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March 29, 2022

The Honorable Blanca Rubio
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5140
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Assembly Bill 2421 (Rubio) Water: unlicensed cannabis cultivation.
As Amended March 14, 2022 – SUPPORT
Set for Hearing – April 5, 2022 – Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife
Committee**

Dear Assemblymember Rubio:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, I write to support Assembly Bill 2421, which would enhance local enforcement authority to prosecute and enjoin water theft and water pollution to combat water theft and illegal cannabis grows. CSAC supports tools that enhance local administration and management of groundwater resources which has come under extreme pressure from illegal cannabis operations.

California counties have found themselves on the front lines of combatting illicit cannabis grows and are working hard to identify new solutions. It is critical that counties are given the tools necessary to protect their communities from the myriad of issues that stem from illicit cannabis grows, including water theft, pesticide pollution, abandoned trash and debris, and other criminal activities. The issue of water theft has become ever more pressing given the state's ever worsening drought, and it is critical that communities that are already struggling with limited water supplies do not lose out more because of these bad actors.

AB 2421 would amend the California State Water Code to provide authority to county counsels and city attorneys to civilly prosecute and enjoin water theft. It would also amend the California Fish and Game Code to authorize county counsels to civilly prosecute and enjoin water pollution. By removing existing limitations on prosecutorial authority, the bill provides more tools for local governments to use against the harmful community impacts of illicit cannabis cultivation as well as the degradation of our water and other natural resources.

CSAC supports efforts to strengthen the ability for counties to address illegal cannabis cultivation, and advocates for strong partnerships between the state and local

governments. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please feel free to contact me at (916) 662-6400, or cfreeman@counties.org.

Cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee
Calvin Rusch, Assembly Republican Caucus
Kirstin Kolpitcke, Assembly Republican Caucus