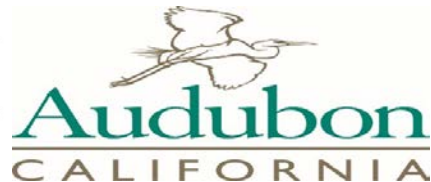




80 Years of Conservation



Lower Sherman Island Duck Hunters Association

June 15, 2018

The Honorable Robert Hertzberg, Chair
Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
State Capitol, Room 5046
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2697 (Gallagher) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Hertzberg:

Our organizations, which represent hundreds of thousands of wildlife conservationists and outdoor enthusiasts in California, urge you to support AB 2697 (Gallagher), which would facilitate the establishment of waterfowl nesting and other wildlife habitat cover on fallowed lands.

AB 2697 would help fulfill an important need of providing additional nesting cover and upland habitat for waterfowl, other game birds and songbirds on private lands, consistent with the Central Valley Joint Venture Implementation Plan <http://www.centralvalleyjointventure.org/science>. The bill would particularly benefit breeding birds in the rice growing areas of the Sacramento Valley that periodically participate in water transfers and offer beneficial brood water for ducks in the spring and summer.

Studies have shown that providing nesting cover through the breeding season can greatly benefit waterfowl. For example, the results of the 2013 Rice Cover Crop Rotation Pilot Project, which was part of the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (DFW) Ecosystem Restoration Program, found that annual cover crops located adjacent to rice cultivation produced on average 39% nest success (which is well above the 15% that is typically targeted by waterfowl biologists).

AB 2697 would create an incentive-based program for landowners who are willing to maintain wildlife cover on fallowed lands, including, but not limited to, lands involved with a water transfer. Voluntary, incentive based wildlife cover programs such as the federal Conservation Reserve Program have helped to significantly increase waterfowl populations in the Prairie Pothole region of the upper Midwest.

Creating a similar program that is flexible enough for California growers should provide like waterfowl and other wildlife conservation benefits for our state. The program would be administered by the Wildlife Conservation Board and funded through bond monies and federal Farm Bill funds.

Please also note that providing upland cover on fallowed lands improves air quality and helps to sequester carbon, amongst other environmental benefits.

For these reasons, please support AB 2697 when it is considered by your committee.

Sincerely,



Mark Hennelly, California Waterfowl Association



Paul Buttner, California Rice Commission



Mike Lynes, Audubon California



John Devney, Delta Waterfowl

Ric Ortega, Grassland Water District

Don Kirby, Cal-Ore Wetlands and Waterfowl Council

Kyriakos Tsakopoulos, Conaway Preservation Group

Todd Manley, Northern California Water Association

Rachael Zwillinger, Defenders of Wildlife

Dan Connelly, Pheasants Forever, Inc./Quail Forever

Steve Chappell, Suisun Resource Conservation District

Roger Mammon, Lower Sherman Island Duck Hunters Association

Ed Miller, The Black Brant Group

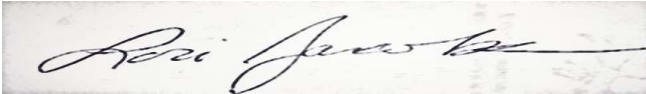
Gary Link, Ducks Unlimited



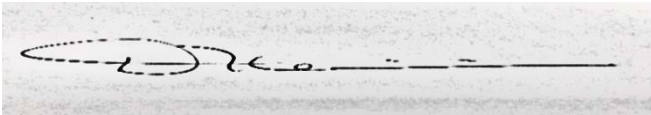
Kevin Vella, National Wild Turkey Federation



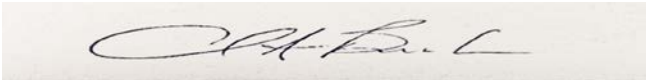
Pablo Garza, Environmental Defense Fund



Lori Jacobs, California Houndsmen for Conservation



Darryl Williams, Wild Sheep Foundation, California Chapter



Chris Bowles, California Bowman Hunters Association and State Archery Association



Donn Walgamuth, California Deer Association



Jay Ziegler, The Nature Conservancy