



March 3, 2025

Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
 1020 N Street, Room 164
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 491 (Connolly) Climate Goals: Natural and Working Lands SUPPORT

Dear Chair Bryan and Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources:

We write to urge your support for AB 491, which would make it the goal of the state to achieve the targets for the nature-based climate solutions recently developed by the Administration. In 2022, the Legislature passed a package of climate bills including AB 1757 (C. Garcia & R. Rivas) which directed the state to “determine an ambitious range of targets for ... nature-based climate solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions for 2030, 2038, and 2045 to support state goals to achieve carbon neutrality and foster climate adaptation and resilience.” These targets were released in 2024 and chart an ambitious but achievable path for engaging the state’s landscapes in addressing the climate crisis.

The Expert Advisory Committee convened to inform these targets found that the state can achieve reductions of 250-400 million tons of CO2 over the next decade through the conservation and management of natural and working lands, and that these efforts would be at a dramatically lower cost per ton than from other emissions sectors. The targets released by the Administration in April 2024 include a similar suite of actions that reduce greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions while also reducing catastrophic wildfires and floods and protecting biodiversity.

California’s natural and working lands are essential to mitigating emissions and adapting to climate change. Restoring, maintaining, and conserving these as well-managed lands is a necessary complement to other direct emissions reductions. Climate-smart land management offers near-term, rapid, cost-effective, and large-scale opportunities for enduring reductions in

carbon and other potent GHG emissions such as methane. Conversely, when lands are degraded they release more GHGs, increase climate risks to people and nature, and are more vulnerable to future climate change impacts.

The targets provide important guidance and context for the scale of opportunity to mitigate climate change on natural and working lands and the actions proposed in these climate targets are all voluntary, cooperative, and non-regulatory ways to partner with landowners to advance multiple state goals. The funding available in Prop. 4 positions the state to make substantial progress towards these goals in the coming years.

We strongly support increasing the scale of climate action on our natural and working lands and urge your support of this bill.

Warmly,

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