



May 6, 2024

RE: Proceed with Wildlife Conservation Board meeting on May 23, 2024

Dear Governor Newsom,

We write to urge your Administration to move forward with funding the projects noticed for action at the May 23rd Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) meeting. This meeting has been publicly noticed for weeks and is the final critical step for over 40 projects around California that will help the state meet your bold goals for conservation, climate mitigation, biodiversity protection, and achieving more equitable access to nature. Derailing this meeting at the last minute would inflict entirely avoidable harm on state efforts to meet these essential goals.

Your Administration has been a global leader on conservation and natural resource issues, from addressing threats to biodiversity by establishing a goal of conserving 30% of California's land and coastal waters by 2030, to the targets for climate mitigation and adaptation through natural and working land released last month on Earth Day. These and other goals and frameworks chart a positive path to restoring a better relationship with a healthier world, but these aspirations must be matched with action.

We are concerned that the recent guidance from the Department of Finance to halt expenditures of certain funds could impact the funding for projects on the WCB's May agenda. We expect the Administration to exercise discretion and nuance in allowing some funding actions to proceed, but we must emphasize that derailing the pending meeting at this very late date would be seizing defeat from the jaws of victory.

The May 23rd meeting represents the final action on dozens of projects that have been many years in the making. These projects are complicated, with landowner agreements that have terms and expiration dates, and bring many millions of dollars in matching funds from federal, philanthropic, local governments, and other sources that can be jeopardized by a sudden suspension of the meeting. Again, this agenda has been publicly noticed for weeks and this meeting is the final necessary action for a myriad of conservation, restoration, education, equity, and engagement projects around the state.

We thank you for your commitment to elevating the role of nature – and access to nature – in your Administration. And we ask that you ensure that the May 23rd meeting of the Wildlife Conservation Board proceeds as planned, and funding is provided accordingly for all noticed projects.

Yours,

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