California Coastal Commission
Chair Dayna Bochco and Commissioners,

As elected leaders here in Monterey County, the economic and environmental well-being of our citizens is our responsibility. California American Water’s proposed desalination project does not meet either of those priorities. We ask you to deny its application for a Coastal Development Permit.

A feasible alternative, the Pure Water Monterey Expansion, has been developed since the CPUC decision that authorized Cal Am’s desalination project. This recycled water project is environmentally superior and far less expensive.

A recent Water Supply and Demand report from the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District has shown that the demand for water has dramatically declined over the past twenty years. The report clearly shows that the expansion of Pure Water Monterey (PWM) can meet our water supply needs for several decades. There is no need for this desal plant.

Our coastal environment must be protected. We cannot allow a project that would do harm. This project would draw groundwater from the overdrafted Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin and create seawater intrusion that could threaten the municipal water supply of the City of Marina, the Ord Community and CSU Monterey Bay. It would also destroy seven acres of coastal dunes and environmentally sensitive habitat in Marina.

As a coastal community, the impact of climate change is a grave concern. This desal plant would use a massive amount of energy - 38,000 megawatt hours of PG&E power a year compared to the Pure Water Monterey Expansion which is powered by biogas energy from the adjacent landfill and would use only 12 megawatt hours a year from PG&E. This desal plant
would become a large CO2 emitter on the coast at a time when we are trying to reduce emissions.

Our local public agencies working together have solved our water supply problem with the Pure Water Monterey project and its proposed expansion. Currently, Cal Am will not sign a water purchase agreement for this additional water, preferring its profit generating desal project instead.

The economic impact of this unnecessary project would be a hardship on the entire community. Cal Am’s desal would cost $1.2 billion over 30 years compared to $190 million for the Pure Water Monterey Expansion. Monterey Peninsula Cal Am customers already pay the highest cost in the nation for water and this desal project would double residents’ water bills. It would make water unaffordable for many and create an environmental injustice issue for our lower income communities of Marina and Seaside.

Cal Am’s desalination project is not in the public interest. It benefits Cal Am shareholders, while creating environmental damage and unnecessary financial burden for our community. The Pure Water Monterey Expansion is an environmentally superior alternative. We ask you to deny Cal Am’s permit.

Respectfully,

Jane Parker, Monterey County Supervisor District 4
Clyde Roberson, Mayor of Monterey
Ian N. Oglesby, Mayor of Seaside
Bruce Delgado, Mayor of Marina
Alison Kerr, Mayor of Del Rey Oaks
Jenny McAdams, Pacific Grove City Council
Jon Wizard, Seaside City Council
Jason Campbell, Seaside City Council
David Pacheco, Seaside City Council
Alan Haffa, Monterey City Council
Tyller Williamson, Monterey City Council
Gail Morton, Marina City Council, Mayor Pro Tem
Lisa A. Berkley, Marina City Council
Adam Urrutia, Marina City Council
Jeff Baron, Carmel City Council
Alvin Edwards, Monterey Peninsula Water Management District Board
George Riley, Monterey Peninsula Water Management District Board
Tom Moore, Marina Coast Water District Board, President
Jan Shriner, Marina Coast Water District Board, Vice President
Matthew Zefferman, Marina Coast Water District Board
Peter Le, Marina Coast Water District Board
Herbert Cortez, Marina Coast Water District Board
Wendy Root Askew, Monterey Peninsula Unified School District, Board of Education
Debra Gramespacher, Monterey Peninsula Unified School District, Board of Education
Alana Myles, Monterey Peninsula Unified School District, Board of Education
Rosalyn Green, Monterey Peninsula College, Board of Trustees
Anthony Rocha, Salinas Union High School District, Board of Education
Regina Gage, Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital Board, Vice President