



To: California State Legislature

Date: January 18, 2011

Subject: Williamson Act Subvention Funding

The undersigned partners of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition (Coalition) are writing to express our support for reinstating subvention funding in the 2011-2012 budget to California counties for the California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act). The elimination of subvention funding is contrary to the underlying goals of our partnership to protect California's rangeland landscape.

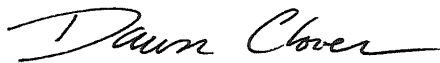
The Rangeland Coalition is an unprecedented group of California ranchers, environmental organizations, researchers and government agencies. Together, these partners are working to preserve private working landscapes, support the long-term viability of the ranching industry, and protect and enhance California rangeland for both legally protected and still-common species. This unique partnership encompasses the expertise of rangeland managers, ecologists, grassland wildlife experts and private ranchers who strongly believe the Williamson Act is intrinsically linked to our Coalition's ability to preserve private working rangelands.

The Williamson Act plays a critical role in preserving rangeland. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Fire and Resource Assessment Program, California is losing tens of thousands of acres of rangeland annually. This significant conversion of rangeland contributes to the loss of open space, groundwater recharge, the state's primary watersheds, homes of common and threatened species and family ranchers. Research on these rangelands finds that nearly all of the species of grassland birds, most native plants and the threatened vernal pool ecosystem actually benefit from responsible grazing practices. The Williamson Act plays an important role in preserving California's rangelands that are the foundation of the economic and social fabric of California's ranching industry and rural communities, and will only continue to provide habitat for plants, fish and wildlife if the Williamson Act remains a viable tool for landowners.

We greatly appreciate your leadership to get the state budget on track; however we believe longer-term negative impacts vastly outweigh the short-term budget savings the state would receive from the elimination of subvention funding to counties for the Williamson Act. Furthermore, the elimination of subvention funding sends the wrong message about the importance of open space, threatened and endangered species and domestic food production to the state of California. Again, the Rangeland Coalition strongly supports subvention funding to California's counties for the Williamson Act. Should you have any questions regarding our support please contact Tracy Schohr, Director of Rangeland Conservation, California Rangeland Conservation Coalition at (916) 444-0845 or tschohr@calcattlemen.org.

Sincerely,

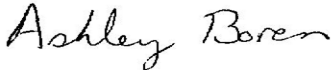
Partners of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition



Dawn Clover
Director of Government Relations
California Cattlemen's Association



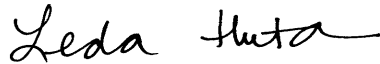
John Gamper
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Ashley Boren
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Greg Yarris
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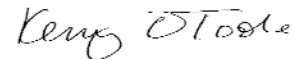
Leda Huta
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Michael Post
Board Chair
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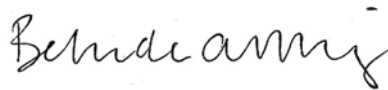
Chuck Peck
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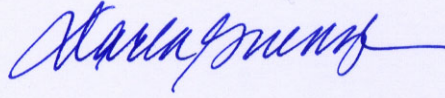
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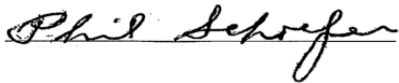
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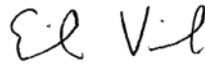
Carol Witham
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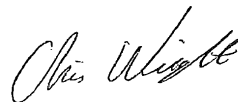
Melanie Fowle
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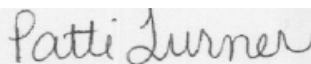
Chris Wright
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Michael Johnson
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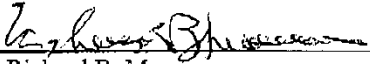
Patti Turner
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Bob Hammond
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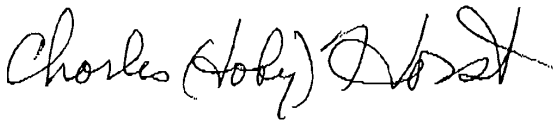
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Rich Morris
On behalf of the
Central Coast Rangeland Coalition



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Toby Horst
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cc: The Honorable, Governor Brown
The Honorable, Lt. Governor



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