



COUNTY OF PLACER
Community Development/Resource Agency

Michael J. Johnson, Agency Director

PLANNING
SERVICES DIVISION

Paul Thompson, Deputy Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Michael J. Johnson, Agency Director 

DATE: January 24, 2012

SUBJECT: Federal Section 6 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund

ACTION REQUESTED: The Planning Services Division is requesting that the Board approve a resolution requesting the United States Congress to increase funding for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 Cooperative Endangered Species Fund (CESCF) and authorize the Chairman to sign letters to Senators Feinstein and Boxer in support of increasing funding for CESCF.

BACKGROUND:

With over 80 percent of threatened and endangered species habitat found on non-federal lands; the CESCF has been one of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's most successful grant programs. Authorized under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act, the CESCF represents a vital tool for ensuring cooperative partnerships exist between the federal government, states and non-federal partners for the protection and conservation of threatened and endangered species.

The CESCF program provides grant funding to states through three sub-accounts – HCP Planning Assistance Grants, HCP Land Acquisition Grants, and Recovery Land Acquisition Grants. HCPs and Recovery Plans focus land acquisition on lands that have the greatest potential to benefit the species that is most in need for conservation assistance. Placer County has been the beneficiary of CESCF Planning Assistance Grants that have helped with the preparation of the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP). In 2011, the County was awarded a \$350,000 grant to fund continued PCCP planning efforts. In the future, the County will seek HCP Land Acquisition Grants should the PCCP moves forward into implementation.

In fiscal year 2011, Congress made a 30 percent cut in CESCF appropriations, from the previous \$85 million down to approximately \$60 million. This \$60 million was the lowest funding level since major funding of the program was initiated in 2000. In Fiscal Year 2001, the program reached its highest level of \$104.7 million in appropriations. At the same time the appropriations are decreasing, there is tremendous demand both in California and across the country for threatened and endangered species grant funding. With the increased utilization of HCPs and enhanced activity in recent years to update

and finalize Recovery Plans, the CESCO program is currently receiving requests at two to three times the amount available, and requests from single states totaling as much as the entire program is able to provide in any given year. Over the past 10 years, Placer County will have received approximately \$1 million in funding from this program by the end of this fiscal year.

In recognition of the significant need for a continued federal investment in cooperative partnerships providing funds for threatened and endangered species work by non-federal partners, the attached resolution encourages the United States Congress to consider placing special emphasis on the CESCO program in Fiscal Year 2013 by appropriating \$80 million in funds.

For Placer County, this program is a key element of the funding for the implementation of the PCCP. CESCO funding will apply to the conservation activities of the plan (e.g., habitat restoration, recovery actions, land conservation) for federally-listed threatened and endangered species. These federal funds and similar funding from the state, combined with mitigation payments, are the primary means through which the one-time costs of the PCCP will be funded.

In addition, Placer County's 2012 Legislative/Regulatory Platform General Principle Number 8 states that the County will "*Encourage and seek legislation that protects the County's quality of life, its diverse natural resources, and continued preservation of agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and open space.*" The approval of this resolution and letters the County will be advancing the objectives of the Placer Legacy program and the PCCP to protect open space and agricultural land in the county and to comply with the myriad of state and federal laws that apply to wetlands and sensitive species while streamlining regulatory procedures.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Federal Section 6 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, supporting habitat conservation planning in the United States, may be increased if the coalition is successful. An increase in the appropriation would be fiscally positive for Placer County if the County is successful in obtaining CESCO grant funding.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Services Division is requesting that the Board approve a resolution requesting the United States Congress to increase funding for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 Cooperative Endangered Species Fund (CESCF) and authorize the Chairman to sign letters to Senators Feinstein and Boxer in support of increasing funding for CESCO.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1: Resolution supporting a request to Congress to increase funding for the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund

Exhibit 2: Endangered Species Act Section 6 – Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund letters

cc: John Hopkins, California Habitat Conservation Planning Coalition

Before the Board of Supervisors County of Placer, State of California

In the matter of:

Resolution No.: _____

A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE CALIFORNIA
HABITAT CONSERVATION PLANNING COALITION
TO SEEK FEDERAL FUNDING FOR LOCAL
CONSERVATION PLANNING

The following Resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held _____, by the following vote on roll call:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

Attest:
Clerk of said Board

Chairman, Board of Supervisors

Clerk of the Board Signature

Chairman Signature

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF PLACER,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, jurisdictions across California have embarked on habitat conservation planning (HCP) or Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) to conserve species and their habitats; and,

WHEREAS, HCP and NCCP planning efforts aid our economies and job creation through the efficient permitting for impacts to sensitive species and their habitats; and,

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EXHIBIT 1

WHEREAS, these planning efforts will provide regulatory relief by streamlining the permitting process, identifying the costs earlier in the process, and providing time for complying with state and federal environmental regulations; and,

WHEREAS, these planning efforts will offer opportunities for private landowners to voluntarily participate in the selling of conservation easements or sale of their land; and,

WHEREAS, these planning efforts will set a national example of how to balance the conservation of biological resources with significant growth throughout California; and,

WHEREAS, these planning efforts will aid in the recovery of endangered and threatened wildlife species and enhance their habitats; and,

WHEREAS, regional, landscape level conservation planning efforts will protect a broad diversity of species and habitats; and,

WHEREAS, Placer County has invested over \$6 million in monies from its General Fund to prepare the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP) and needs additional funding to complete the project; and,

WHEREAS, Placer County has matched the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund at a 6:1 ratio demonstrating how federal funds can be substantially leveraged with local funding efforts; and,

WHEREAS, the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund provides grants for preparation of HCPs and also grants for acquisition of land by approved HCPs, and

WHEREAS, there is a significant demand for these HCP grants; particularly during a time of fiscal constraint;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF PLACER does hereby support working together with agencies from counties across California to request that the United States Congress provide \$80 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund in the fiscal 2013 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill anticipated to be passed by Congress in 2012.

