



Sustainable Conservation

## **Proposition 68: The California Parks, Environment, and Water Bond of 2018**

Sustainable Conservation strongly supports the passage of Proposition 68, the California Parks, Environment, and Water Bond of 2018. Proposition 68 provides a total of \$4.1 billion in bond funds, to be allocated as follows:

- \$1.44 billion for state, regional, and local parks, trails, and greenways, as well as rural recreation, tourism, and economic development;
- \$1.53 billion for river parkways, urban streams, and watershed and habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement; and
- \$1.17 billion for clean drinking water, groundwater sustainability, flood protection, and drought, groundwater, and recycled water investments.

In addition to specified allocation requirements in its individual chapters, Proposition 68 includes several general provisions to ensure that its benefits reach disadvantaged communities. At least 20% of the funds available for each general area of expenditure (except Chapters 9 – Ocean, Bay, and Coastal Protection - and 10 – Climate Preparedness, Habitat Resiliency, Resource Enhancement, and Innovation) must go to severely disadvantaged communities (below 60% median income). At least 15% of Chapters 9 and 10 must go to severely disadvantaged communities. In addition, up to 5% of almost all chapters is to be allocated to community access projects (subject to applicable state law and approval from the Department of Finance).

While Sustainable Conservation supports funding for all of the needs addressed by Proposition 68, we believe the following funding proposals to be particularly significant for both new and ongoing efforts to improve California's fish and wildlife habitat, water supply, and flood protection:

- \$200 million to the Natural Resources Agency for implementation of voluntary agreements that provide alternative implementation of the State Water Board's Bay/Delta Plan update through projects providing multiple benefits to water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration;
- \$253 million to the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Food and Agriculture, and the Department of Conservation to benefit fish and wildlife habitat, soil health, and working lands and riparian corridors;
- \$300 million to the Department of Water Resources, in coordination with the Central Valley Flood Protection Board and the Department of Fish and Wildlife, for multi-benefit flood protection projects that achieve public safety improvements and measurable fish and wildlife enhancement, and include, but are not limited to, levee setbacks, creation or enhancement of flood plains or bypasses, and groundwater recharge projects in flood plains; and
- \$290 million for drought and groundwater investments to achieve regional sustainability, which may include planning, design, and implementation projects for investments in groundwater recharge with surface water, stormwater, recycled water, and other conjunctive use projects.

In short, Sustainable Conservation believes that Proposition 68 provides an admirable balance of benefits to fish and wildlife habitat, urban and rural communities (particularly disadvantaged communities), groundwater supply enhancement, and public safety. We are strongly supportive of its emphasis on multi-benefit projects to address flood protection and the implementation of the Water Board's Bay/Delta Plan update. We gladly offer our support to Proposition 68.