



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL VOTERS



WILDCOAST COSTASALVAJE



SIERRA CLUB

CALIFORNIA



Audubon

CALIFORNIA



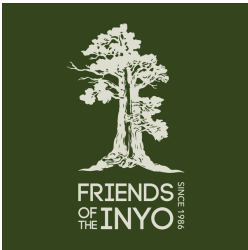
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

west marin environmental action committee

Escondido Creek Conservancy



PACIFIC FOREST TRUST



SEQUOIA Riverlands Trust SERVING LAND and PEOPLE



AMERICAN RIVER CONSERVANCY



Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Stockton Help for Today...Hope for Tomorrow



Environmental Justice Program



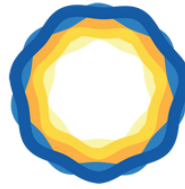
MOUNT SHASTA BIOREGIONAL ECOLOGY CENTER mountshastaecology.org



Preserving Rivers and Land for Life



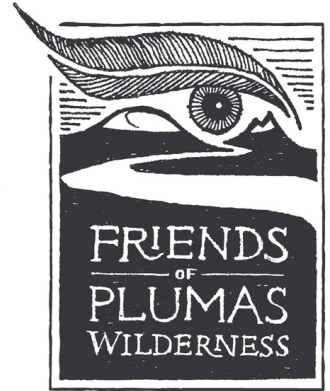
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL LAND TRUST



California Institute for Biodiversity



The Wilderness Society



Climate Action Mendocino

February 23, 2024



The Honorable Mike McGuire
President Pro-Tempore
California State Senate

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker of the Assembly
California State Assembly

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
California State Senate

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
California State Assembly

The Honorable Josh Becker
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee 2
California State Senate

The Honorable Steve Bennett
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 4
California State Assembly

Re: FY 2024-25 Proposed Budget Delivers Cuts to 30x30 Goal & Climate Resiliency

Dear President Pro-Tempore McGuire, Speaker Rivas, Senator Wiener, Senator Skinner, Senator Becker, Assemblymember Gabriel and Assemblymember Bennett:

On behalf of the Power in Nature coalition and the undersigned organizations, we thank you for the significant investments in biodiversity conservation and climate resilience made in the fiscal years 2021-22 and 2022-23 budgets. This funding has resulted in the completion of important projects and has brought more conservation and equitable access efforts into the project pipeline. **However, we are deeply concerned that the momentum created by these investments is slowing and likely to stop in the next year or two if these investments continue to be reduced.**

While we understand that California is currently facing a second year with a budget shortfall, **we respectfully request that the Legislature work with our organizations to identify opportunities to restore critical funding to the fiscal year 2024-25 budget and work to ensure that no further reductions are made** to the natural and working lands programs critical to meeting our climate and biodiversity goals.

Governor Newsom issued an executive order on climate and biodiversity (EO N-82-20) in 2020 and the legislature codified that goal in 2023 in which the state commits to protect California's biodiversity, expand equitable access to nature's benefits, and conserve places that help California achieve climate resilience and/or carbon neutrality. As a key strategy for meeting these goals, the state has committed to a goal to conserve 30 percent of its lands and coastal and inland waters by 2030.

As demonstrated by the devastating impacts from the most recent storms this month, along with the winter 2022-23 storms, the multi-year drought, and catastrophic wildfires, California must increase – not decrease – its investments in climate resilience programs, including conserving important coastal areas, floodplains, and other ecosystems that allow our state to better withstand the impacts from extreme weather events.



California's investments in land conservation also provide a cost-effective strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In November 2023, the AB 1757 Expert Advisory Committee issued recommendations for implementing targets for Natural and Working Land Sector Climate Actions in which the experts stated that the state can achieve reductions of 250-400 million megatons of CO₂ in 10 years through the conservation and management of natural and working lands, and that these efforts would be at a notably lower cost per ton in reductions than from other emissions sectors.

The historic \$54 billion California Climate Commitment agreed to by the Legislature and governor recognized the critical importance of investing in climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation. However, this commitment was reduced by \$2.9 billion last year. This year, the January 10 budget proposal would cut an additional \$3.1 billion – of which **nearly half of the total reductions impact climate resilience and nature-based solutions programs, including 30x30.**

Specifically, the Governor's January 10 budget proposal would make the following reductions to key conservation programs:

- \$392 million from the State Coastal Conservancy, reducing investments in coastal protection and adaptation and sea level rise.
- \$327.4 million from the Wildlife Conservation Board with most of the reduction focused on the Cascade and High Sierra Upper Watershed Climate Resilience Program and the Land Acquisition and Habitat Enhancement Program (i.e., Watershed Resilience for Southern California).
- \$126 million from the Department of Water Resources' Watershed Climate Resilience funding.
- \$60 million from the Ocean Protection Council.

Conservation funding programs are already over-subscribed with backlogs of projects waiting to be funded. For example, the State Coastal Conservancy has estimated that it has more than \$600 million in projects. Yet, this year's budget proposes to reduce the funds already appropriated to the State Coastal Conservancy by more than half.

Our organizations have been mobilizing and investing in project development as part of the effort to partner with the state to achieve its important initiatives. Significantly cutting this funding will not only prevent projects from coming to fruition, but it leaves many of our organizations in a difficult position with stranded costs and a loss of momentum in the effort to meet our goal of conserving millions of acres of lands and coastal waters by 2030. We urge the Legislature to reject deep funding reductions to our 30x30 and climate resilience programs in the final budget agreement in June. Instead, we urge the Legislature to look for creative budget solutions such as direct excess greenhouse gas reduction fund monies to the programs proposed to be cut by the Governor.

California must continue to uphold the commitments made to Indigenous communities, Tribal nations, conservation organizations, community-based organizations, land trusts, and resource conservation districts to support the important partnerships essential for the state to implement its climate resilience initiatives.



Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspective and recommendations. We are happy to work with you and staff as the state budget proposal moves forward.

Sincerely,

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American River Conservancy

Pamela Heatherington
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Environmental Center of San Diego

Tori Kjer
Executive Director
Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust

Dan Silver
Executive Director
Endangered Habitats League

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Defenders of Wildlife

Ashley Eagle-Gibbs
Executive Director & Legal and Policy Director
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin

About the Power in Nature Coalition

Power In Nature is a statewide coalition of over 100 community groups, environmental and conservation organizations, land trusts, indigenous organizations and tribal members dedicated to advancing California's 30x30 commitment. The Power In Nature coalition has identified [nearly 100 potential 30x30 projects](#) across the state and works on a broad range of issues including biodiversity protection, climate resilience, equity, recreation, outdoor access and social justice. For more information, visit powerinnature.org.

