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Federal Affairs Advocacy

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**Tuolumne Utilities District
Board of Directors Meeting
January 12, 2021**

About VNF Solutions

- Integrated consulting firm of more than 100 professionals with offices in Washington, DC, Seattle, Denver, and the San Francisco Bay Area
- Bipartisan firm with relationships throughout Congress and Federal agencies
- Highly developed, nuanced understanding of core and evolving areas of business and policy, including:
 - Agriculture
 - Community Resiliency, Pre-Disaster Mitigation, and Disaster Recovery
 - Emerging Technologies and Cybersecurity
 - Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources
 - Infrastructure
 - National Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
 - Native American Affairs and Consultation
 - Water Resource Management

Representative Clients

- California Department of Water Resources
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- Nevada Irrigation District
- Sonoma Water
- South Sutter Water District
- Tri-Dam Project
- United Water Conservation District
- Utica Water and Power Authority
- Valley Water
- West Stanislaus Irrigation District
- Yuba Water

Comprehensive Federal Support

- Assess TUD's federal priorities with input from Board and staff
- Identify legislative and regulatory opportunities and develop and federal strategy
- Build and leverage relationships with legislative and executive branch policymakers to champion TUD priorities
- Develop fact sheets and other advocacy materials
- Identify and pursue federal funding opportunities through the annual appropriations process and federal grants/loans
- Represent TUD with trade associations and coalitions (e.g. ACWA, NWRA)
- Build partnerships with likeminded stakeholders
- Track legislative and regulatory developments and proactively identify opportunities

2020 Accomplishments

- **USDA Rural Development Grants/Loans**
 - Facilitated conversations and assisted in establishing relationships between USDA and TUD, resulting in \$4.2M grant and \$15M low-interest (1.1%) 40-year loan for Sonora Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant
 - TUD now positioned to leverage USDA relationships to pursue federal funding for Sierra Pines Water Treatment Plant
- **USBR/ New Melones Reservoir water service contract**
 - Assisted in making introductions critical relationships at USBR

2020 Accomplishments (cont'd)

■ Phoenix Lake Reservoir

- Facilitated meeting with USACE for dredging of Phoenix Lake to remove sediment
- Assisted with acquiring permit for construction

■ Pinecrest 401 water quality certification

- Engagement with PGE, Senators Feinstein and Harris and Representative McClintock to build support for getting Pinecrest water elevation certified and approved
- Importance of federal/state advocacy nexus

■ Congressional advocacy

- Maintain relationships with offices of Senators Feinstein and Harris, as well as Representative McClintock to ensure that TUD's interests are represented in Washington

2021-2022 Outlook

- Biden Administration
- 117th Congress
- Federal Policy Opportunities and Risks
 - COVID response/ stimulus
 - Infrastructure
 - Water Policy
 - Wildfires
 - Climate
 - Funding

Thank you!


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Tuolumne Utilities District State Government Affairs

California Advocates, Inc.
Dennis Albiani, Vice President
Anthony Molina, Advocate



About California Advocates

- Established in 1970
- Professional contract lobbying Firm located in Sacramento, CA.
- Bipartisan firm with relationships in all branches of government.
- Represent over 70 business, professional, and local government interests.

Advocacy Team

- Dennis Albiani, Vice President
 - 23 years of government experience
 - Two Bipartisan Governor Administration Appointments
 - Former Legislative Staffer
 - Active Member of the CA State Bar
 - Graduate of McGeorge School of Law and Cal Poly, SLO

- Anthony Molina, Advocate
 - 9 years of government experience
 - Former Legislative Staffer for 8 years
 - Worked for a major trade association CMTA
 - Managed legislative campaigns
 - Graduate of the University of Nevada, Reno

Advocacy Strategy

- Legislature
 - Advocate key Members and Committees of the Legislature
 - Provide written and verbal testimony
 - Monitor and engage in budget conversations
 - Identify funding opportunities
 - Craft proposals

Advocacy Strategy Cont'd

- Regulatory
 - Monitor board meetings and workshops
 - Comment on draft regulations
 - Support grant funding opportunities
 - Maintain and grow relationships
- Communications/Education
 - State Lawmakers
 - Regulatory Professionals

Accomplishments

- Pinecrest Lake 401 Certification
 - Amendment to minimum lake level requirement at Pinecrest Lake
- Phoenix Lake Reservoir Project
 - Initiated funding conversation with Department of Water Resources
 - Initiated Conversations with OES on essential emergency response Infrastructure
- Advocacy & Relationship Building
 - State Water Resources Control Board Members
 - Department of Water Resources
 - Key Legislators

2021-2022 Outlook

- COVID-19: PPE, Testing, Tracing, Vaccine Distribution – Water Utility workers are Tier 1C
 - Legislature is modified
 - Administrative Agencies working remote but still active
- Legislative:
 - Wildfire response, clean up, emergency response, PSPS
 - Climate Resiliency including “Green Stimulus” Water/Res. Bonds
- Budget:
 - Restore Cuts, \$26 Billion One Time Influx
 - Infrastructure Hardening
 - Cap-and-Trade
 - Federal Stimulus

Goal to Align TUD Needs with Funding Categories

2021-2022 Outlook

■ Regulatory issues:

- Affordable Rates – Lifeline programs
- SGMA, VSA, “Subsidence Funding”
- Safe Drinking Water

■ Utility Issues

- PG and E
- State Federal Licensing

■ Political Issues

- Redistricting
- Special Elections
- Ongoing Relationship Building and Education

Questions?

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