County of Placer Board of Supervisors

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AUBURN, CALIFORNIA 95603
530/889-4010 • FAX: 530/889-4009
PLACER CO. TOLL FREE # 800-488-4308

JACK DURAN
District 1

ROBERT M. WEYGANDT
District 2

JIM HOLMES
District 3

KIRK UHLER
District 4

JENNIFER MONTGOMERY
District 5



January 24, 2012

Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Endangered Species Act Section 6 – Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund

Dear Senator Boxer:

On behalf of Placer County, I am writing to express the County's support for robust funding of the Section 6 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) in the Fiscal Year 2013 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. Placer County encourages you to request that the Appropriations for this important national program be \$80 million. The County would also like to thank you for your strong support of Section 6 funding for Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs).

Placer County recognizes that the Country is in an era of federal budget restraint and cutbacks. However, Placer County believes that achieving substantial funding for the CESCF is justified for three reasons.

First, CESCF is one of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) most successful investments because it spurs additional non-federal spending for habitat conservation. It is a vital tool for establishing and maintaining cooperative partnerships between the federal government, states, and non-federal partners for the protection and conservation of federally-listed threatened and endangered species. As over 80 percent of habitat for federally-listed threatened and endangered species is on non-federal lands, this support is critical to the conservation and recovery of listed species. The sub-grants provided to local governments have significantly benefited local efforts for on-the-ground species conservation, including the development of HCPs that can provide valuable streamlining benefits to job-creating activities and infrastructure development.

Second, there is tremendous demand both in California and across the country for threatened and endangered species grant funding. With the increased utilization of HCPs and enhanced activity in recent years to update and finalize recovery plans, the CESCF program receives requests far in excess of the amount of funds available.

Third, Habitat Conservation Plans facilitate economic growth and job creation, including infrastructure and renewable energy projects, and so they are particularly important in these difficult fiscal times. Any federal money dedicated to the CESCF will be spent quickly and with resultant benefits for conservation and economic growth.

Honorable Barbara Boxer
RE: Endangered Species Act Section 6 – Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund
January 24, 2012

In Fiscal Year 2011, Congress made a 30 percent cut in CESCFC appropriations from the previous \$85 million down to approximately \$60 million. This \$60 million was by far the lowest funding level since major funding of the program began in 2000. For Fiscal Year 2012, Congress made a further 20 percent cut, down to \$47.8 million even though CESCFC was one of the few programs for which the Administration proposed an increase in funding. In contrast, the overall U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service appropriations are cut by 1.8 percent for fiscal year 2012.

Placer County has invested over \$6 million in monies from its General Fund to prepare the Placer County Conservation Plan and will need additional funding to complete the project. Placer County has received over \$1 million from the CESCFC program. Placer County has matched the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund at a 6:1 ratio demonstrating how federal funds can be substantially leveraged with local funding efforts.

In recognition of the tremendous need for a continued federal investment in cooperative partnerships that facilitate efforts by non-federal partners to conserve federally-listed threatened and endangered species, Placer County encourages you to request \$80 million for the CESCFC program in the Fiscal Year 2013 Senate Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill. In the future, when economic conditions improve, it will be crucial for the CESCFC to grow again.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

COUNTY OF PLACER

Jennifer Montgomery, Chairwoman
Supervisor District 5
Placer County Board of Supervisors

cc: Placer County Board of Supervisors
Representative Tom McClintock, District 4 (R-CA)
Thomas M. Miller, Placer County Executive Officer
Richard Gold, Holland & Knight LLP
National Association of Counties (NACo)
Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC)
Loren Clark, Assistant CD/RA Director-Placer County

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Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Re: Endangered Species Act Section 6 – Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund
January 24, 2012

In Fiscal Year 2011, Congress made a 30 percent cut in CESCOF appropriations from the previous \$85 million down to approximately \$60 million. This \$60 million was by far the lowest funding level since major funding of the program began in 2000. For Fiscal Year 2012, Congress made a further 20 percent cut, down to \$47.8 million even though CESCOF was one of the few programs for which the Administration proposed an increase in funding. In contrast, the overall U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service appropriations are cut by 1.8 percent for fiscal year 2012.

Placer County has invested over \$6 million in monies from its General Fund to prepare the Placer County Conservation Plan and will need additional funding to complete the project. Placer County has received over \$1 million from the CESCOF program. Placer County has matched the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund at a 6:1 ratio demonstrating how federal funds can be substantially leveraged with local funding efforts.

In recognition of the tremendous need for a continued federal investment in cooperative partnerships that facilitate efforts by non-federal partners to conserve federally-listed threatened and endangered species, Placer County encourages you to request \$80 million for the CESCOF program in the Fiscal Year 2013 Senate Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill. In the future, when economic conditions improve, it will be crucial for the CESCOF to grow again.

Sincerely,

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Jennifer Montgomery, Chairwoman
Supervisor District 5
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