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October 13, 2022

Clerk of the Board  
California Air Resources Board  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

#### ***Re: Comment Letter – Proposed Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation, Public Fleet Requirements***

The Vista Irrigation District (District) appreciates the opportunity to provide formal comments on the proposed Advanced Clean Fleets Regulations, Public Fleet Requirements. We appreciate California Air Resources Board's (CARB) willingness to engage in dialog and respond to stakeholder feedback on the concerns of the public fleets, including water and wastewater utilities.

The District is a retail water agency that provides water service to roughly 133,000 people in the city of Vista, and portions of San Marcos, Escondido, Oceanside and unincorporated areas of San Diego County. The District is responsible for operating its distribution system, ensuring facility security and emergency preparedness, and maintaining and managing the fleet and various other assets. The District also manages dam and reservoir operations, ensures water quality, maintains all vehicles and heavy equipment, and implements its Mainline Replacement Program, among other functions. A reliable fleet is critical to the District's ability to meet their mission of providing a reliable and safe water supply to its customers.

The District appreciates CARB staff's work to incorporate stakeholder input in this revised draft rule. Our concerns are related to infrastructure requirements, Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) availability, ability to maintain a safe and healthy water supply especially during emergency responses, grid reliability and Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events, and costs. The District wants to make sure that the rule does not create unintended consequences for water and wastewater utilities that will endanger public health and safety, especially during emergency events.

#### ***Infrastructure***

The District appreciates the inclusion of Section 2013.1 (b) Infrastructure Construction Delay Extension. Upon review of this section and discussion with our energy provider, that estimates its permitting process to take 18 to 24 months, we recommend that the one-year limitation be changed and replaced with: "that the Executive Officer grant an extension of rule implementation up to 12 months after the completion of the permitting process from municipalities and energy providers required to implement charging infrastructure."

*A public agency serving the city of Vista and portions of San Marcos, Escondido, Oceanside and San Diego County*

## ***ZEV Availability***

A substantial portion of the District's fleet will be affected by this regulation. Our vehicles must be able to tow; have 4-wheel drive; have power take off features to power auxiliary items such as cranes, dump beds, and lift gates; not exceed highway weight restrictions with batteries and auxiliary tools; have the ability to idle for an extended period of time; have a substantial range on one charge; and have the ability to remote-off-road charge where there is no access to the electric grid. These vehicles include dump trucks, welding trucks, valve trucks, utility trucks, and water trucks. **It is our understanding that manufacturers are currently not focusing on vocational vehicles and estimate that they will not have offerings in this category for at least 5 years.**

Because the market is not ready for vocational ZEVs, it is imperative that the exemption for ZEV availability be very robust. The District supports recommendations by Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) and the California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA) for exemptions that will allow for the purchase of internal combustion engine vehicles (ICEV) when ZEVs are not commercially available. We request that if a vehicle is necessary for water or wastewater system operations, and is available as an ICEV and can be delivered to the agency in expeditious timeframe, that the exemption allow for the purchase of an ICEV instead of just postponing the ZEV delivery. Not having a critical vehicle in our fleet will affect our ability to maintain water supply and to respond to emergencies. In addition, we request that credits are given for vehicles purchased in lower classes (i.e., below the 8,500 pounds threshold for this regulation) to meet implementation requirements.

## ***Emergency Response***

The District supports the recommendations made by ACWA and CMUA with respect to mutual aid and emergency response. All water and utilities are tasked with maintaining a safe and reliable water supply and infrastructure that is critical to public health and safety. Water or sewer system emergencies cannot wait for state declarations of emergencies and often are localized where the county or state will not be involved in emergency declarations. For example, the District recently completed an emergency repair one of its distribution pipe in a residential neighborhood; however, no county or state emergency was declared despite District crews working around the clock to make the repair.

## ***Grid Reliability and PSPS events***

Extreme temperatures, increased electricity demand, and potential reductions in hydropower generation due to drought can result in interruptions in electric service. The most recent heatwave in September where California ISO issued multiple statewide Flex Alerts (which advised not to charge electric vehicles from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.) is a foremost example of how overburdened the electrical grid is with current demands. In addition, due to increasing threat from wildfires, PSPS events have increased in frequency and duration in high fire risk areas. Areas that the District serves includes several high fire risk areas that have experienced PSPS events. These interruptions in electricity would hinder public agencies with electrified fleets from being able to provide essential services. The rule should consider that there will inevitably be interruptions in electric service and should be written in a way that considers the implications of interruptions in electricity for up to one week.

## ***Cost***

As a retail water provider, the District is cognizant of Assembly Bill 685 that codifies human right to water in California. Water Code Section 106.3 statutorily recognizes that “every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water...” As non-profit entities, water agencies are required to pass the costs to all consumers, including disadvantaged individuals and groups. All of us need to do all we can to keep that water affordable as the statutes direct us. Currently, cost for vocational ZEVs is exponentially higher than comparable ICEVs. This additional cost burden will directly translate into increased water rates. The District supports CMUA edits to Section 2013 (c) (6) that ICEV should be allowed when NZEV or ZEV costs exceed 133% of purchase price. This will allow utilities to budget and know that until the technology is prevalent enough to be price competitive and affordable, water rates will not be impacted by requirements for higher-cost, unproven vehicles.

It should also be noted, most water and wastewater agencies (as do most government agencies) store their fleet in central locations such as a main office, headquarter building, public works yard, etc. Electrical services that power these facilities are typically engineered and sized to support the original design and use of the facility. Therefore, adding vehicle-charging stations to support fleet operations would likely require extensive modifications to existing electrical services that supply power to these facilities and add significant capital costs.

The District appreciates the opportunity to comment on this very important rulemaking and supports the points raised and recommendations made by ACWA and CMUA in their comment letters. The District hopes CARB staff will continue to work with stakeholders to create a rule that is implementable, fair, and supports our mission of providing a reliable and safe water supply to our customers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brett Hodgkiss".

Brett Hodgkiss  
General Manager