



Supervisor Diane Burgis  
3361 Walnut Blvd. Suite 140  
Brentwood, Ca 94513

March 26, 2018

Dear Supervisor Burgis

I was referred to you by Supervisor John Gioia as a member of the supervisor's Legislative Committee. The Contra Costa County watershed-streams community is requesting that the Contra Costa County Supervisors endorse the Nature Heritage Institute ( NHI) Fall 2018 Water Bond: State Water Supply Infrastructure, Water Conveyance, Ecosystem and Watershed Protection and Restoration, and Drinking Water Protection Act of 2018. It is attached as a pdf file part of this letter.

The California Urban Streams Partnership is a network of over 150 watershed organizations. We are well aware of the successful restoration projects of the Friends of Marsh Creek and the extensive community and schools involvement in this project. The Marsh Creek projects have been reliant upon the California Department of Water Resources Urban Streams Restoration Program and the California Natural Resources Agency River Parkways Program. The NHI water bond is a good complement to the park bond proposition 68 which will be on the June ballot, but most importantly it is this Fall NHI water bond which will refund these programs our community uses the most.

Over 600,000 signatures were submitted to the Secretary of State on March 6 to qualify the bond proposition to appear on the Fall 2018 ballot . An attachment compares the fall water bond against the spring parks bond. Northern California and the Bay Area are only marginally benefitted by the Spring bond act and your endorsement of the fall bond will be appreciated by our Contra Costa County Watershed councils, organizations and public works departments.

Particularly important to East Bay agencies and organizations, the water bond provides generous funding for urban rivers and streams statewide such as ours which do not benefit from state created river or regional conservancies. This includes \$ 50 million for DWR Urban Streams Restoration and \$70 million for the Natural Resources Agency River Parkways program . The park bond headed for the spring ballot provides for only a total of \$20 million for competitive grants statewide for these two programs. This of course does not come close to addressing the level of statewide funding needs for streams and watershed management, no less county funding needs.

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The East Bay watersheds located in Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Concord, Walnut Creek, Brentwood, Martinez and Orinda in which our groups are involved that can benefit from this ballot proposition are:

Baxter Creek

Wildcat Creek and San Pablo Creeks( Cities of Richmond and San Pablo)

Rheem Creek

Hercules and Refugio Creeks

Marsh Creek

Pinole Creek

Walnut Creek

Graysons and Murders Creeks

Alhambra Creek

San Pablo Creek ( Orinda)

The funds can be used to plan and implement flood damage reduction projects that also enhance the environment, as well as native fish habitat restoration, storm water management, urban greening including street tree planting, land acquisition and trails. The funding can sustain jobs in watershed restoration work, an important goal for our local agencies and organizations.

The water bond revives the Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator Program, one of the highest priorities of the statewide as well as local watershed community. This is a program which was dropped in the great recession of 2008-9. Before it was cut this program helped fund watershed coordinators who organized needed projects throughout Contra Costa County.

The proposition contains important provisions which make it much easier for our agencies and organizations to assist disadvantaged communities( DACs) such as North Richmond, San Pablo, Pittsburg and Bay Point.

- Funds may be provided to ngos and local public agencies assisting DACS for grant writing and technical assistance.
- Grant advance payments can be made to projects benefitting DACs if the grants are \$ 1 million or under.
- Project serving DACS or" economically distressed areas" do not require cost sharing.

Finally, the proposition contains an important reform for state grant programs. Grants under this proposition cover sufficient funding needed for planning, monitoring and permitting needed in order to successfully design, select and implement projects.

Please send your endorsement to our organization, The California Urban Streams Partnership:

[custreams@gmail.com](mailto:custreams@gmail.com) or [rileywaterways@gmail.com](mailto:rileywaterways@gmail.com)

Ann Riley

California Urban Streams Partnership