

ENDANGERED HABITATS LEAGUE

DEDICATED TO ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE



August 20, 2013

The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Chair
Assembly Water, Parks & Wildlife Committee
1020 N Street, Suite 160
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Water Bond

Dear Chairperson Rendon and Committee Members:

The Endangered Habitats League (EHL) applauds your work on a water bond and appreciates the opportunity to provide input on its *watershed* component. EHL was formed in 1991 and is Southern California's only regional conservation group.

We urge a minimum of \$500 million for the watershed category and that State of California Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs) and regional Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) be specifically referenced as eligible projects.

Across the state, watersheds are currently being effectively protected under NCCP/HCPs. NCCP/HCPs concentrate on rivers and streams, as these are the backbone of wildlife connectivity and ecosystem function. They also focus around existing lakes and reservoirs, protecting the surrounding watersheds from roads and development that degrade water quality. In Southern California alone, hundreds of thousands of acres are now protected, yet many reserves remain incomplete

Through NCCP/HCPs, water bond monies are leveraged in combination with local and federal contributions. And because local government land use authority is used in addition to land acquisition, NCCP/HCPs are highly *cost-effective*. Furthermore, these collaborative, multi-stakeholder efforts are seated at local governments, and enjoy unprecedented levels of support and consensus across the public and private sectors.

We urge you to take advantage of these "off the shelf" programs. The Wildlife Conservation Board and state-chartered conservancies are logical vehicles for disbursing the funds. *However, we would like to work with you further on any allocation formula.*

Thank you for your leadership on the water bond and for considering our views. Please let me know if more information would be helpful.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dan Silver', is placed over a light gray rectangular background.

Dan Silver
Executive Director