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**Governor Brown Signs Law Recognizing Forest Watersheds as Part of State's Water System**  
***Source watersheds will now be acknowledged as infrastructure***

SACRAMENTO, California (September 27, 2016) – Governor Jerry Brown took a significant step today to preserve and maintain the key sources of the state's water supply. With his signature, Assembly Bill 2480 became law, requiring recognition of source watersheds - especially those that feed Shasta and Oroville reservoirs - as water system infrastructure and a critical component of California's water system. The bill was shepherded by Assembly Member Bloom (D – Santa Monica), a leader in California's climate change policy.

These "source" watersheds provide the vast majority of the water for the State Water Project and Central Valley Project, supplying drinking water for over 28 million people, and providing irrigation for over 8 million of acres of farmland as well as 85% of the freshwater to San Francisco Bay. Those watersheds feeding the Oroville and Shasta reservoirs are predicted to remain wetter and cooler than other parts of the state as climate change continues, making them even more vital for our water security.

"The health of the land that surrounds California's rivers, lakes and streams is critical to a clean and reliable water supply," said Laurie Wayburn, President of Pacific Forest Trust, who sponsored the bill. "Regrettably, these lands have been degraded due to development, drought and other impacts of climate change, imperiling water security for millions of Californians."

Currently, California has policies and systems in place that maintain built water infrastructure such as dams, levees, and canals, but until now the state has had no mechanism for ensuring the function of natural water infrastructure, which is essential to providing clean, plentiful water. Watershed restoration and conservation can increase water quality and quantity, as well as improve flow regulation, both reducing peak flooding and holding water later into summer seasons.

"This law will make sure that the source of our water is treated just like other basic infrastructure that Californians depend on, such as roads, dams and power supplies," said Wayburn. "We can now move forward on putting a comprehensive system in place to restore and conserve these landscapes that are so critical to a safe and secure water supply."

*Pacific Forest Trust sustains America's forests for all their public benefits of wood, water, wildlife, and people's wellbeing. Learn more at: <https://www.pacificforest.org/>*