



May 7, 2020

The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly
The Honorable Philip Ting, Bay Area Caucus Chair
The Honorable Members of the Bay Area Caucus
The Honorable Eduardo Garcia
The Honorable Richard Bloom
The Honorable Robert Bonta
The Honorable Laura Friedman
The Honorable Cristina Garcia
The Honorable Kevin Mullin
The Honorable Eloise Reyes
The Honorable Jim Wood
The Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman
The Honorable Robert Rivas

RE: Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Climate Resilience, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020 (AB 3256 – Garcia) – SUPPORT

Dear Honorable Members of the State Legislature:

The TOGETHER Bay Area coalition of 56 public agencies, Tribes, and nonprofits is pleased to share our support for AB 3256, and to provide our priorities for climate resilience during these evolving and challenging times. The Bay Area is home to nearly eight million people or 20 percent of the state’s population, and features world-class parks and recreational amenities, an incredible diversity of wildlife and habitats, working farms and ranches, and urban waterfronts and wetland habitats. Our region is uniquely beautiful and of great economic significance to the state and globally. These facts stand in sharp relief today, within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic crisis. Like so many, our member entities, listed below, are facing numerous operational and financial challenges. And, **these challenges reveal the direct linkages between equitably accessible public lands, healthy working lands and farms, natural resource management, and public health and job opportunities.** We believe that strategic investment in green infrastructure projects and nature-based solutions to today’s challenges can simultaneously:

- 1) Create jobs,
- 2) Fight climate change, and
- 3) Improve equity indicators related to human health, socioeconomics, and community resilience to crisis.

Earlier in the year, TOGETHER Bay Area expressed strong support for a unified, inclusive set of recommendations that would lead to bold investments in our region and across the state. We did so in partnership with the State Coastal Conservancy and San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, to take a watershed-based approach to building resilience and equity here in the Bay Area — from the hills and ridgelines to the Bay shoreline. All of those recommendations, which are summarized below, are still very important to us. However, we know the Legislature’s attention and priorities have had to shift in response to the unprecedented public health and economic crises.



We therefore have shifted *our* focus to outline a vision **that supports climate resilience actions, focuses on improving equity indicators, and puts people to work**. In support of this vision, we [recently produced a report](#) which reveals that **critical services – such as ensuring safe public access to nature during shelter in place orders, and vegetation management for wildfire prevention – can sustain and increase regional job opportunities**.

Our recommendations are aligned with this vision. Our top two priorities for AB 3256 are as follows:

- **Prioritize statewide funding that supports climate resilience actions and puts people to work.**
- **Ensure eligibility for the Bay Area’s most marginalized communities, who are most vulnerable to climate change impacts.** Use Under-Resourced Communities (PRC 71130(g)) to determine eligibility for struggling communities, and use the Cal OES's definition and analysis methodology of "vulnerable population/community" used in their State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

And as amendments are considered, we would like to share our broader priorities:

- **Include no less than \$800 million for State Coastal Conservancy programs statewide.** The State Coastal Conservancy serves as a long time, important partner to our members, the Restoration Authority, and numerous regional stakeholders, in implementing climate adaptation projects with multiple benefits for, in particular, our most underserved communities. Looking beyond the region, the consequences of climate change, such as coastal flooding and sea level rise, disproportionately impact 80 percent of California’s population that live and work within 30 miles of the coast. Adequate funding for the State Coastal Conservancy’s programs statewide is simply a must for a climate resilience bond that hopes to achieve its goals.
- **Include a minimum of \$200 million for the State Coastal Conservancy’s Bay Area Program.** Our region is densely populated and yet serves as a biodiversity hotspot. We face some of the direst climate change-related impacts, including wildfires that threaten lives, property, and habitat; sea level rise scenarios threatening many miles of shoreline and critical infrastructure; and the urban heat island effect, which disproportionately impacts the most underserved among us. The Bay Area Program provides funding for the protection of the most critical remaining wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors; climate smart agriculture projects; support for resilient working landscapes; promotion of wildfire resilience for our lands and communities; use of natural and green infrastructure methods where appropriate; assurance of eligibility for the Bay Area’s underserved communities; increased and equitable outdoor access including regional trails; use of natural trail materials; and a focus on active transportation. This program answers many needs, especially in the context of a bond seeking to build climate resilience and equity into our landscapes and communities. And it has been woefully underfunded in the past.
- **We support the Restoration Authority’s request for \$500 million in the bond.** This funding will be highly leveraged with local Measure AA dollars and federal funds, and will support shovel-ready, science-driven projects that will help the region buy time to adapt to the conditions of sea level rise. This funding is also directly accessible to many of our members for priority shoreline projects that will protect habitat and provide public access.
- **Make \$800 million available to the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)** for habitat protection (fee and conservation easements), restoration, and enhancement. These funds will be distributed by the WCB through competitive grants and contracts.



- **Include no less than \$200 million to the Department of Conservation (DOC)** for protection and restoration of farmland and rangelands, including the acquisition of fee title or easements, for small and medium sized farms.
- To promote public awareness about climate change and inspire stewardship and investment in our natural resources, be sure to **include at least \$75 million for active transportation projects; \$50 million for natural surface recreational trails; and at least \$100 million to the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) for the State Recreational Trails Program and public access projects** that promote climate awareness and regional trail connections.
- **Make at least \$10 million available to the Department of Food and Agriculture** for deposit into the Invasive Species Account, for the purposes of funding invasive species projects and activities recommended by the Invasive Species Council of California.

TOGETHER Bay Area stands in partnership with government leaders to create transformational, enduring economic changes that effectively respond to the crises we face today. We thank you for your consideration of these priorities shared by a unified Bay Area.

Sincerely,

Shelana deSilva
Political Director

Encl.

List of 56 TOGETHER Bay Area public agencies, Indigenous Tribes, and nonprofits



TOGETHER Bay Area Founding Members

The following 56 nonprofits, public agencies, and Indigenous Tribes in the 10-county San Francisco Bay Area are Founding Members

Alameda County

Resource Conservation District*
Amah Mutsun Land Trust*
Bay Area Ridge Trail Council*
Bull Valley Agricultural Center
California Invasive Plant Council* (Cal-IPC)
California Mountain Biking Coalition*
City of American Canyon
Claremont Canyon Conservancy*
Coastside Land Trust*
East Bay Regional Park District
East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy
Friends of Five Creeks
Golden Hour Restoration Institute*
Grassroots Ecology*
Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
LandPaths*
Mare Island Heritage Trust
Marin Agricultural Land Trust
Marin County Parks*
Marin County Bicycle Coalition*
Marin Municipal Water District
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District*
Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz*
Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District
National Park Service – Golden Gate
National Recreation Area*
National Park Service – Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front NHP*

Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation

Paula Lane Action Network (PLAN)
Peninsula Open Space Trust*
Pie Ranch*
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy*
River Otter Ecology Project*
San Francisco Bay Trail*
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission*
San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department*
San Mateo County Parks*
San Mateo County Parks Foundation
San Mateo Resource Conservation District*
Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department*
Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority*
Save Mount Diablo*
Save the Redwoods League*
Sempervirens Fund
Solano Land Trust*
Sonoma Ag and Open Space District*
Sonoma County Regional Parks*
Sonoma Land Trust
Student Conservation Association (SCA)
Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE)
The Field Semester*
The Nature Conservancy
Urban Bird Foundation*
Valley Water
YES Nature to Neighborhoods
Youth Outside

*Indicates Keystone Members, who have pledged 3 years of membership. This demonstrates their commitment to regional collaboration, and allows the coalition to make long-term plans with ongoing participation and support from its members.