Letter to be addressed to each of the five State Water Resources Control Board Members:
Dorene D'Adamo
Frances Spivy-Weber
Felicia Marcus
Steven Moore
Tam Doduc

**Item 5**

**Draft**

The City of Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara) respectfully request that the State Water Board take action to expedite the completion of the feasibility of developing uniform water recycling criteria for direct potable reuse (DPR) per Water Code Section 13563. Our community is located in a part of California that is particularly vulnerable to water shortages. This reality has had a significant impact on the attitude of its residents and leaders in water supply planning. Santa Barbara was one of the first agencies in California to construct and operate a recycled water system, has been a strong leader in conservation, and has developed a diverse water supply portfolio which includes desalination, groundwater, and State Water.

Prior to the current drought, the City's average annual water usage was almost 20% lower than water usage in the mid-1980s with a strong community commitment to water conservation, despite modest growth and significant tourism. Since declaration of a Stage 2 Drought in May 2014, the City has reduced water use by an additional 23%, exceeding the 20% requested of the community. Unfortunately, we cannot conserve our way of this unprecedented State-wide drought. Even with extraordinary conservation, we still have a water shortage.

As you may be aware, reactivating the City's existing Charles E. Meyer ocean desalination plant has been part of our water supply planning since the early 90's. The role of desalination in our supply planning has always been as an emergency supply during extended drought periods. With the unprecedented nature of this drought and the reality of climate change we will once again revisit what the long-term role of desalination should play in our water supply planning if we have to reactivate the plant.

As part of our desalination reactivation process, Santa Barbara has committed to studying the feasibility of future alternatives that would support a drought-resilient local water supply and environmental stewardship. Alternatives that will be evaluated include subsurface seawater intakes for desalination, indirect potable reuse, and DPR. While the feasibility of these options still needs to be studied, we strongly believe that DPR has potential to play a significant role in securing a reliable local water supply while supporting our position as environmental stewards. Given the close proximity of our Wastewater Treatment plant and Desalination plant, the City may have a unique opportunity for converting the desalination plant to direct potable reuse in the future.

We understand the State Board deadline for developing a feasibility criteria for DPR is December 2016. In order to appropriately analyze DPR as an option, we would like to voice our support and desire for the State to expedite its preparation of DPR guidelines. The City strongly supports the State Board providing the resources necessary to complete this effort by the end of 2015. DPR represents a potential win-win solution that exemplifies environmental stewardship and development of a drought-resilient local water supply.

Honorable Mayor Helene Schneider