



## California Conservation Organizations Respond to Governor’s Executive Order on Land and Water Protection

Last week, in a stated effort to “fight climate change, conserve biodiversity, and boost climate resilience”, Governor Newsom signed an executive order ([EO N-82-20](#)) which establishes a goal of the State to conserve at least 30 percent of California’s land and coastal waters by 2030.

California’s hunting community represents the original conservationists and guardians of our lands with a proud history of seeking sustainable, accessible, and vibrant resources for future generations. To ensure the long-term health of the wildlife habitats we care deeply about – and to protect and expand the hunting and other recreational opportunities California’s lands provide – it is imperative that we embrace the need to actively engage with state resource agencies in constructing how California will implement this directive.

Throughout the recently concluded 2020 State Legislative Session, our community actively opposed AB 3030 – legislation which failed late in Session that also would have declared it to be goals of the state to protect at least 30% of California’s land and waters by the year 2030. Our opposition was not to the overarching policy goal of the bill, but rather to the details of its implementation and its potentially unintended consequences – concerns which were debated at great lengths by the Legislature. Although some of the amendments we pushed hard for were ultimately amended into the legislation, our two primary concerns were left unaddressed.

First, the bill's sponsors rejected our request that AB 3030 expressly define what the bill meant by its use of the word "protect" – thus opening the door for sweeping closures to public access and hunting and other recreational opportunity on much of the lands which would be "protected" under the legislation. Secondly, although AB 3030 called out goals for the total percentage of our lands that should be "protected", the bill failed to quantify the baseline of existing protections already in place.

We are thankful that EO N-82-20 expressly states that state agencies shall collaborate with, among others, outdoor recreation and access groups and hunting organizations in achieving these goals, that it acknowledges the need for lands protected under this directive support our outdoor heritage and to expand equitable outdoor access and recreation for all Californians. Further, we appreciate that EO N-82-20 embraces the concern we called out during debate of AB 3030 that California use existing data and information to establish a baseline assessment of existing biodiversity from which to build upon.

Hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts have historically played the lead role in the successful conservation of California's wildlife and the habitats they depend upon. As our nation's original conservationists, for decades we have worked in partnership with public agencies, private landowners, and other interests, to conserve California's lands and waters. In fact, the California Protected Areas Database estimates the total area of currently protected land in California to be 49,294,000 acres, or 47.05% of the state's landmass, not including thousands of acres of conservation easements.

To promote the health of California's wildlife species, to maximize the habitat values of lands already protected and on all newly protected lands, and to expand the hunting and other outdoor recreational opportunities all these lands provide, our community stands ready to work directly with the Newsom Administration, the Legislature and our state resource agencies on the design and implementation of EO N-82-20. Our coalition will follow up with the designated leaders of this effort to actively participate in accomplishing all the above stated goals.

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