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Institutional/Educational Membership

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Legislative Advocate

Rosanna Carvacho
Clear Advocacy

May 2, 2022

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1426 (Caballero) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino,

On behalf of the California Groundwater Coalition (CGC), I write to express our support for SB 1426 (Caballero) which makes water theft and groundwater pollution, in cases of illegal cannabis grows, a felony.

CGC was formed at the urging of California state and local officials who believed that increased efforts were needed to educate and inform policy makers and the public about California groundwater resources. CGC members include public and private groundwater management entities located throughout California and consist of experts with technical, legal, and professional groundwater and related expertise.

Illegal cannabis grows are a serious, growing threat across rural areas of California. CGC members have seen illicit cannabis cultivators engage in the theft of large amounts of water and create environmental pollution due to the use of illegal pesticides.

California penalties are not strong enough to deter criminals from engaging in widespread illegal cannabis farming, nor does it recognize the danger illegal grows pose to water supply and groundwater pollution. Illegal cannabis farmers frequently break water pipes and infrastructure to steal water or dig unpermitted, illegal wells to tap groundwater.

Additionally, the widespread use of dangerous and deadly pesticides at illegal cannabis farms can be lethal to both humans and wildlife, posing immediate and long-term risks to those working in and near these sites. Moreover, the use of unlicensed pesticides can pollute limited groundwater supplies, rendering the water unfit for drinking.

SB 1426 establish that the theft of groundwater, unauthorized tapping into a water conveyance or storage infrastructure, or digging an unpermitted, illegal well may be treated as a felony.

For these reasons, CGC is in support of SB 1426 and respectfully requests your “AYE” vote when this

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bill comes before you. If you have questions about CGC's position please contact our Legislative Advocate, Rosanna Carvacho Elliott at 916-479-7400 or rosanna@clearadvocacy.com.

Sincerely,



Ann DuBay

President, California Groundwater Coalition

cc: The Honorable Anna Caballero
Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee