



August 18, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Request for Correction of key Department of Fish and Wildlife
Positions Approved in FY 2021-22 Budget**

Dear Governor Newsom,

We appreciate your leadership to ensure California's biodiversity is protected and to that end, your Administration's proposal to add new positions to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife ("CDFW") focused on the protection and recovery of species listed as endangered or threatened under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). The "Biodiversity Resilience Package" ([3600-071-BCP-2021-MR](#)), which was a part of your May Revision to the FY21-22 Budget, included a total of 31 new positions to protect California's endangered species with an expressed intent to "preserve the state's amazing natural wealth....[to] allow the Department to focus on implementing the full intent of the CESA." The BCP also included 8 positions for statewide infrastructure support and management impacts to address "a changing climate such as wildfire, drought, in addition to human-wildlife conflict is creating increasing impacts to our State's biodiversity."

While this broad coalition of stakeholders was very pleased to support these new positions, we wrote to both you and to legislative budget leaders in the attached May 24, 2021 letter:

“While we strongly support these augmentations to CDFW’s budget, we would note that the Administration’s proposal does not propose permanent staff positions. Rather, the funding for new staff positions is only for a duration of between three to five years, depending on the proposal. **We agree with the Legislative Analyst’s Office and the Senate Budget Subcommittee 2 recommendation that the five-year staff positions should be permanently funded.**”

Short-term staffing is generally reserved for situations in which there is uncertainty as to whether a staffing augmentation is needed permanently. In this instance, CDFW’s Service-Based Budget effort has clearly demonstrated that the endangered species program is woefully understaffed. Considering your commitment to address the biodiversity crisis in California and given that we know this crisis will not be solved within our lifetimes, there is no question that the proposed CESA program positions should be permanent instead of short-term. We reinforced the recommendation to fund these positions on an ongoing basis in every budget subcommittee and in the full budget committee hearings in the Assembly and the Senate. Both houses concurred with this request by voting in their full budget committees to make these positions permanent instead of funded through a one-time expenditure.

To our great surprise, we learned shortly after the enactment of Senate Bill 129, that these positions were not keyed permanent in accordance with the Legislature’s will and instead were reverted to one-time, with five years to spend, for the entire proposal. We have confirmed with legislative leaders that they continue to support these positions as permanent, and it was not their intention to revert to the one-time expenditure proposal as set forth in the May Revision.

We are calling on you to direct your staff to correct this matter as soon as possible. We want to assume that this matter is an error or oversight given the enormous complexity of this year’s budget. We do not believe that any statutory clarification is needed: the Administration (Department of Finance) has authority to correct this since nothing appears in the budget bill to characterize this aspect of the appropriation.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss and address this matter. Thank you for your ongoing leadership.

Sincerely,

Juan Altamirano
Associate Director of Policy
Audubon California

Kimberly Kolpin
Executive Director
Bolsa Chica Land Trust

Margarita Gordus
President
California Association of Professional
Scientists

Karen Buhr
Executive Director
California Association of Resource
Conservation Districts

Andrea Caldwell
Executive Director
California Association of Zoos and Aquariums

Chriss Bowles
President
California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery
Association

Don Martin
President
California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation

Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis
Board Chair
California Council of Land Trusts

Dan Whisenhunt
CEO
California Deer Association

Nick Buckler
President
California Fish and Game Wardens Association

Danny Stevenson
President
California Fish and Game Wardens Supervisors
and Managers Association

Lori Jacobs
President
California Houndsmen for Conservation

Melissa Romero
Legislative Affairs Manager
California League of Conservation Voters

Nick Jensen
Conservation Program Director
California Native Plant Society

Roy M. Griffith Jr.
Legislative Director
California Rifle and Pistol Association

Walter "Redgie" Collins
Staff Attorney
CalTrout

Ryan Henson
Senior Policy Director
CalWild

Andria Ventura
Legislative and Policy Director
Clean Water Action

Pamela Flick
California Program Director
Defenders of Wildlife

Dan Silver
Executive Director
Endangered Habitats League

Morgan Patton
Executive Director
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin
(EAC)

Kristen Hislop
Marine Conservation Program Director
Environmental Defense Center

Jora Fogg
Policy Director
Friends of the Inyo

Emily Parker
Coastal and Marine Scientist
Heal the Bay

Geary Hund
Executive Director
Mojave Desert Land Trust

Debra Chase
CEO
Mountain Lion Foundation

Neal Desai
Senior Program Director, Pacific Region
National Parks Conservation Association

Nikita Koraddi
CA Legislative Advocate
Natural Resources Defense Council

Greg Helms
Program Manager, California Fisheries
Ocean Conservancy

Paul Mason
V.P., Policy & Incentives
Pacific Forest Trust

Matthew Baker
Policy Director
Planning and Conservation League

Gary Brennan
President
San Diego County Wildlife Federation

Gary Weitzman, DVM, MPH, CAWA
President and CEO
San Diego Humane Society

Andrea Caldwell
Associate Director, Community & Government
Relations
San Diego Zoo Global

Cathie Nelson
President
San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of Safari Club
International

Richard A Block
President & CEO
Santa Barbara Zoo

Corrine Brindley
Corp. VP External Affairs
SeaWorld San Diego

Brandon Dawson
Director
Sierra Club California

Virginia Chadwick
Vice President
Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation

Melinda Booth
Executive Director
South Yuba River Citizens League

Steve Chappell
Executive Director
Suisun Resource Conservation District

Pete Stauffer
Environmental Director
Surfrider Foundation

Fred Harpster
President
The Black Brant Group

Jay Ziegler
Director of Policy and External Affairs
The Nature Conservancy

Matt Clifford
Staff Attorney
Trout Unlimited

Steve Miller
President
Tulare Basin Wetlands Association

Zachary Plopper
Associate Director
WILDCOAST

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker, California State Assembly
The Honorable Toni G. Atkins, President pro Tempore, California State Senate
The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
The Honorable Richard Bloom, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3
The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Budget Committee
The Honorable Bob Wieckowski, Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #2
Rachel Ehlers, Legislative Analyst's Office
Hazel Miranda, Office of the Governor
Mindy McIntyre, Office of the Governor
Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
Chuck Bonham, Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Matt Almy, Department of Finance
Sergio Aguilar, Department of Finance
Kim Delfino, Earth Advocacy
Jennifer Fearing, Fearless Advocacy
Bill Gaines, Bill Gaines & Associates



May 24, 2021

Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins
 Senator Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Budget Committee
 Senator Bob Wieckowski, Chair Senate Sub #2 Budget Subcommittee
 Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
 Assemblymember Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
 Assemblymember Richard Bloom, Chair, Assembly Sub #3 Budget Subcommittee
 State Capitol
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Stakeholder Support for the May Revision Funding Proposals for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Along with Additional Recommendations

Dear Pro Tem Atkins, Speaker Rendon, Senators Skinner and Wieckowski, and Assemblymembers Ting and Bloom:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in support of the substantial increase in investments proposed for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) in the Governor's May Revision for the 2021-22 State Budget. This proposed funding would significantly increase staffing and critical resources at the department. Specifically, we support the following investments:

- \$41.75 million in one-time funding, as proposed in the January budget, .
- \$59.6 million in General Fund and \$5 million in California License Plate Funds for Biodiversity Resilience, including \$53.75 million and 31 PYs to do non-fee related California Endangered Species Act (CESA) work; \$7.85 million and 8 PYs to do an assessment of

CDFW lands and infrastructure, including \$350,000 to develop a feasibility study for a state-of-the-art Wildlife Health Lab; \$3 million in one-time funding to develop a wolf compensation program; and \$1.3 million in one-time funding to cover payments to voluntary participants to complete the Drift Gill Net Transition program pursuant to SB 1017.

