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February 13, 2013

Ron Chapman, MD, MPH
CA Department of Public Health
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PO Box 997377, MS 0500
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**RE: AB 145 (Perea) State Water Resources Control Board: Drinking Water
SB 117 (Rubio) Drinking water: State Water Resources Control Board**

Dear Dr. Chapman:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted on February 7, 2013, at the CCLHO Board meeting to oppose AB 145 and SB 117. Our recommendation is that the California Department of Public Health should also oppose these two bills. Although the bills are somewhat different, both seek to transfer the various duties and responsibilities imposed on the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) by the California Safe Drinking Water Act and move them to the State Water Resources Control Board. AB 145 also proposes moving additional programs to the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA).

There have been ongoing concerns about the ability of CDPH to get drinking water funding out to local communities, especial for small water systems. CDPH has addressed the critical issues that prevented the flow of this funding to these communities and now most of the remaining obstacles are at the local level. Therefore, CCLHO believes that the issues that likely precipitated these two pieces of legislation are no longer pertinent.

Transfer of all or part of the programs proposed for transfer out of CDPH would not address current issues and could also weaken the infrastructure that supports the established regional water programs. An additional concern is that the Water Board is a politically-appointed entity that may not be familiar with the needs and operations of local Environmental Health Departments.

As you are aware, CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Health Services (now the California Department of Public Health), other departments, boards, and commissions, as well as officials of federal, state and local agencies, the Legislature and other organizations on all matters affecting health. CCLHO membership consists of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at wilma.wooten@sdcounty.ca.gov or 619-542-4181.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By:

Wilma Wooten, MD, MPH
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers

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