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SAMPLE LETTER

March 3, 2021

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez

California State Assembly

Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 564 The Biodiversity Protection and Restoration Act - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez:

I am writing in support of AB 564, the Biodiversity Protection and Restoration Act, and am thankful that you have introduced this important bill to conserve and protect California’s biodiversity. California is a biodiversity hotspot, home to thousands of species, many of which occur only in the state and nowhere else. However, as many as a third of California species are of conservation concern, while hundreds are at serious risk of extinction.

Over the past two decades, California has lost more than one million acres of natural area due to development, while 4 million acres burned in only the 2020 wildfire season. The continued loss and degradation of the natural environment from this direct habitat loss, as well as climate change, invasive species, and pests, threatens wildlife species and entire ecosystems. Globally, scientists have advocated for the protection of 50% of the earth’s natural marine and land resources by 2050 in an effort to halt or reverse the world’s sixth mass extinction event. A UN Report found that approximately 1 million animal and plant species are currently threatened with extinction, more than at any other point in human history .

On September 7, 2018, Governor Edmund G. Brown issued Executive Order B-54-18, which launched the California Biodiversity Initiative and directed the Secretaries of Food and Agriculture and Natural Resources to promote deeper understanding of current and future threats to California’s biodiversity; protect native vegetation; manage and restore natural and working lands and waterways; and explore appropriate financing options to achieve these goals. The order directed all state agencies to work together to achieve these goals.

Last year, AB 3030 (Kalra 2020) introduced the concept of a ‘30 by 30’ conservation goal in California. While the legislation did not pass, on October 7, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-82-20, which set out the state goal to conserve at least 30 percent of California’s land and coastal waters by 2030. The order requires the California Natural Resources Agency and other relevant state agencies to develop and report strategies to meet that goal by February 2022 and established the California Biodiversity Collaborative.

AB 564 codifies the biodiversity protection provisions of both executive orders by requiring that all state agencies, boards, and commissions utilize their authority in advancement of the purposes and goals laid out in the executive orders and submit the report on strategies to achieve to 30 by 30 goal to the Legislature by June 30, 2022. The bill will also help slow the loss of biodiversity and natural lands by requiring that no public agency approve projects that are inconsistent with or would impair the implementation of the strategies developed by the Resources Agency to meet the 30 by 30 goal.

For the above reasons, I again thank you for authoring this important legislation and urge your colleagues in the legislature to vote aye on AB 564.

Best regards and all our respect,