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Local Congressmembers Join Town of Mammoth Lakes, Community in Voicing Concerns over Proposed Geothermal Project

Representatives Paul Cook & John Garamendi Announce Support for Mammoth Community Residents Facing Danger of Diminished Water Supply

Mammoth Lakes, CA – Mammoth Community Water District (MCWD) today released letters from Representatives Paul Cook (CA-8) and John Garamendi (CA-3) in support of MCWD’s concerns regarding the proposed Casa Diablo IV Geothermal Energy Project (Casa Diablo IV), which could threaten the region’s limited water supply. The congressional representatives join the Town of Mammoth Lakes (Mammoth) and local community groups in voicing concerns over the proposed project.

The project, owned by Ormat Technologies Inc., proposes pumping 29,000 acre-feet of hot water from below the cold groundwater zone. Mammoth depends on this cold aquifer to fulfill the water supply needs of the community, and this project directly threatens that precious water supply at a time when California is experiencing a serious statewide drought.

“I am a strong advocate of renewable energy. However, in the face of California’s serious drought, I want to ensure that our communities have safe and adequate water,” said United States **Congressman Paul Cook**. “My past experience with water projects underscores the importance of an adequate groundwater monitoring and mitigation plan.”

By rapidly processing the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR), the Bureau of Land Management and United States Forest Service failed to adequately evaluate the project’s threat to MCWD’s groundwater supply and also failed to provide a suitable monitoring and mitigation plan to address such a threat. In addition, the EIS/EIR prepared for Casa Diablo IV failed to properly assess the potential impacts to critical hydrological systems that provide water to the residents of Mammoth.

Representative Cook echoed MCWD’s concerns by raising a series of questions regarding conclusions reached in the EIS/EIR. Cook’s concerns include the accuracy of the EIS/EIR’s assertion that the proposed Casa Diablo IV project will not affect MCWD’s groundwater wells, as well as concerns relating to which chemicals the project could release into the groundwater and surface water.

United States Congressman John Garamendi also raised a number of questions regarding the proposed project and expressed his continued support for MCWD and the community, stating, “I continue to care deeply for the region that I represented for 16 years in the CA Legislature. I will use

your information in the letter to raise questions regarding the project. The questions that need to be asked are ‘What ongoing procedures need to be in place to protect the community’s water supply?’ and ‘If there is a threat, what mitigation measures will be taken?’”

MCWD is committed to carefully managing and maintaining local water resources for more than 8,200 residents and 35,000 visitors during holiday periods. Unfortunately, the severe statewide drought has increased MCWD’s reliance on critical groundwater supplies. The region’s congressional representatives join the Town of Mammoth Lakes and community groups in expressing concern over the proposed expansion of the Casa Diablo IV project, as the project’s pumping could threaten the sustainability of the area’s groundwater basin, thereby jeopardizing the town’s water supplies.

In 2010, Ormat purchased the geothermal power plants in Mammoth for more than \$72 million, becoming sole owner of more than 10,000 acres of land, power plants, and equipment in the Mammoth complex. The geothermal energy company’s production has impacted the fragile environment surrounding the Mammoth complex and the proposed expansion now goes one step further by increasing the threat to the region’s water supplies. MCWD will continue working with local groups, stakeholders and Ormat to address the very real threats the proposed Casa Diablo IV project poses to the region and ensure the safety of its critical water supplies.

About Mammoth Community Water District

MCWD provides water and wastewater utility service to the Town of Mammoth Lakes and surrounding areas. MCWD strives to provide reliable, affordable utility service to our customers and to conduct our operations in a manner reflecting our stewardship role. We encourage our customers to practice responsible use of our limited water resources, and to take advantage of the information and services available to support this goal.

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