



County of Monterey

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April 14, 2025

The Honorable Anna Caballero
The California Senate
1021 O Street, Room 7620
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 599 (Caballero) Atmospheric Rivers Research and Forecast Improvement Program: extended range forecasting – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of the County of Monterey, I am pleased to offer our strong support of SB 599 (Caballero), which supports the Department of Water Resources (DWR) in its development of extended range atmospheric river (AR) forecasting at subseasonal (2-6 weeks) and seasonal (1-6 months) lead times.

Flooding is the most widespread natural hazard in California, more pervasive than wildfires or earthquakes. In fact, one-in-five Californians live in flood-prone areas, and all 58 counties have a history of severe flood damage. A staggering \$900 billion in homes and buildings replacement are at risk of flooding throughout the state.

Atmospheric rivers have been identified as major drivers of precipitation and floods, responsible for up to half of the annual precipitation in California and 94 percent of all flood damages, totaling around \$620 million annually. Winter storms from December 2022 to mid-January 2023 caused massive flood damage in 40 of California's 58 counties, resulting in 20 deaths and significant devastation to homes, roads, infrastructure, agriculture, businesses, the economy, and caused over \$30 billion in damages. We also know that climate change has resulted in more intense and more frequent atmospheric river events.

Scripps Institute partners with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) on several initiatives including AR research and Forecast Improved Reservoir Operations (FIRO) to help gather better data and inform water managers and risk management resources effectively. The Scripps Institute AR Program has improved forecast skill over and for all of California, five-day AR forecasts in water year 2020 were better than four-day forecasts in 2017. However, better forecasting is needed to inform decision-making about flood-prevention and water management.

SB 599 (Caballero) would build upon DWR's current research-operations framework to advance extended range AR forecasts, providing emergency operations ample lead-time for effective decision-making. With more accurate data and longer-range certainty, we can better prepare and protect our communities from catastrophic flood and other severe weather events.

For these reasons the County of Monterey supports SB 599. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Monterey County's Public Policy Advisor, Ashley Walker of Nossaman LLP, at 916-442-8888.



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Sincerely,

DRAFT

Chris M. Lopez, Chair
Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable John Laird, 17th Senate District
The Honorable Robert Rivas, 29th Assembly District
The Honorable Dawn Addis, 30th Assembly District
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)
Members and Consultants, Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water
Members and Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee