



December 4, 2013

The Honorable Lois Wolk
 California State Senator
 State Capitol Building
 Sacramento, CA 94249-0063

RE: Senate Bill 42 – SUPPORT IF AMENDED

Dear Senator Wolk:

As a network of nonprofit organizations and practitioners working to improve California water quality and stormwater management through urban forestry, we are writing to applaud your efforts to propose a revised version of the water bond slated for the November 2014 ballot. We believe SB 42, as amended on September 11, 2013, shows tremendous promise and moves California toward solving the water challenges of the state.

We are encouraged by numerous amendments that have been recently incorporated into your legislation. This includes new language in section 79736 to “implement adaptation projects that improve the ability of California’s watersheds, wetlands, forests, and floodplains to reduce the impacts of climate change on California’s communities and ecosystems.” We strongly support such efforts, and further recognize such projects must extend into all areas of the state – especially in reference to our rural forest stands and urban forests.

It is with this particular point in mind that we are requesting a specific commitment to ensuring our state’s urban forests are not overlooked as an essential element to improving groundwater recharge, managing stormwater quality, and reducing flood risks through small storm events. We believe Paragraph (4) within Section 79736(a) comes close to meeting that objective, and would require minor but additional specificity as follows to move California’s entire urban forestry community to support for SB 42:

(4) Restore river parkways, urban streams and greenways throughout the state, including, but not limited to, projects supported by the Urban Streams Restoration Program established pursuant to Section 7048, the California River Parkway Act of 2004 (Chapter 3.8 (commencing with Section 5750) of Division 5 of the Public Resources Code), and the Urban Forestry Act of 1978 (Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 4799.06) of Part 2.5 of Division 4 of the Public Resources Code).

For 35 years, the Urban Forestry Act has served California as a model for improving water quality through strategic green infrastructure support. In fact, it is the State Legislature that declared “Maximizing the benefits of trees through multiple-objective projects that provide environmental services can provide cost-effective solutions to the needs of urban communities and local agencies, including, but not limited to, increased water supply, clean air and water, reduced energy use, flood and stormwater management, recreation, and urban revitalization” (Section 4799.07 of the Public Resources Code). To this end, the Legislature explicitly encouraged “Developing projects or programs that use urban forests for water conservation, improving water quality, or stormwater capture” (Section 4799.12 of the Public Resources Code).

Specific reference to the Urban Forestry Act in SB 42 also compliments other components of the proposed bond. Funding for green infrastructure investments such as urban forestry help bolster sustainable community strategies, support local governments in meeting stormwater regulations, and improve local neighborhoods, especially in California’s disadvantaged communities.

Again, the Legislature was very explicit in detailing the scope and design of the Urban Forestry Act as it relates to these issues and how the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection would address them as an administering agency under Section 4799.10 of the Public Resources Code:

- (a) (1) The department may implement a program in urban forestry to encourage better tree management and planting in urban areas to increase integrated, multibenefit projects by assisting urban areas with innovative solutions to problems, including greenhouse gas emissions, public health impacts of poor air and water quality, urban heat island effect, stormwater management, water shortages, lack of green space, lack of urban parks that are accessible to pedestrians, vandalism, and insufficient tree maintenance, and to otherwise accomplish the purposes of this chapter.

- (2) The department shall encourage demonstration projects that maximize the benefits of urban forests in conjunction with state and local agency programs to improve water conservation, energy conservation, stormwater capture and reuse, urban parks and river parkways, school construction and improvements, school greening or sun-safe schoolyards, air quality, water quality, flood management, urban revitalization, solid waste prevention, and other projects.

Urban streams, river parkways, and urban forests are community assets that are all important water quality as well as water capture and conservation tools that significantly contribute these benefits through a variety of natural services delivery. SB 42 does a good job of explicitly recognizing the value of the first two, and should incorporate the third as an equal element of this equation.

We appreciate your leadership on this complex and critical issue, and stand ready to support SB 42 with minor amendments as suggested.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Ray Trethewey
Sacramento Tree Foundation



Melissa Iger
Tree Foundation of Kern



Joe Liszewski
California ReLeaf

Jean Nagy
Huntington Beach Tree Society

Ken Knight
Goleta Valley Beautiful

Andy Lipkis
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David Wilkinson
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