

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



**FROM:** Supervisor Buster

**SUBMITTAL DATE:** May 13, 2003

**SUBJECT:** Position on AB 496 by Assemblyman Lou Correa

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** That the Board approve in concept a Santa Ana River Conservancy with concerns regarding Assembly Bill 496 as currently proposed and direct the Executive Office and the Board's Sacramento representative to further the Board's position.

**BACKGROUND:** The expressed purpose of this legislation is to: protect the Santa Ana River Watershed, coordinate watershed planning between counties and cities, attract more funding and expand recreational opportunities along the river.

Existing law authorizes various conservancies to acquire, manage, direct the management of, and conserve public lands in the state. This bill would, until January 1, 2011, establish the Santa Ana River Conservancy (SARC) to acquire and direct the management of specified public lands in the Santa Ana River watershed area and would prescribe the management, powers, and duties of the conservancy. The bill would also create the Santa Ana River Conservancy Fund, but would prohibit the conservancy from implementing the funding authorization until the Legislature appropriates, or a bond act approved by the voters allocates, the necessary funds.

In general, the establishment of a conservancy has merit because such bodies become a fulcrum for common issues regarding a specific area to be brought together and dealt with in a comprehensive fashion. However, AB 496 as currently proposed, raises several concerns that need to be specifically addressed before adoption to ensure the proposed SARC is an effective mechanism in the management of the Santa Ana River basin. The following issues are noted:

- 1) Clarification of SARC's relationship, including funding, with ongoing County efforts such as SAWPA, MSHCP and CETAP. SARC should serve as a focal point to complement and augment these ongoing programs.
- 2) Clear explanation of the role of SARC concerning ongoing transportation, planning, water, flood control or park district issues. SARC should not adversely impact or limit existing programs.
- 3) The boundaries of the conservancy may need to be expanded to possibly include the Santa Margarita and San Jacinto watershed areas. The rationale for the proposed boundaries needs to be clearly stated.
- 4) How and by whom the conservancy shall be governed is a crucial concern. The role of each member of the governing board and the rationale for membership on the governing board needs to be clearly established.
- 5) SARC should clearly provide demonstrable benefit to water quality programs.
- 6) The costs of operating the conservancy and realistic funding sources need to be clarified.

BOB BUSTER, Supervisor  
First District

Department Recommendation:  Consent  Policy

Per Executive Office:  Consent  Policy

Prev. Agn. ref.

Dist.

AGENDA NO.

3.41