QUADSTATE

County Government Coalition

State of Arizona
County of Mohave

State of California
County of Imperial
County of Kern
County of San Bernardino

State of Nevada
County of Lincoln

State of Utah
County of Washington

Associate Members
City of Ridgecrest, CA.

June 23, 2005

Mr. John Hamill, Executive Coordinator
Desert Managers Group
2701 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311

Mr. Clarence Everly, DOD Coordinator
Desert Managers Group
222 East Main Street, Suite 216
Barstow, CA 92311

Dear Mr. Hamill and Mr. Everly:

I am in receipt of your letter of June 1, 2005, addressed to me as Chairman of the QuadState County Government Coalition (QuadState), regarding the participation of QuadState in the closed session of the meetings of the Desert Managers Group (DMG).

First, I appreciate the fact that the Group acted favorably on the request of the Counties to join with the Federal and State agencies so as to allow us to coordinate many activities of mutual concern and to improve communication and coordination. The three counties who are members of the QuadState Coalition have all accepted membership and look forward to participating with the members of the DMG.

The principal point of your letter expressing your consideration of our multi-county organization as simply an advocacy group came as a shock and surprise. QuadState provides information and services to each of the member counties, and serves as a clearing house for information regarding public lands and natural resources issues.

You, and the agencies who are members of the DMG, may not be aware that QuadState is a public agency, and definitely not, as you unfairly and erroneously characterize it, an advocacy organization. QuadState was created under Joint Powers Authority legislation governing special service organizations among public agencies in the three counties in California and under appropriate State laws in the other three states. QuadState meetings are open to the public, its records are part of the public record, and its membership and staff must even file formal conflict of interest and financial statements that are a public record.

You raise an issue relative to potential litigation that might occur regarding QuadState as a reason for disallowance of its attendance in closed sessions. I suspect that that assessment is based on the filing, some 21 months ago, of a 60-day notice for citizen lawsuit, filed regarding issues related to desert tortoise. You and your membership should note that in the ensuing time, QuadState has not filed any lawsuit, and has continued a positive communication and dialogue

Wally Leimgruber, Chairman
c/o Imperial County Board of Supervisors
940 W. Main Street, Room 212
El Centro, CA 92243-2871
(760) 339-4305
(760) 352-7876 FAX
wallyleimgruber@earthlink.net

Gerald Hillier
Executive Director
P.O. Box 55820
Riverside, CA 92517
(951) 683-5725
(951) 683-8544 FAX
gerryhillier@quadstate.org

with officials of the Department of the Interior regarding the matters contained therein. This reason also is without substance. You should know that the individual counties themselves also joined that 60-day notice, and were, in fact, listed ahead of QuadState.

While I certainly do not now suggest that the counties' membership in the DMG be reconsidered on the basis of their being potential litigants, I do offer this very clear information (indeed, information contained in the second paragraph of the 25-page 60-day notice letter) as evidence that the exclusion of QuadState, as at least an observer at DMG meetings, on that basis is inconsistent and unwarranted.

You further raise the issue of County Supervisors being represented by staff in lieu of their direct participation. This statement cannot be reconciled with the opening statement in your letter that the DMG is diminished with staff and contractors present. The member counties organized QuadState as a Joint Powers Authority so as to facilitate communication and operations among our counties on issues of common interest, and to augment our staffs in areas where we may lack personnel or expertise. The QuadState Executive Director, and his associate, serves as an extension of our staffs, providing us with information, interpretations and recommendations on a variety of matters related to public lands and natural resources. In many instances, the Executive Director will have more immediate information and knowledge on a particular issue than the Board member or county staff person who may be present. The QuadState staff, too, by their regular participation provides a continuity of information to and from member counties.

In addition, there are counties, such as Imperial, who simply lack the internal staff to allow full and regular participation. A QuadState representative at the sessions will provide at least our county with information and input that we likely would not receive any other way. The bottom line is that full participation by the county's umbrella organization becomes a cost-effective means of coordination and information flow. Indeed, given Imperial County's lack of resources and expertise, without QuadState attendance at DMG meetings, the DMG's invitation for our county to participate is a hollow offer.

Finally, and in response to any thought that our QuadState organization is simply a non-public advocacy group, you should be aware that the organization has represented three counties bordering the Colorado River for the past five years during completion of the Lower Colorado Multi-Species Conservation Plan. QuadState, as an entity, served on the Steering Committee, a multi-agency group led by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Colorado River Water Board. That organization parallels, and in some areas possesses more authority, than the DMG. Yet, it clearly and completely accepted QuadState as an appropriate, professional and public representative of local governments, to work with other governmental entities which have a stake in land and water management issues in the region. Since Plan completion, QuadState continues to represent the three counties on the new Steering Committee overseeing implementation.

I trust that the DMG will reconsider their action to exclude our QuadState organization from the DMG's closed and business sessions. If you would like us to share documentation regarding our Joint Powers Authority, we would be happy to provide it to you and your membership. For our

part, having been admitted to membership, we look forward to getting acquainted and working with you beginning with the Ventura meeting next month.

Yours truly,

Wally Leimgruber
Fifth District Supervisor, Imperial County
Chairman, QuadState County Government Coalition

Cc: Mike Pool, California State Director, Bureau of Land Management
Steve Thompson, California-Nevada Operations Manager, Fish and Wildlife Service
John Jarvis, Regional Director, National Park Service
Bill Postmus, Supervisor First District, San Bernardino County
Dennis Hansberger, Supervisor Third District, San Bernardino County
Jon McQuiston, Supervisor First District, Kern County
Don Maben, Supervisor, Second District, Kern County
Buster Johnson, Supervisor, Third District, Mohave County AZ, Vice Chairman of QuadState
Steve Morgan, City Councilman, City of Ridgecrest
Robin Cochran
G. William Lamb