

COMMITTEE:
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEES:
CHAIRMAN, COMMERCE,
MANUFACTURING AND TRADE
COMMUNICATIONS AND
TECHNOLOGY
ENVIRONMENT AND
ECONOMY



Mary Bono Mack
Congress of the United States
45th District, California

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September 19, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Secretary Salazar and Administrator Jackson:

Southern California is witnessing first-hand the impact of a dying ecosystem. Last week, foul odors emanating from the Salton Sea were reported throughout the Inland Empire and Los Angeles area. Though the incident did not present a serious health risk, there is real concern that this incident could foreshadow more ominous events in the future if we fail to meet the challenge of saving the Salton Sea. Last week's incident serves as a wakeup call and demonstrates that health and air quality issues involving the Salton Sea not only affect the Coachella Valley, but also the broader Southern California area.

At the local level, political, business, agriculture and environmental leaders remain committed to restoring the Salton Sea. The potential of developing various renewable resources in the area has reinvigorated that support. We need that same commitment at the federal and state levels of government. The solutions are difficult - especially in these challenging financial times -- but failure to act could ultimately prove even more costly.

The degradation of the Salton Sea ecosystem has been an ongoing problem for decades. Numerous studies at the federal and state level have been conducted. Various alternative plans have been developed. The Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA), which mandated mitigation funding and a restoration plan of the Sea, is now in legal limbo due to a lawsuit. Yet, the Salton Sea continues to decline, the ecosystem continues to diminish, and the potential economic development remains untapped.

We cannot continue down the path of doing nothing. Without leadership and commitment from all parties, the largest inland water body in the state of California and its valuable habitat could be lost forever, along with the economic benefits of a healthy Sea. As a primary land owner around the Salton Sea and in response to the Coachella Valley being designated as one of the most polluted air quality regions in the country, I urge you to bring together your agencies and work with our local and state leaders. I have also contacted state agencies asking for their cooperation and leadership in this effort as well.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Bono Mack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Bono Mack
Member of Congress

CC: The Bureau of Reclamation
The Bureau of Indian Affairs
The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Army Corps of Engineers

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