



To: The Assembly Democratic Caucus Water Bond Working Group;
Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee

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Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Shasta Land Trust
Sierra Foothill Conservancy
The Nature Conservancy
Truckee Donner Land Trust
Trust for Public Land
Tuolumne County Land Trust

RE: *Proposed Principles for Developing a Water Bond*

Dear Assemblyman Rendon:

We are writing as a council of land trusts to applaud the water bond working group's efforts to set the tone for future water bond discussions with the Proposed Principles. Your thoughtful consideration of the many complex issues surrounding California's water future is greatly appreciated.

Member land trusts that comprise the Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council (SCLTC) work with willing landowners to conserve important watershed lands in the Sierra Nevada and California Cascades. We write to humbly suggest that a critical piece of California's water infrastructure needs to be more adequately addressed by policy makers in Sacramento—the forests, meadows, lakes and streams of the Sierra Nevada and California Cascades.

With that in mind, in reviewing the Principles we feel that there are some modifications to be made that would ensure that discussions around California's water future are more holistic:

- We support the working group's recommendation that a water bond "restore the health of California's watersheds, to protect our important coastal and inland waterways, especially for salmon that depend on both." **However, we feel that a specific focus on watersheds that are the source of California's water, such as the Sierra Nevada region and the California Cascades, should also be included as a priority.**

- We support the working group's recommendation that protection of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta remain a high priority. **However, we encourage you to ensure that any plan for Delta protection considers the protection and restoration of the source of fresh water that flows through the Delta as a priority as well.**

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A reliable supply of high quality water is fundamental to securing drinking water for all Californians and essential for providing flood protection, maintaining agricultural productivity, hydropower generation, the environment, and supporting a vibrant and diverse economy. Snowpack in the Sierra and California Cascades Region provides a natural form of water storage and Sierra forests and meadows play a role in ensuring water quality, yield, and reliability. Over 60 percent of California's water supply originates in the Sierra Nevada, serving end users throughout the State. **Up to half of the fresh water that flows into the Delta starts its journey in the Sierra.**

Sadly, the health of Sierra Nevada forests, meadows and streams are in decline, putting the primary source of water in California at risk. Investing in natural infrastructure, such as improving forest and watershed health, conserving and restoring meadows and streams in the upper watersheds, conserving working landscapes that provide habitat and watershed protection, addressing water quality issues such as mercury contamination, and reducing the risk of large damaging fires is essential to ensuring water supply and improved water quality for all California communities.

Further, we believe that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy provides an excellent mechanism for investment in this critical part of the State, given its strong presence in our region and proven track record in administering grant funds. Without an investment in the Sierra Nevada and California Cascades, a significant element of a comprehensive fix to California's water issues will be ignored with significant downstream impacts and costs. Please feel free to contact us for more information on this matter, and thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,



Ben Miles

President, Board of Directors

Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council