

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



FROM: Supervisor Marion Ashley

SUBMITTAL DATE: September 10, 2013

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the City of Banning and the Banning Heights Water Company

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board join me in supporting the City of Banning and the Banning Heights Water Company

BACKGROUND: Since 1913, the City of Banning and the Banning Heights Mutual Water Company have relied on the Whitewater Flume Project (The Flume) for its water supply. The Flume, located in the San Bernardino National Forest, is of vital importance to the residents of the Banning Heights as it is the only water source for the area. 250 residents, citizens and shareholders are under threat of losing their only source of water.

Recently, The US Forest Service has ordered the Southern California Edison Company to remove approximately 1,100 feet of an existing pipeline located in Burnt Canyons in the vicinity of the San Gorgonio River. The pipeline is the sole source of water supply for the community of Banning Heights and removing the 1,100 foot section of pipe will curtail all water deliveries to the community on or before January 1, 2014.

Southern California Edison has operated the Flume and its hydro buildings for most of the 20th century. SEC is in agreement to transfer The Flume over to the City of Banning and the Banning Heights Mutual Water Company. The US Forest ruling will stop the transfer and remove The Flume.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will be hosting a hosting a scoping meeting to review the US Forest ruling. Community support is being solicited for the SCE and agency transfer as well as letters in oppositions to the US Forrest Ruling.

Supervisor Marion Ashley, 5th District

Prev. Agn. ref.

Dist.

AGEND NO.

3-105

County of Riverside



SUPERVISOR MARION ASHLEY FIFTH DISTRICT

September 10, 2013

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United State Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Two hundred and fifty residents, citizens, and shareholders of the Banning Heights Mutual Water Company, located on the Banning Bench, an unincorporated area above Banning, California, are under threat of losing their only source of water. This water loss will also impact the City of Banning.

Representatives of the San Bernardino National Forest have taken the position that the flume, which provides water to 250 residents and farmland on the Banning Bench, and to the City of Banning, needs to be removed. The flume conveys water for which Banning Heights Mutual Water Company and the City of Banning hold adjudicated waters rights. The Banning Bench and the City have relied on this water source since 1913.

Southern California Edison (SCE) has operated the flume and generated electric power for most of the twentieth century. Now, SCE is in the process of getting permits to complete repairs to this 100 year-old facility so that ownership can be transferred to the City of Banning.

The water users residing on Banning Bench are totally reliant upon local water supplies flowing from the flume and use no water from the Colorado River or California aqueducts.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will hold meetings on September 11th and 12th, at the Banning City Hall Council Chambers, where the US Forest Service ruling will be discussed.

We respectfully request your assistance in persuading the US Forest service to withdraw its ruling that would interrupt repairs on the flume, disrupting this water supply as soon as January 1, 2014.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Respectfully,


MARION ASHLEY
Supervisor, County of Riverside 5th District