



THE  
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LAND

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CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE

August 21, 2013

The Honorable Anthony Rendon (Chair)  
Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
1020 N Street Room 160  
Sacramento, CA 95819

**Re: Assembly Water Bond Framework and Natural Green Infrastructure**

Dear Assemblymember Rendon,

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is writing to provide comments regarding the crafting of the next water bond, specifically addressing the need for natural green infrastructure. Thank- you Assemblymember Rendon, your staff, members of the Assembly Water Bond Working Group and the Water Parks and Wildlife Committee staff for work on what is a very complicated issue with broad and passionate stakeholders – it’s much appreciated.

In our view, the next water bond needs to reflect investments in our natural green infrastructure, with an emphasis on water resources in densely populated communities. Our comments in this letter specifically address section (V) and section (VII) of the ‘2013 Water Bond Framework’ and will highlight the clear and considerable opportunity to improve water quality and protect, improve, and create natural green spaces, while also reaping the incredible co-benefits that will be achieved by investing in urban greening.

The next water bond should invest in every opportunity to replace impermeable surfaces like blacktop and concrete with permeable green spaces that naturally filter storm water, recharge groundwater and make our local water supplies cleaner and more reliable.

Today, natural green spaces like local parks, river parkways, green alleys and urban forests can be designed with porous walking paths, swales, trees and planted cisterns to capture water (Section (V) (4) & Section (VII) (2)). The Trust for Public Land has been involved in urban greening projects like this for years and knows they are strongly supported by adjacent communities and often attract private matching funds from business and individuals wanting to better their community.

Along with the considerable water resource benefits that can be had with greening our densely populated communities (Section (V) (1), there are myriad co-benefits associated with this kind of investment. Urban greening reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Projects can be designed with active transportation components like bike paths and walking trails that induce non-motorized travel and get people out of their cars to make short trips. Green spaces mitigate the heat island effect and lower the temperature and associated energy costs of cooling urban areas. Trees not only capture and store water, but also remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Human health will benefit from urban greening. Communities in many places in California are park poor. Millions of children in urban California do not live within walking distance of a green space to exercise or play. The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention says that the creating green spaces within walking distance will result in a 25% increase of people who will exercise at least 3 times a week.

Finally, there are economic co-benefits to urban greening. Green spaces increase property values and tourism – both factors provide local governments with direct income to their treasury.

In conclusion, there are existing programs at the Strategic Growth Council and the Natural Resources Agency to plug the money into and countless ‘shovel ready’ projects to get the investments on the ground immediately to improve our water resources and create jobs.

We strongly urge that Assembly and the Water Bond Working Group make urban greening among the priorities in the next water bond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rico Mastrodonato', with a stylized, cursive script.

Rico Mastrodonato  
Senior Government Relations Manager

Cc: Water Bond Working Group Members Rendon (Chair) Atkins, Bocanegra, Chesbro, Eggman, Gatto, Gordon, Mullin, Perea