



July 03, 2025

Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy  
California State Assembly  
1020 N Street, Room 408A  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Prioritize Water Affordability—Support Senate Bill 473 (Padilla)**

Dear Chair Petrie-Norris and Members of the Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy,

As a diverse group representing labor, business, consumer and environmental groups, and low-income advocates, we are writing to **urge you to prioritize drinking water affordability for millions of Californians by supporting Senate Bill 473—a bill with no fiscal impact on the State of California—** that stands to financially benefit millions of low-income Californians.

**As the Legislature works to identify policy solutions focused on affordability and easing costs for Californians, SB 473 is a simple pragmatic solution that will directly impact affordability and encourage water conservation.**

In 2022, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 1469 to make permanent a successful pilot program, called “decoupling,” that promotes water affordability, conservation, and protects investments in clean, safe, reliable water infrastructure. The program lets water utilities separate the fixed costs of water infrastructure from the variable costs of water consumption. It’s a proven tactic but unfortunately, since SB 1469 passed, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has denied all decoupling requests from water suppliers, discouraging programs that help make water bills more affordable and that encourage conservation.

**SB 473 offers a permanent solution to water affordability** by ensuring the CPUC permits water utilities to utilize decoupling when requested and honor the intent of the Legislature when they passed SB 1469.

**SB 473 will help make water affordable** by rewarding customers who use water the most efficiently—often low-income Californians — while ensuring those who use the most, pay the most. Decoupling assists in establishing equitable rates so water suppliers can charge high-use customers higher rates, while those who use less water and conserve, pay less. This process helps promote equitable rates among Californians and helps us achieve our goal of assisting Californians keep bills predictable and manageable.

Additionally, **SB 473 will encourage conservation among both water suppliers and customers.** Without SB 473, water suppliers will be detached from California’s water conservation goals and have a perverse incentive to sell as much water as possible. With SB 473, it will be easier for water suppliers to maintain robust water conservation programs, including rebates for turf replacement and high-efficiency home appliances, as well as programs to assist low-income families repair leaky sprinkler systems. Water suppliers who have used decoupling have consistently maintained significant cumulative reductions in water use.

For these reasons, we support Senate Bill 473 and respectfully request your AYE vote when it comes before the Committee on Utilities and Energy.

Sincerely,

Rick L. Callender, President  
**NAACP California-Hawaii State Conference**

Julian Canete, President & CEO  
**California Hispanic Chambers of Commerce**

Ahmad R. Holmes, President & CEO  
**California African American Chamber of Commerce**

Kristopher Anderson, Policy Advocate  
**California Chamber of Commerce**

Melissa Sparks-Kranz, Legislative Advocate  
**League of California Cities**

Bryon Face, President  
**Utility Workers Union of America, Local 259**

Kevyn Mei, Union Steward  
**Operating Engineers Local 3**

David Bini, Executive Director  
**Santa Clara & San Benito Counties Building & Construction Trades Council**

James Peifer, Executive Director  
**Regional Water Authority**

Michael Quigley, Executive Director  
**California Alliance for Jobs**

José R. Rodriguez, President & CEO  
**El Concilio California**

Ron Burke, President & CEO  
**Alliance for Water Efficiency**

Charley Wilson, Executive Director  
**Southern California Water Coalition**

Ahmad Thomas, CEO  
**Silicon Valley Leadership Group**

Mark Orcutt, President & CEO  
**East Bay Leadership Council**

Adrian Covert, Senior Vice President Public Policy  
**Bay Area Council**

Robert W. Heidt Jr., President & CEO  
**Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce**

Carlos Singer, Chief Policy Officer  
**Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce**

Norma Aguirre, President  
**East Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce**

Robert Taylor, Executive Director  
**Commerce Business Council**

Eileen Hupp, President & CEO  
**Palos Verdes Peninsula Chamber of Commerce**

Donna Duperron, President & CEO  
**Torrence Area Chamber of Commerce**

Leah Skinner, President  
**Carson Chamber of Commerce**

Jenny Hatch, Executive Director  
**Sierra Nevada Alliance**

Patrizia Hironimus, Executive Director  
**Butte Environmental Council**

Rob Powelson, President & CEO  
**National Association of Water Companies**

Roberto Barragán, Executive Director  
**Initiating Change in Our Neighborhoods  
Community Development Corporation (ICON CDC)**

Pat Fong Kushida, President & CEO  
**CalAsian Chamber of Commerce**

Leah Toeniskoetter, President & CEO  
**San Jose Chamber of Commerce**

Celeste Wilson, Government Affairs Manager  
**Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce**

Patricia Donaldson, President  
**Hawthorne Chamber of Commerce**

Michelle Crispin, President & CEO  
**Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce and Visitors  
Bureau**

Deborah Feng, CEO  
**Cupertino Chamber of Commerce**

Chuck Schaich, President  
**West Basin Water Association**