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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Local Opposition to California's Water Bond**

*Chico, California* – The Butte Environmental Council (BEC) Board of Directors voted September 23 to endorse a NO vote on Proposition 1. After careful consideration of the elements in this bond concerning water quality, supply, and infrastructure improvements, BEC determined this would be a bad deal for California.

BEC stands with other local and statewide groups opposing the Water Bond, including the Sacramento River Preservation Trust, Chico Conservation Voters, AquAlliance, Food and Water Watch, the Environmental Water Caucus of California, as well as more than 30 organizations throughout the state.

Although California is in desperate need of real and long-term solutions and strategies to meet water scarcity in the state, the water supply projects in the bond will only increase California's water supply by 1%. The bond also fails to mitigate the effects of drought, and does nothing to establish long-term water self-sufficiency. This bond in effect reinvigorates the dam building era and pays for increased and long-term north-to-south water transfers.

While there are some good things in Prop 1, including water conservation and watershed restoration funding, the serious flaws outweigh the benefits. The bond promotes long-term water transfers through funding for water purchases.<sup>1</sup> In an era when rights exceed available water supply by five to one<sup>2</sup>, where will we find more water?

The bond language facilitates and funds groundwater storage projects and statewide conjunctive use that would likely lead to greater groundwater banking and out-of-region water transfers – both of which would be detrimental to the Northern Sacramento Valley's ecosystems.

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<sup>1</sup> In essence, this could be good. Those that have rights to more water than they can use could sell their rights. And money for water purchases might help those willing to implement conservation methods to free more water. However, this doesn't help California come to grips with learning to live within the 'means' of our available resources. It also continues to promote the transfer and consequential loss of lots of water. On average, the State estimates that more than 30% of water moved from the north to southern entities is lost to evaporation or seepage.

<sup>2</sup> Comparison with the mean annual runoff throughout the state.

The bond allocates too little money for true water supply enhancement and too much money for pork barrel projects that will do little for water supply. If the state is truly concerned about improvements in water quality and water supply, why allocate less than 0.2% of the funding for the northern California counties that encompass the lands that provide 65% of California's water supply? The state must promote managing watersheds for water production and not the continuous destruction of the headwater regions.

Plain and simple, the 2014 Water Bond is an irresponsible financial instrument that will borrow against our future, without solving any of the state's water supply problems.

**BEC will host a public education forum on the Water Bond, Tuesday, October 28 at the Chico Grange Hall.**

The Water Bond (and what this means for the North State)

6-7:30 PM at the Chico Grange Hall, 2775 Nord Ave, Chico, CA 95973

Speakers include Jane Wagner-Tyack Policy Analyst with Restore the Delta, Michael Jackson Water Lawyer, and Lucas RossMerz, Executive Director of the Sacramento River Preservation Trust.

For more information about this event, visit [www.becnet.org/events](http://www.becnet.org/events)

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The Butte Environmental Council is a non-profit environmental organization based in Chico, California. BEC's mission is to protect and defend the land, air and water of Butte County and the surrounding region through action, advocacy and education. Since 1975, BEC has played a significant part in shaping the environment and policies of Butte County and surrounding areas.

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