

# Testimony in Support of HB 1218

## Introduction

Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am here today to express my strong support for HB 1218, a crucial bill for Water Resource Districts (WRDs) and the funding for drainage projects. This legislation addresses several significant issues impacting WRDs and offers a pathway to more efficient and cost-effective project management.

## Current Challenges

By law, WRDs must undergo the State Water Commission's (SWC) "Economic Analysis" (E/A) process for projects estimated to cost \$1 million. However, the SWC, by their policy, reduced the threshold for the E/A process to \$200,000. This reduction is applicable solely to WRDs, creating an undue burden on these districts.

As anticipated, the E/A process has led to:

- Higher project costs, stemming from the expenses related to conducting the E/A and the interactions with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) staff.
- Delays in project cost-sharing approvals.
- A decrease in the overall cost-share dollars available for WRDs and their projects.

## Provisions of HB 1218

HB 1218 proposes to:

- Raise the threshold for the E/A process from \$1 million to \$5 million.
- Prohibit the SWC from implementing their own (lower) threshold for requiring the E/A.

## Benefits of HB 1218

The passage of this bill would result in numerous benefits, including:

- Increased cost-share dollars for WRD projects.
- Reduced project and cost-share delays.

- Decreased costs for WRDs applying for cost-share.

Ultimately, HB 1218 would save money and reduce taxes (assessments) for landowners who rely on drainage and flood protection projects.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, HB 1218 is a vital piece of legislation that will alleviate the financial and administrative burdens currently faced by WRDs. It promotes efficiency, cost savings, and timely project execution, benefiting both the districts and the landowners they serve. I strongly urge you to support HB 1218 and help ensure the continued effectiveness and sustainability of our water resource management efforts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.