



March 4, 2025

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear and The Honorable Henry Stern
 California State Senate
 State Capitol
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for Senate Bill 427 - Ensuring Ongoing Funding for Critical Habitat Conservation

Dear Senators Blakespear and Stern,

On behalf of our organizations, the undersigned write to express strong support for Senate Bill 427 and to thank you for proposing to remove the sunset date of July 1, 2030 for the **Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF)**. The HCF funds projects are led by state agencies, local governments, nonprofits, and other organizations and plays a key role in preserving California's biodiversity and promoting the long-term health of our natural resources for future generations.

Initially created by the California Wildlife Protection Act, the Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF) was approved by California voters in 1990 to fund projects protecting critical ecosystems, open spaces, wildlife corridors, and enhancing public access to natural areas and promoting outdoor education. **Since 1990, more than \$1 billion in HCF funds have protected over 1.2 million acres of wildlife habitat across California since 1990 as well as supporting more than 350 local and regional parks projects.**

Citizen-led Proposition 117 of 1990 required an annual transfer of \$30 million General Fund dollars into the HCF until July 1, 2020, and specified how the monies were to be expended. Prop 117 allows the Legislature to extend this sunset date and/or make this fund permanent by deleting the sunset. In 2019, the Legislature and Governor agreed as part of the annual budget process to extend the annual allocation to the Habitat Conservation Fund through July 1, 2030. While the HCF annual allocation is relatively small in comparison to resource-related bond acts, it has provided a necessary, consistent, and reliable revenue source for conservation efforts in California -- helping to attract and secure other public and private funding critical to complete major acquisitions, restoration, and wildlife connectivity projects.

In the five years since the Legislature and Governor extended the HCF through 2030, the Department of Finance has proposed (through the May Revision process) to sweep the HCF twice and proposed in 2024 to terminate it altogether. **The legislature rejected these efforts.**

Section 8 of Proposition 117 expressly states that "the Legislature shall not reallocate the funds allocated by Sections [2787](#) and [2788](#) of the Fish and Game Code." Further, Section 8 requires that any action taken by the Legislature must be consistent with and furthering the purposes of the initiative. Past proposals to revert or reallocate funds out of the Habitat Conservation Fund and shift those funds back into the General Fund are therefore inconsistent with the purposes of Proposition 117 and may even be unlawful.

The HCF has a 35-year track record of providing critical funding across California for a variety of projects that provide resiliency to the effects of climate change, create new jobs, increase outdoor access in communities, and support a robust tourism economy.

By eliminating the sunset, SB 427 will extend the HCF in perpetuity to protect a necessary, consistent, and reliable revenue source for conservation efforts that benefit California's diverse communities and biodiversity.

SB 427 ensures that the Habitat Conservation Fund will continue and gives Governor Newsom an opportunity to secure a legacy that began with his father's wisdom and advocacy more than 40 years ago.

Please call on us to help you enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

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cc: The Honorable Monique Limon, Chair, Senate Natural Resources & Water Committee
Members, Senate Natural Resources & Water Committee