



Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Coalition

*Dedicated to the sustained conservation of native animal and plant species
in the Southwest Bioregion.*

March 31, 2017

The Honorable Kevin de León
Senate President pro Tempore
Room 205, State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 5: California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 – SUPPORT IF AMENDED

Dear Senator de León:

The Wildlife and Habitat Conservation (WHCC) offers its general support for this measure and respectfully highlights a very important area for improvement so that it can fulfill its climate resiliency mission. WHCC is a coalition of 16 conservation groups representing over 25,000 members in Southern California. We strongly support collaborative regional habitat planning programs which, when managed effectively, have been able to reconcile tradition land use conflicts.

Our concern lies in Chapter 10, Climate Preparedness, Habitat Resiliency, Resource Enhancement, and Innovation. It is this section which speaks directly to the pressing need for California's wildlife and natural systems to adapt to climate change. Yet the numerous eligible projects would result in available funds being insufficient to make a significant difference for wildlife statewide.

As a remedy, we concur with the direction of the recent amendment adding section 80132, which creates a line item for the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). WCB has the requisite experience and knowledge, with a long track record of merit-based disbursements. We recommend that the amount for WCB reflect that already contained in AB 18 (\$400 million), as well as its list of grant categories. In this context, we also support the line item of \$55 million for State of California Natural Community Conservation Plans, which are off-the-shelf vehicles for climate resiliency and to which the State has substantial existing funding commitments.

With this change, the bill would, in our assessment, admirably serve the park, recreation, natural resource, and climate adaptation needs of our State.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering our views.

Yours truly,

Laura Hunter, Coordinator
Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Coalition

cc. Senator Toni Atkins