



July 13, 2020

State Senator Henry Stern,
Chair Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water
State Capitol, Room 5046
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 3030 - Support

Dear Senator Stern,

We are writing in support of AB 3030, a measure to conserve 30% of California's land and water by 2030. This bill would help conserve and restore California's wildlife and natural habitat and would help California reach its climate goals. For the reasons stated below in the letter, we urge your Aye vote in the upcoming Committee on Natural Resources and Water hearing.

California is considered to be a biodiversity hotspot. Over three thousand plant species and 70 animal species are endemic to California and are found nowhere else.¹ These include the California newt, the golden trout, the San Joaquin kit fox, and the California mule deer. However, studies have shown that one-third of all species are at risk of going extinct within the next 50 years.² Additionally, about 40% of California's land has been developed for agriculture and will continue to grow as California's population increases.³ Our iconic wildlife has never been more at risk.

This bill will take the first step towards alleviating the pressure of development on wildlife populations. By conserving 30% of California's land and water, California will reduce habitat fragmentation, increase ecosystem resilience, protect biodiversity, and protect and enhance our planet's largest carbon sinks: our trees and oceans. The benefits of conserving these lands do not just extend to wildlife, California's citizens will benefit from having access to green open spaces and parks, and the number of dangerous wildlife encounters and collisions will decrease as habitat fragmentation is reduced. Additionally, this bill will reduce long-term carbon emissions and increase the rate of carbon sequestration, thus reducing the looming crisis of climate change on our civilization. As scientists across the world urge countries to

¹ Morell, Virginia "California's Wild Crusade" *National Geographic*,
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/habitats/california-wild-crusade/>

² Corbett, Jessica "Climate Crisis Could Cause a Third of Plant and Animal Species to Disappear Within 50 Years: Study" *EcoWatch* (Feb. 15, 2020) <https://www.ecowatch.com/climate-crisis-plant-and-animal-species-2645160419.html?rebelltitem=1#rebelltitem1>

³ Thompson, Jr, Edward "Agricultural Land Loss & Conservation" *California Department of Food and Agriculture* (2009) https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/agvision/docs/Agricultural_Loss_and_Conservation.pdf

protect 50% of their land by 2050 to avoid the devastating effects of climate change and extinction, this bill will help push California in the right direction towards accomplishing this goal.⁴

Some might argue that California has already protected over 30% of its land with various State Wildlife areas, National Wildlife Refuges, National Monuments, State Parks, ecological preserves, and other public lands. And while we commend California for taking great strides to protect California's natural habitat, we believe these measures are not quite enough to secure long-term health for California's ecosystems. For instance, the land chosen to be protected from development is often chosen based on scenic values and the lowest economic impact, and not biodiversity.⁵ This results in uneven protection of some plant and wildlife species over others, which could still lead to ecosystem collapse overtime. Additionally, some of these lands, such as the U.S. Bureau of Land Management land and National Forests, still allow for uses such as logging and mining, which can harm and impact local habitat⁶. If we want to protect habitat and biodiversity, particularly in the face of climate change, then we must expand our land and water conservation and restoration efforts, which this bill would do.

Although this bill sets a goal of conserving 30% of California's land and water by 2030, it does not specify how the state should go about in accomplishing this goal. This allows for a diversity of stakeholders to come together and create a plan that works for everybody. One point that environmentalists, hunters, anglers, wildlife watchers, and outdoor enthusiasts can agree on is that protecting wildlife populations and restoring habitat is an important goal. Given enough time and debate, these groups could come up with a solution that works for all and for California. In crafting this plan going forward, it will be important to directly address public access concerns for responsible or regulated uses such as fishing, hunting, hiking, outdoor recreation. Well managed and sustainable fishing, hunting, hiking, and wildlife watching with low-ecological impact are compatible with protected areas.

We hope to have your support in helping pass this goal that would protect wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and reduce carbon emissions, and also allow for stakeholder groups to work together in developing a plan that accomplishes these mandates and addresses any needs and concerns.

⁴ Leahy, Stephen "Half of all land must be kept in a natural state to protect Earth" *National Geographic* (Apr. 19, 2019) <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/04/science-study-outlines-30-percent-conservation-2030/>

⁵ Morell, Virginia "California's Wild Crusade" *National Geographic*, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/habitats/california-wild-crusade/>

⁶ Public Land Statistics, *Bureau of Land Management*, <https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/PublicLandStatistics2018.pdf>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Howard Penn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Howard" being more prominent than the last name "Penn".

Howard Penn
Executive Director
Planning and Conservation League

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Pratt". The signature is cursive and elegant, with the first name "Beth" and last name "Pratt" clearly legible.

Beth Pratt
Regional Executive Director, California
National Wildlife Federation