- \$3.785 million in General Fund and 18 permanent PYs to continue to support the Cutting the Green Tape Initiative.
- Realignment of Dedicated Fish and Game Preservation Funds to generate \$3.858 million and 19 permanent PYs to carry out permitting under the Streambed Alteration Agreement Program and the CESA Program.
- \$18.795 million in General Fund and 16 PYs to support CDFW's work on offshore wind development and terrestrial renewable energy project development, as part of the state's proposed Investments to Accelerate Progress on the State's Clean Energy Goals Budget Change Proposal.
- \$50.52 million in General Fund and 55 term limited staff to support drought related permitting compliance and enforcement, and to increase drought related fisheries and wildlife support as part of the Water Resilience and Drought Package.
- \$36 million to CDFW for management of lands in response to fire threats, which will result in 47 limited term staff as part of the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Expenditure Plan.
- The proposed increase in the per barrel fee on oil by 2 cents with an annual CPI adjustment to address the structural deficit in the Oil Spill Prevention and Administration Fund.

These proposed investments directly respond to the information generated through the Service Based Budget (SBB) effort, which identified environmental review and permitting and protection and species and habitat conservation as the two most underinvested categories of service.

While we strongly support these augmentations to CDFW's budget, we would note that the Administration's proposal does not propose permanent staff positions. Rather, the funding for new staff positions is only for a duration of between three to five years, depending on the proposal. **We agree with the Legislative Analyst's Office and the Senate Budget Subcommittee 2 recommendation that the five-year staff positions should be permanently funded.**

We also note that the Governor's May Revision did not include funding to implement a wildlife-vehicle collision data program essential to identifying locations for restoring habitat connectivity pursuant to §1023 and §2000.6 of the Fish and Game Code. Given the proposed investments in wildlife connectivity projects in the Governor's budget (i.e., \$230 million to the Wildlife Conservation Board for wildlife connectivity and fish passage projects), there is an even greater need to understand where the biggest barriers to wildlife movement exist. Therefore, we urge you to include an additional \$1 million for the implementation of a wildlife-vehicle collision data collection program to identify and solve current barriers to wildlife movement.

Finally, but significantly, we want to emphasize that earlier this year, we strongly urged the administration as did you, to report back before the May Revision with specific ideas for addressing the deficiencies highlighted by the SBB review. While the current budget proposal includes substantial and important short-term investments toward those deficiencies, the Administration did not provide any specific ideas for addressing the lack of adequate sustainable and dedicated funding for CDFW and its mission. **We urge you to direct the California Natural Resources Agency**

and CDFW to form a workgroup to identify potential long-term funding solutions for CDFW and report back to the Legislature in January 2022 with its findings.

Thank you again for your leadership in the effort to address the serious funding and staffing deficiencies at CDFW. The SBB effort provided the critical information necessary to justify this significant increase in funding for CDFW, which is a worthy down payment toward improved protections for California's biodiversity.

Sincerely,

Juan Altamirano
Associate Director of Policy
Audubon California

Kimberly Kolpin
Executive Director
Bolsa Chica Land Trust

Don Martin
President
California Chapter of the Wild Sheep
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Nick Jensen
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Roy M. Griffith Jr.
Legislative Director
California Rifle and Pistol Association

Mark Hennelly
VP Legislative Affairs & Public Policy
California Waterfowl Association

Corey Thompson
President
Cal-Ore Wetland and Waterfowl Council

Ryan Henson
Senior Policy Director
CalWild

Pamela Flick
California Program Director
Defenders of Wildlife

Jeff McCreary
Director of Operations
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Dan Silver
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Jora Fogg
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Ric Ortega
General Manager
Grassland Water District

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Greg Helms
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Cathie Nelson
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San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of Safari
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Richard A Block
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Corrine Brindley
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Brandon Dawson
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cc: Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
Chuck Bonham, Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Christine Hironaka, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor
Hazel Miranda, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
Matt Almy, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance
Rachel Ehlers, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office
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