

PCL Insider - September 5, 2019

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Action Alert: SB 1 needs your Support!

At PCL's 2017 Annual Assembly, we hosted a series of workshop discussions focused on what California can do to safeguard our values in the wake of the 2016 federal election. The number one recommendation that emerged from that day was for California to enact legislation that incorporates the environmental and social protections that California relies on in federal law but are not as of yet instituted in CA State law. Now is the time to make that happen!

The most important thing you can do today to protect California's environment and communities is to contact your district's State Assemblymember and Senator to urge support for [Senate Bill 1](#), authored by Senate Pro Tem, Atkins.

If you can't take the time to contact your legislature directly, NRDC's online messaging portal for SB 1 is [here](#):

SB 1 would encode portions of the federal Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe

Drinking Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and basic workplace safety laws that are not currently in California law, and gives our state agencies streamlined authority to enforce these protections. SB 1 does not add any regulations beyond what was required by these federal protections in existence prior to January 19, 2017, it only holds those same protections in place.

Our federal agencies have attempted and succeeded in multiple attacks on all of these bedrock environmental and social protections. Most recently, the Trump Administration, on August 12, adopted regulations dramatically weakening the Endangered Species Act.

These changes would:

- Reduce protections given to species that are listed as "threatened," the designation given to plants and animals before they become "endangered." Current classifications equally protect both, but the new policy means protections for future threatened species may be far more limited.
- Allow more federal actions to move forward without fully considering all impacts on listed species.
- Exempt climate change from key parts of the law, making it more difficult to protect salmon, California condor, and hundreds of other imperiled species that are impacted by the effects of climate change.

As one of the most biologically diverse places on the planet, California has a lot to lose with these loosened regulations. Species that have been protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act but are not currently protected under the California Endangered Species Act include Southern Sea Otters, steelhead, snowy plover, and Southern Resident Killer Whales.

It has taken a long time to get SB 1 (previously SB 49, De Leon, 2017-2018) where it is today. Enacting these protections under state law has not been as easy as just a cut-and-paste into CA code. It has been extremely difficult to identify the appropriate mechanisms and pathways for our state agencies to effectively enact these regulations, and there have been three years of deliberations on the many technicalities involved. There has been give and take and compromise, but there is round support from environmental and social justice organizations around the state for the present bill as a reasonable and essential solution to safeguard these bedrock environmental and social protections.

The federal government is moving backward, but California can't afford to.

Contact your legislators today to voice your support of SB 1!

Links to various coverage:

SF Chronicle:

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/editorials/article/Editorial-Trump-is-gutting-the-Endangered-14340507.php>

Sacramento Bee:

<https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/environment/article234220102.html>

LA times:

<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2019-08-20/california-endangered-species-trump>

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