



November 30, 2012

The Honorable Luis Alejo, Chair  
Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee  
State Capitol, Room  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Comment for Contaminated Drinking Water in California's Disadvantaged Communities Hearing –  
November 14, 2012

Dear Chair Alejo:

The Safe Water Alliance is a dynamic group of faith-based, environmental justice, tribal, consumer, and public health advocates working across the state to realize the human right to water in California. We thank you and the committee for organizing this hearing and highlighting this important challenge. The Alliance came together because of our shared belief in the necessity of ensuring that all people in California have reliable access to safe, affordable, and sufficient water for drinking and sanitation. Shining light on this problem is an important step – so we are grateful for hearings like this and media coverage like the New York Times story on November 13, 2012 - but awareness is just the first step.

There must be redress for currently impacted communities and vigilance to protect against the problem's expansion. The Alliance wants to stress the role AB 685, the Human Right to Water bill, can play in this work. AB 685 establishes the human right to water as state policy and requires state agencies to consider the policy when undertaking administrative action. The Alliance wants to see rigorous implementation of AB 685 by all state agencies and departments with jurisdiction over policy that impacts access to drinking water. The Alliance encourages you to use the committee's oversight capacity to help ensure AB 685 implementation is complete and comprehensive.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. For additional information, contact Alecia Sanchez at 530.297.6000 ex. 207 or [as@publichealthadvocacy.org](mailto:as@publichealthadvocacy.org) or Vern Goehring at 916.444-8194 or [vern@cal.net](mailto:vern@cal.net). We look forward to working with you to secure safe, affordable drinking water for everyone.

Sincerely,

**Safe Water Alliance**, including: Alliance for Democracy; Asociacion de Gente Unida por el Agua; California Center for Public Health Advocacy; California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation; Catholic Charities Diocese of Stockton; Clean Water Action; Community Water Center; Environmental Justice Coalition for Water; Food and Water Watch; Policy Link; San Jerardo Cooperative; Southern California Watershed Alliance; Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry Action Network; Unitarian Universalist Service Committee; Urban Semillas; Winnemem Wintu Tribe; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, US Section

cc: Ken Alex, Director, Office of Planning and Research  
Dianne Dooley, Secretary, Health and Human Services Agency  
Ron Chapman, Director, Department of Public Health  
Matt Rodriguez, Secretary, Environmental Protection Agency  
Tom Howard, Executive Director, Water Resources Control Board  
John Laird, Secretary, Natural Resources Agency  
Mark Cowin, Director, Department of Water Resource

The Safe Water Alliance works to realize the human right to water in California, to ensure all residents have reliable access to safe, affordable, and sufficient water for a dignified human existence. We advocate for supportive policies and laws, educate decision makers and the general public, and engage communities in the effort to implement this basic human right for all.