

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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May 27, 2009

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

Comments on California Department of Parks and Recreation Budget Proposal

Dear Mr. Governor:

The Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority (WCCA) is strongly opposed to the proposal to eliminate the General Fund allocation for the California Department of Parks and Recreation as announced by the Department of Finance.

Our state parks exist to provide educational and recreational opportunities, preserve important cultural and historic resources, and aid the state in protecting key natural resources. They also serve a critical function in providing respite for the state's residents in times like these – when economic circumstances keep Californians closer to home, looking for low-cost ways to vacation and spend time with family.

This short-term solution will lead to permanent degradation of biological, aesthetic, and recreational resources, inconsistent with the intent of protecting these lands for preservation of sensitive biological resources and passive recreational use.

Chino Hills State Park is part of the 31 miles that make up the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor (Corridor). The Corridor connects the Cleveland National Forest in Orange County and beyond to Puente Hills in Los Angeles County. The approximately 13,000-acres that make up Chino Hills State Park is the core anchor habitat for the Corridor. Significant expenditures of public funds were used to establish and enhance this park. The limited open space in the Puente-Chino Hills has been rapidly dwindling, and further loss and degradation of this open space collectively compromises the long-term sustainability and maintenance of the Puente-Chino Hills wildlife corridor.

This is exactly the wrong time to be proposing to eliminate the state's core commitment to this world-class resource. Removing the state's General Fund support for state parks would cause an additional

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economic ripple effect to the state's budget and to local economies. The state would lose the ability to generate revenue from popular parks. As you learned during last year's proposal to close state parks, every \$1 that funds the state park system returns \$2.35 to the state's General Fund, largely through economic activities in communities surrounding state parks.

If you have any questions, please contact Judi Tamasi of our staff by phone at (310) 589-3200, ext. 121 or by email at judi.tamasi@mrca.ca.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Glenn Parker
Chairperson