



COUNTY OF PLACER

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April 30, 2019

The Honorable Henry Stern, Chair
 Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
 State Capitol, Room 5046
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 474 (Stern): Habitat Conservation Fund—SUPPORT

Dear Chair Stern,

On behalf of the Placer County Board of Supervisors I am writing in support of your SB 474, which would make permanent the Habitat Conservation Fund, a crucial fund that will otherwise sunset in July 2020.

The California Wildlife Protection Act, Proposition 117, was passed by the voters of California in June 1990. The Act states that "... there is an urgent need to protect the rapidly disappearing wildlife habitat that supports California's unique and varied wildlife resources." With California's population expected to reach 50 million by 2050 and the rate at which California's plants and animals are facing a changing climate, the need to protect wildlife habitat is even more urgent today. Unlike traditional bond acts, Proposition 117 did not provide a fixed amount of money for habitat protection on a one-time basis. To assure the conservation of unique and important wildlife habitat, Proposition 117 created the Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF); required an annual transfer of \$30 million into the fund until the year 2020; and specified how the monies were to be expended.

The HCF has protected more than 1 million acres of wildlife habitat since 1990. To better understand HCF accomplishments that were achieved in the last decade alone, the table below summarizes by category the number of acres protected, restored or enhanced.

| | Deer and Mountain Lion | | T&E Species/Plans | | Wetlands Habitat | | Aquatic/Riparian Habitat | | Corridors, Trails, etc | |
|--|------------------------|--------|-------------------|---------|------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------|------------------------|--------|
| | Allocation | Acres | Allocation | Acres | Allocation | Acres | Allocation | Acres | Allocation | Acres |
| Total Funds / Acres <small>(7/1/08 to 6/30/18)</small> | \$59,444,987 | 95,153 | \$77,443,556 | 243,129 | \$49,744,615 | 291,751 | \$34,732,015 | 324,915 | \$11,256,318 | 74,965 |

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In implementing Proposition 117, the Legislature has used a wide variety of funding sources (as specified in the measure) to achieve the \$30 million a year goal. In any year, funds may come from a new bond act, the Environmental License Plate Fund, the Tobacco Tax Fund, the Wildlife Restoration Fund, the Tobacco Tax Public Resources Account, and the Endangered Species Income Tax Checkoff. Only one source of funds is fixed from year to year—each year ten percent of the Unallocated Account of the Tobacco Tax Fund must be used for the wildlife protection programs contained in Proposition 117 (in most years this amounts to approximately \$15 million).

The HCF has been a highly effective program for implementing a wide range of vital conservation efforts throughout the entire state including in Placer County where over \$500,000 has been invested since the passage of Proposition 17. While the HCF annual allocation is relatively small in comparison to resource related bond acts that have passed over the life of the Proposition 117, it has provided a necessary, consistent and reliable revenue source for conservation efforts in California.

For the reasons discussed above, Placer County strongly supports SB 474 and the permanent renewal of this essential fund. We thank you for introducing this important legislation and look forward to working with and supporting this effort. If you have any questions placer contact Gregg McKenzie

Sincerely,

COUNTY of PLACER



Kirk Uhler, Supervisor/Chair (District 4)

Cc: Members of the California Natural Senate Resources and Water Committee
Placer County Board of Supervisors
Todd Leopold, Placer County Executive Officer
Gregg McKenzie, Placer County Conservation Plan Administrator
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