



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 30 2026

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2218 without my signature.

This bill would establish a state policy to recognize and address the inequities inflicted upon all California Native American tribes regarding access to, and control over, water by state-sanctioned actions of termination, removal, and assimilation, and would require several state agencies to take a series of steps to implement this policy. The bill would also require disputes between a tribe and an agency over implementation of the policy to be brought before the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs for mediation before the agency action is challenged in court.

I have long recognized the historical harms perpetrated against Native peoples and tribal governments in California, and my administration has worked tirelessly to address them. Under my administration, state agencies are directed to foster respectful, government-to-government dialogue with tribes above and beyond what existing law requires. For example, the Department of Water Resources convened a tribal advisory committee to ensure tribal perspectives are incorporated into updates to the California Water Plan. The State Water Resources Control Board also expressly incorporated Tribal Beneficial Uses into its long-term planning, which involves extensive engagement and collaboration with tribal nations to protect water resources important to tribes.

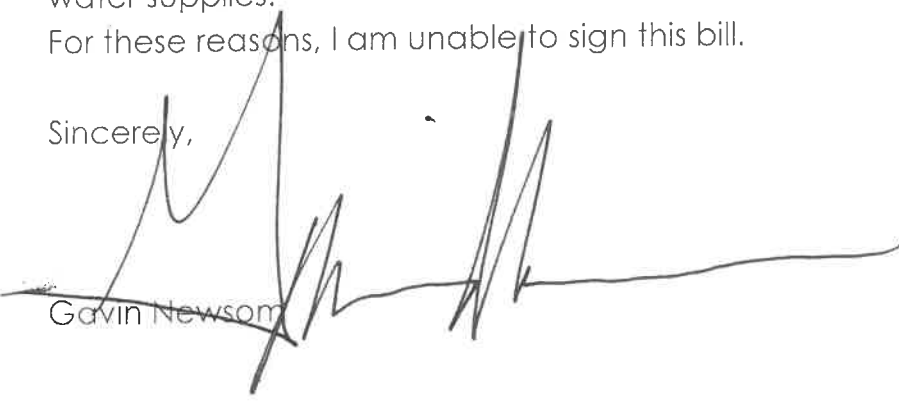
I also recognize, however, that California must streamline its water policies to protect our water supply from the reality of climate change. I am concerned this bill would undermine that imperative — adding new layers of process to duplicate work that my Administration already prioritizes. I am further concerned that the bill is not sufficiently clear about how its new policy should be

implemented — or whether such implementation would disrupt important regulations, policies, permits, and grant criteria already moving forward. Adding new sources of uncertainty will delay our urgent fight to secure Californians' water supplies.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, written over the printed name "Gavin Newsom". The signature is highly fluid and abstract, with several sharp, vertical strokes and a long horizontal line extending to the right.