



January 8, 2018

Mono County Board of Supervisors  
PO Box 1903  
Bridgeport, California

RE: Mono County State and Federal Legislative Platform comments

Dear Members of the Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Mono County 2017 State and Federal Legislative Platform dated February 14, 2017. Friends of the Inyo has not previously commented on the County's legislative platforms but given the legislative threats to public lands that have emerged in 2017 we now consider it prudent for the County to take a strong stance on federal legislation impacting public lands in Mono County, as well as to support State legislation that seeks to insulate California from such federal attacks. This letter includes our concerns and recommendations for revision of the 2017 platform specifically regarding the Natural Resources, Public Lands and Agriculture sections. We ask the Board to consider the revisions below.

- In the **introduction** (pgs. 4-5), inclusion of language informing readers that Highway 395 is a designated Scenic Highway from its southern boundary to the town of Walker.
- **Support sustainable fishing** (pgs. 8, 16). We suggest including language supporting funding to clean up the lakes and streams where people fish, particularly fishing line, which is harming all wildlife, including fish. We suggest this section also include support for education regarding sustainable fishing, and for the restoration of native fish populations. The new recreation Coordinator for the County could help spearhead this as a pilot project with partners and volunteers in 2018.
- Add **support of sustainable trails**. We suggest the document include language supporting sustainable trails, including the maintenance of existing trails and the development of strategy for planning and execution of new sustainable trails. The County's new recreation coordinator could facilitate legislative tracking and advocacy around trails funding.
- **Continue to oppose legislation that would increase entrance fees to National Park lands** (pg. 15 add to section 2a or 2b). Increased entrance fees will harm gateway communities that depend on park visitors. If the current administration wants to address deficiencies in the National Park Service budget, it must commit to working with Congress to adequately fund parks including the passage of the National Park Service Legacy Act (S.751, HR.2584).

- **Support the control of invasive species** (pg. 16). We suggest adding a sentence to include the importance of following the Best Available Science, such as using native species when seeding, and eliminating the use of chemical treatments. Mono County could also coordinate with the California's Invasive Plant Council's Eastern Sierra Weed Management Area team (<http://www.cal-ipc.org/solutions/wmas/eastern-sierra-wma/>), a group of agency partners working on invasive species management in the Eastern Sierra.
- **Support State Senate Bill 5**. We suggest including language supporting The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018. This bill earmarks \$492 million to the Sierra Nevada. The bill also provides \$100 million for forest management. The bill is widely supported, currently polling at 65%, and is endorsed by the Sierra Business Council.
- **Support alternative energy** (pg. 16). We suggest deleting 1. "Support geothermal power- Continue to support geothermal power production that is environmentally sustainable and doesn't negatively affect local domestic water supplies." This appears to be redundant as it is stated in the section just above.
- **Special Designations** (pg. 15). We fully support the section on special designations with the necessary addition of Wild and Scenic Rivers. This addition would be consistent with the Board's August 23, 2016 comment letter to the Inyo National Forest regarding the Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement where the Board supported many Wild & Scenic River designations.
- **Support public lands infrastructure** (pg. 16). We suggest adding language regarding the need for more law enforcement staff.
- **Support endangered species regulation** (pg. 17). Consider including language opposing any federal legislation that undermines the Endangered Species Act.
- **Support wildfire funding and fuels reduction** (pgs. 8, 16). Consider including language addressing tree mortality and stating that forest management should be driven by the Best Available Science. Current research supports prescribed burning, selective thinning of small diameter trees and the use of managed wildfire, when it does not threaten people or property. The removal of large live and dead trees, which are invaluable to wildlife, for timber benefit does nothing to promote forest health. It is important the County emphasizes a commitment to protecting the County's forest ecosystems as a whole. The County should oppose false solutions to proposed forest management legislation, such as HR 2936, which falsely promises to fix the wildfire funding crisis and promote fuels reduction, when in actuality it would weaken bedrock environmental laws and open our forests to widespread commercial timber production.
- **Groundwater** (pg. 9). In addition to section 3G, we recommend including a section on the importance of groundwater in Mono County and thus advocacy and support for stronger state regulations for groundwater pumping specifically limiting the drawdown of water tables. Because of climate change, communities throughout the County may have to rely on groundwater pumping in future years and the County should proactively protect groundwater supplies through state legislation. The Mono Basin, Long Valley, and smaller basins are too small to trigger a GSA to manage them. The proposed Mammoth Base Land Exchange and Tioga Inn projects are of particular concern regarding groundwater.
- **Water Supply**. We recommend adding language supporting federal and state funding to measure, on an annual basis, the most important glaciers and snowfields in the Sierra (i.e. Mt. Lyell) in order to prepare the County for surface water shortages and impacts to wildlife and habitat from decreased stream flows.

- **Climate Change.** We suggest including stronger language on combating climate change. This could include advocating and supporting stronger state and federal regulations on energy conservation and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. The County could also work with communities to support local renewable energy initiatives and appropriately sited and scaled projects. There are many places a section on this could fit within the document ranging from sustainable recreation to alternative energy.

In closing, we greatly appreciate the effort the County has put into crafting a strong legislative platform. We thank you for making this a public process as you review the document for 2018 and consider our recommendations.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jora Fogg, Friends of the Inyo



Lisa Cutting, Mono Lake Committee



April Sall, Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership



Lynn Bolton, Sierra Club Range of Light Group



Fran Hunt, Sierra Club