



Green California

Participating Organizations:

American Lung Association of California
Audubon California
Better World Group
Bluewater Network/Friends of the Earth
Breast Cancer Fund
Breathe California Central Coast
California Coastal Coalition
California Coastal Protection Network
California Coastkeeper Alliance
California Council of Land Trusts
California League of Conservation Voters
California Native Plant Society
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
California State Parks Foundation
California Trout
California Watershed Network
Californians Against Waste
Californians for GE-Free Agriculture
Californians for Pesticide Reform
Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technology
Center for Food Safety
Clean Water Action
Coalition for Clean Air
Communities for Clean Ports
Conservation Strategy Group
Defenders of Wildlife
EndOil
Environment California
Environmental Defense
Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
League of Women Voters of California
Making Our Milk Safe
Mono Lake Committee
National Environmental Trust
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Ocean Conservancy
Pacific Forest Trust
Planning and Conservation League
Regional Asthma Management Program (RAMP)
Sierra Club California
The Sierra Fund
Transportation and Land Use Coalition
Trout Unlimited
Trust for Public Land
Union of Concerned Scientists

January 4, 2008

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

As you prepare to release your proposed 2008-09 budget, we urge you to consider the importance of California's environment and the contributions made by our natural resources to the state's economy and our quality of life. We recognize the challenges posed by the estimated \$14.5 billion budget deficit, but we are concerned that across the board budget cuts of 10% or more would decimate, if not eliminate, key resources and environmental protection programs.

Based on the 2007-08 budget, the Resources Agency and Cal-EPA collectively comprise only 1.7% of General Fund spending. The lion's share of that is spent by the California Department of Forestry on fire protection, with the remainder spread across a wide array of programs, from parks to endangered species to rivers and coastal waters. General Fund revenues have, over time, been backed out of most environmental programs. For example, our state land conservancies now rely almost exclusively on bond funds. And funds that were previously directed to environmental programs now contribute to the General Fund. For example, the share of tidelands oil revenue previously allocated to natural resource programs now goes exclusively into the General Fund. And since 2000, nearly \$3 billion in dedicated public transit funds have been redirected for non-public transit purposes. Environmental programs are already stretched thin, with little or no buffer to absorb further cuts.

It is clear that the State has already plucked the "low-hanging fruit" in previous efforts to balance the budget by making significant cuts to California's environmental programs. We are concerned that further cuts will get to the point of seriously compromising the integrity of California's environmental programs. Thus, any opportunities for future reductions will require a careful examination to ensure that core environmental protections remain. While private-public partnerships may hold promise for some environmental programs, these partnerships are not a substitute for designing long term fiscal strategies to keep this programs vital. For example, user fees and targeted taxes would help ensure that the beneficiaries of at least a limited number of environmental programs are covering the cost of those programs. In particular, we draw your attention to



Green California

and urge you to consider some of the innovative budget reforms proposed in the 2001 and 2004 *Green Scissors Reports* (copies attached), including cost-sharing by landowners whose wildland fire protection is currently fully covered by state taxpayers via the General Fund.

The environment matters to Californians. We believe the state can rise to the current challenges while still effectively carrying out its public trust responsibilities. We look forward to working with your administration and legislative leadership on solutions to address the projected budget shortfall for 2008-09.

Sincerely,

Jeff Shellito
California Trout

Linda Sheehan
California Coastkeeper Alliance

Stuart Cohen
Transportation and Land Use Coalition

Traci Verardo-Torres
California State Parks Foundation

Tim Carmichael
Coalition for Clean Air

Karen Douglas
Environmental Defense

Tina Andolina
Planning and Conservation League

Bill Magavern
Sierra Club California

Ann Notthoff
Natural Resources Defense Council

Susan Smartt
California League of Conservation Voters

Kim Delfino
Defenders of Wildlife

Martha Guzman
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation

Dan Kalb
Union of Concerned Scientists

Jennifer Clary
Clean Water Action



Green California

Joel Bush
Communities for Clean Ports

Danielle Fugere
Friends of the Earth

Darla Guenzler
California Council of Land Trusts

Ron Sundergill
National Parks Conservation Association

Renata Brillinger
Genetic Engineering Policy Project

Brian Johnson
Trout Unlimited

Janis R. Hirohama
League of Women Voters of CA

Paul Schramski
Pesticide Watch

Lynn Sadler
Mountain Lion Foundation

Janet Cobb
California Oak Foundation/CA Wildlife Foundation

Amanda Jorgenson
California Native Plant Society

Wenonah Hauter
Food and Water Watch

Mary Lee Knecht
California Watershed Coalition

Cc: The Honorable Don Perata
The Honorable Fabian Núñez
Members of the Legislature
Linda S. Adams, Secretary for Environmental Protection
Mike Chrisman, Secretary for Resources
Michael C. Genest, Director of Finance