



April 9, 2020

Senator Ben Allen, Chair
Senate Environmental Quality Committee
State Capitol, Room 2205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 996 (Portantino): State Water Resources Control Board: Constituents of Emerging Concern Program - **SUPPORT**
Senate Environmental Quality Committee

Dear Senator Allen:

On behalf of the public agencies and business organizations noted below, we urge your support for SB 996 by Senator Anthony Portantino to establish a statewide program for Constituents of Emerging Concern in drinking water at the State Water Resources Control Board.

California has a well-established framework to set safe drinking water standards. However, that process takes time and considers chemicals one-by-one. A new and diverse group of synthetic and naturally occurring chemicals, as well as some microorganisms, called Constituents of Emerging Concern (CECs) may overwhelm the current process. Scientists can now detect thousands of CECs in trace amounts in drinking water, with little understanding of their true public health risk. Understandably, as public concern grows about the potential public health risks of CECs such as microplastics or Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), state leaders have felt compelled to push for targeted legislative solutions to collect the necessary data and prioritize regulatory efforts.

Senate Bill 996 seeks to address this problem by creating a statewide CEC Program at the State Water Board. This program would identify, evaluate, and prioritize for action CECs in drinking water sources and proactively fill in information gaps. Importantly, the bill creates a dedicated funding source to support and maintain the program. With this program and funding, the State Water Board would form and direct a Science Advisory Panel to help prioritize CEC actions. The program would (1) identify the highest priority CECs; (2) bridge information gaps and coordinate scientific research; (3) remove barriers and improve timeliness for action on CECs, including identifying new, cost effective treatment technologies; and (4) solicit public input. The proposed legislation would be forward-looking and not interfere with any existing regulations or programs focused on CECs, including the process underway to regulate the two most common type of PFAS chemicals. Rather, it would seek to complement those programs and incorporate their recommendations where applicable.

For these reasons, we urge your AYE vote on SB 996 when the bill comes before the Senate Environmental Quality Committee. If you have questions or wish additional information on this measure, please contact Danielle Blacet-Hyden with California Municipal Utilities Association at (916) 326-5802 or Kathryn Viatella with Metropolitan Water District at (916) 650-2614.

Sincerely,

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