City of Santa Rosa

April 7, 2025

The Honorable Damon Connolly
Chair, Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee
California State Assembly
1020 N Street, Room 171
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 532 (Ransom) – Water Rate Assistance Program

Dear Chair Connolly:

MARK STAPP
Mayor

EDDIE ALVAREZ
Vice Mayor

CAROLINE BAÑUELOS
VICTORIA FLEMING
DIANNA MACDONALD
JEFF OKREPKIE
NATALIE ROGERS

On behalf of the City of Santa Rosa, I am writing to express our strong support for Assembly Bill 532, authored by Assemblymember Ransom, which provides critical authority and flexibility for urban retail water suppliers to implement and sustain low-income water rate assistance programs tailored to local community needs.

The City of Santa Rosa has long recognized the importance of equitable access to essential water services, particularly for our most vulnerable residents. In 2016, the City launched the Help 2 Others (H2O) program, which directly supports qualifying low-income customers by covering 100% of the fixed monthly service charges for both water and sewer, averaging approximately $42.00 per month in savings per household. As of March 6, 2025, the program supports 793 active participants and has delivered a total of $1,831,573.00 in assistance since its inception.

AB 532 represents a meaningful step forward in codifying the authority of urban retail water suppliers—such as the City of Santa Rosa—to provide targeted water rate assistance programs. By doing so, the bill strengthens local capacity to address water affordability, provides statutory clarity needed to navigate Proposition 218, and protects existing programs like H2O that are making a measurable impact in our communities.

We also commend the bill's effort to create a statewide assistance program for ratepayers in small or disadvantaged water systems, filling a critical gap left after the expiration of the federal Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). As California continues to uphold the human right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water, AB 532 offers a pragmatic and inclusive approach to advancing that goal.

Office of the Mayor
100 Santa Rosa Avenue - Room 10 • Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Phone: (707) 543-3010 • Fax: (707) 543-3030
www.srcity.org

For these reasons, the City of Santa Rosa respectfully urges your support for AB 532 (Ransom). If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dane Hutchings at dhutchings@publicpolicygroup.com or Coby Pizzotti at cpizzotti@publicpolicygroup.com. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Mayor Mark Stapp
MS/LF

Thank you again. This one is important - we'll be raising water rates significantly for years to come.

Mark