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June 15, 2026

The Honorable Josh Becker
Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 3220
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2032 (Ransom), Golden Mussel Emergency Response - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Becker,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for AB 2032 (Ransom), which establishes an urgent, statewide response framework to the rapidly expanding infestation of invasive golden mussels. Multiple water agencies in Kern County have already experienced direct impacts from this species and the legislative actions proposed in this measure are both timely and essential.

Golden mussels pose a severe and escalating threat to California's water infrastructure, water delivery systems, and ecological health. Their presence in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta and the southern State Water Project has created an emergency that now demands coordinated, statewide intervention. Locally, Kern County water agencies have reported significant and rising treatment and maintenance costs, including multimillion-dollar expenditures within just weeks of infestation response efforts. For example, Arvin-Edison Water Storage District incurred \$3 million for its initial 30-day treatment program, while additional districts in Kern County have reported costs ranging from \$300,000 to more than \$8 million depending on the scale of treatment and system demands.

This bill's provisions directly address the challenges counties and water districts face by correctly identifying the biological characteristics that make golden mussels exceptionally destructive and acknowledging the urgent need for rapid, science-based mitigation.

The permit streamlining measures included in the bill will allow water agencies to remove mussels from pipes, screens, filters, and other infrastructure without delays that worsen system damage and increase cost burdens. Providing essential guidance and flexibility for developing effective control plans will facilitate scientific research by appropriately exempting certain research activities from permit requirements. In addition, the bill will strengthen interagency coordination and require state

departments and regional boards to identify rapid-response tools and streamline administrative processes.

The accelerating spread of golden mussels constitutes an immediate threat to public health, safety, and critical water infrastructure, warranting this urgency statute. Locally, the Kern County Board of Supervisors has officially proclaimed a state of local emergency and strongly recommends that the Legislature put pressure on the Governor to declare a statewide emergency as well due to the scope and severity of this emerging crisis.

Kern County appreciates the Legislature's efforts to establish a comprehensive, statewide structure to support on-the-ground agencies working to protect California's water systems. We strongly support this measure and urge your committee to vote **YES on AB 2032** and thank you for your commitment to safeguarding California's precious water resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phillip Peters", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
Honorable Members Kern Legislative Delegation
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange