



## California Wind Energy Association

April 1, 2011

The Honorable Fran Pavley  
Chair, Senate Committee on Natural Resources  
State Capitol, Room 4035  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 267 – Support

Dear Senator Pavley,

On behalf of the California Wind Energy Association (CalWEA), a trade association comprised of 25 wind energy companies focused on the California market, including wind project developers and operators, manufacturers and related vendors, I am writing to convey our strong support of SB 267.

SB 267 addresses an issue that has recently emerged as a significant problem for wind projects going through permitting -- a focused water study that was adopted by the Legislature as a CEQA requirement in 2002 for certain large-scale residential, commercial and industrial projects that have significant water impacts. Until very recently, local permitting agencies did not consider the Water Supply Agreement (WSA) requirement to apply to wind projects. In May 2010, however, key holdings of an unrelated lawsuit subsequently prompted local permitting agencies to require wind projects that are located on more than 40 acres to prepare these studies.

CalWEA believes that the authors of that legislation did not have wind projects in mind when they included "industrial plants of 40 or more acres" in the definition of the kind of project that would require a WSA. A typical 100-MW wind project uses the equivalent of less than one dwelling unit's demand for water during a year.

Given the low water use of wind projects, applying the WSA requirement to the CEQA process is an unnecessary expense and delay that wind companies can ill afford, particularly now as renewable projects are trying to qualify for the federal cash grant program. Preparing these plans can be expensive – on the order of \$20,000 to \$50,000 per project, and can add several months to permitting timelines at a time when the state is looking for ways to streamline the permitting process.

SB 267 provides a simple clarification of the Legislature's intent not to require water studies of renewable energy projects that use very little water and, indeed, result in saving significant amounts of water that would otherwise be used in conventional thermal generating stations.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nancy Rader  
Executive Director

Cc: Senator Michael Rubio