February 26, 2021

Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Water
State Capitol, Room 5046
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 266 (NEWMAN) - SUPPORT

Dear Honorable Chair Henry Stern,

The above listed organizations represent a cross section of conservation and land use focused non-profits spanning the state of California. We are writing to express our support for SB 266. This bill begins to address a much-needed reboot of renewed land acquisition for California’s State Park system and helps meet Governor Newsom’s goal of protecting 30% of lands and coastal waters by 2030.

Since 2010, the California Department of Parks and Recreation has not been acquiring additional land, nor adding land to existing parks. Though our population continues to grow and the need for adequate park space and wildlife habitat has also grown, additional parkland is not being acquired. The pandemic has proven we need parks for exercise, calm, and renewal in coping with the stresses of the lockdown and loss of normalcy. We
are pleased to see acquisitions begin again through the Governor’s budget, the recent passage of Proposition 68, and through this bill. Californians love their parks. Visitation proves it.

California’s natural resources are unparalleled across the continental United States. The plants and animals found here are second only to the rainforest in terms of biodiversity. To ensure more of these unique resources become protected, we must provide sustainable and connected wild spaces.

Preserving natural lands comes with many benefits, including, but not limited to: sequestering carbon; reducing vehicle miles traveled as land conversion is avoided; cleaning our air and water through trees and streams; increasing property values; providing nearby places to recreate; connecting landscapes together through wildlife corridors; offering outdoor education classrooms for our children; reducing the urban heat island effect; protecting our cultural and archaeological heritage; protecting threatened and endangered species—and much more.

SB 266 is a step in the right direction to ensure parks—like Chino Hills State Park—grow appropriately, helping to meet the vision and goals adopted in the Park’s General Plan. It is our collective hope that this bill represents a shift, where acquisitions once again become a priority for the state. All of the proposed acquisitions in this bill include priority lands contiguous with the Park, are offered by willing sellers or land donations, and funding is secured or identified for the transactions.

We urge the Committee’s passage of SB 266.

Signed,

Claire Schlotterbeck  Larry Klementowski
Executive Director  President
Hills For Everyone  Chino Hills State Park Interpretive Association

Chuck Mills  Ilene Anderson
Director of Public Policy and Grants  Senior Scientist
California ReLeaf  Center for Biological Diversity

Janet Cobb  R. Lee Paulson
Executive Director  President
California Wildlife Foundation/California Oaks  Responsible Land Use

Dr. Patricia Martz  Dr. Jack Bath
President  Vice President
California Cultural Resource Preservation Alliance, Inc.  Tri-County Conservation League

Dr. Dan Silver  Rich Gomez & Gloria Sefton
Executive Director  Co-Founders
Endangered Habitats League  Saddleback Canyons Conservancy
Susan Sheakley  
Conservation Committee Chair  
Sea and Sage Audubon

Rico Mastrodonato  
Acting Government Affairs Director  
The Trust for Public Land

Joel Robinson  
Director  
Naturalist For You

Brian Elliott  
Conservation Director  
Pomona Valley Audubon

Brandon Dawson  
Policy Advocate  
Sierra Club

Jim Kelly  
President  
Friends of the Whittier Hills Association

Victoria Rome  
Director of California Government Affairs  
Natural Resource Defense Council

Steve Evans  
Wild Rivers Director  
California Wilderness Coalition

Michael Wellborn  
President  
Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks

Melissa Romero  
Legislative Affairs Manager  
California League of Conservation Voters

Marlene Nelson  
Co-Chair  
Protect Our Homes and Hills

Brad Jenkins  
President  
California Native Plant Society - Orange County Chapter

Eric Johnson  
Chair  
Puente-Chino Hills Task Force, Sierra Club

Lisa Levinson  
Wild Animals Campaign Director  
In Defense of Animals

Pamela Flick  
California Program Director  
Defenders of Wildlife

Howard Penn  
Executive Director  
Planning and Conservation League

C. Robin Smith  
Chair  
Diamond Bar - Pomona Valley Sierra Club Task Force

Tony Tucci  
Chair  
Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife (CLAW)