
*Grossmont College

* Institutional and organizational affiliations are listed for purposes of identification only. They do not signify official support of the declaration by any organization or institution listed.
CONCERNED SCIENTISTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution/Position</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marco A. Gonzalez, Esq.</td>
<td>Surfrider Foundation - San Diego Chapter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Gonzalez, Ph.D.</td>
<td>University of San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey B. Graham, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Scripps Institute of Oceanography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirat D. Gurol, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>William E. Haas</td>
<td>Varanus Biological Consulting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Hanscom</td>
<td>Zoological Society of San Diego</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry C. Harmon</td>
<td>Past Mayor, City of Escondido</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wayne Harmon</td>
<td>Grossmont College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Harper</td>
<td>Terra Peninsular, AC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phillip A. Hastings, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Scripps Institute of Oceanography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Hentschel, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Hessler, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Scripps Institute of Oceanography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mel Hinton</td>
<td>San Diego Audubon Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Hogan</td>
<td>Center for Biological Diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry Hogue</td>
<td>Sierra Club - San Diego Chapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osmund Holm-Hansen, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Scripps Institute of Oceanography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Hovel, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Hudnall, Ph.D.</td>
<td>La Jolla Friends of the Seals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stuart H. Hurlbert, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles W. Jerde</td>
<td>San Diego Mesa College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albert W. Johnson, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenneth Johnson, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego Audubon Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Johnson, Esq.</td>
<td>Planning and Conservation League</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craig Jones</td>
<td>DDOT Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael W. Klein, Sr.</td>
<td>San Diego Audubon Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neil Krekorian, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aurie Kryzuda</td>
<td>Republicans for Environmental Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boris Kuperman, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rick Landavazo</td>
<td>Friends of Hellhole Canyon Open Space Preserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Leboffe, D.A.</td>
<td>San Diego City College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa A. Levin, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Scripps Institute of Oceanography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerald Lieberman, Ph.D.</td>
<td>State Education &amp; Environment Roundtable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeffrey L. Lincer, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Wildlife Research Institute</td>
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<td>Peter Lind</td>
<td>Sierra Club - San Diego Chapter</td>
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<td>David A. Lipson, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edgar L. Mangelsen</td>
<td>Naturalism Association Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry Mangelsen</td>
<td>San Diegans for the Salton Sea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria Matey, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee McClenaghan, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan McFetridge</td>
<td>Save Our Forests &amp; Ranchlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathleen McGuire, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Messer, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Buena Vista Audubon Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suzanne M. Michel , Ph.D.</td>
<td>Southern &amp; Baja California Watershed Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia Moran</td>
<td>Palomar College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Mullaney</td>
<td>Friends of San Diego</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diane Nygaard</td>
<td>Preserve Calavera</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob R. O'Brien, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonathon J. Olson</td>
<td>San Diego Audubon Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff Opdyckie</td>
<td>Zoological Society of San Diego</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ed Parnell, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Scripps Institute of Oceanography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hal Pashler, Ph.D.</td>
<td>University of California San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristeen Penrod</td>
<td>South Coast Wildlands Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>James A. Peugh</td>
<td>San Diego Audubon Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harry Plymale, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Pokrandt</td>
<td>La Jolla Friends of the Seals</td>
</tr>
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<td>Robert S. Pozos, Ph.D.</td>
<td>San Diego State University</td>
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CONCERNED SCIENTISTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS
OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY*

Philip R. Pryde, Ph.D.
Republicans for Environmental Protection

Geoffrey Smith
Sierra Club - San Diego Chapter

James Watts
San Diego State University

Helene Radzik
Iron Mountain Conservancy

Daniel Sourbeer
Palomar College

Kenneth Weaver
Palomar Audubon Society

Bruce Reznik, Esq.
San Diego BayKeeper

Mark J. Spalding, J.D.
University of California San Diego

Terry Weiner
Desert Protective Council

Diana Gauss Richardson
San Diego State University

Jerre Stallcup
Conservation Biology Institute

Michael D. White, Ph.D.
Conservation Biology Institute

Jim Ricker
Desert Protective Council

Brandon Swan
San Diego State University

Myra Wilensky
National Wildlife Federation

Eleanora I. Robbins, Ph.D.
San Diego State University

Brian D. Swanson
Friends of Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve

Kathy S. Williams, Ph.D.
San Diego State University

Stephen B.W. Roeder, Ph.D.
San Diego State University

Mary Ann Tiffany
San Diego State University

Christopher J. Wills, Ph.D.
University of California San Diego

Forest L. Rohwer, Ph.D.
San Diego State University

Bill Toone
Zoological Society of San Diego

Dawn Wilson
Project Wildlife

Allison Rolfe
San Diego Audubon Society

Constantine Tsoukas, Ph.D.
San Diego State University

Bruce Wingerd
San Diego State University

Dennis Saccuzzo, Ph.D., J.D.
San Diego State University

Philip Unitt
San Diego Natural History Museum

Mala Wingerd
San Diego State University

Lori Saldaha
Border Environment Cooperation Commission

Jan van Dierendonck
Ramona Grasslands Project

David S. Woodruff, Ph.D.
University of California San Diego

Thomas R. Scott, Ph.D.
San Diego State University

L. "Dutch" van Dierendonck
Ramona Community Planning Group

David K. Younkman
National Wildlife Federation

Sedra Shapiro
SDSU Field Station Programs

Rick Van Schoik
San Diego State University

James O. Zimmer
San Diego Field Ornithologists

Dan Silver
Endangered Habitats League

J. R. Thorngren, Ph.D.
San Diego State University

Paul Zucker
San Diego Audubon Society

Marie Simovich, Ph.D.
University of San Diego

Ingrid Vigeant
San Diegans for the Salton Sea

George Vourlitis, Ph.D.
California State University San Marcos

Michael G. Simpson, Ph.D.
San Diego State University

Gary M. Waayers
Southwestern Community College

Patrick Skahan
Students for Environmental Awareness & Protection, Ramona High School

Robyn J. Waayers
Southwestern Community College

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