

Appendix C Letter of Support

This appendix contains the letter provided by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requesting approval of the RCIS.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

REVENUE AND GENERAL FUNDS

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.

March 30, 2022

Mr. Charlton H. Bonham
Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
1416 9th Street, 12th Floor
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Dear Mr. Bonham:

In accordance with California Fish and Game Code (FGC) Section 1852(a) the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 5, a state transportation infrastructure agency, requests that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approve the Santa Cruz County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (SCr RCIS). The proposed SCr RCIS encompasses a portion of District 5 and has been developed by a collaborative group of state and local agencies and non-profits through a steering committee to help achieve improved conservation and public infrastructure outcomes in the region.

Caltrans believes that a successfully implemented SCr RCIS could significantly further the State's public infrastructure goals and regional conservation objectives. By using a science-based approach to identify areas of high conservation value in the County, the SCr RCIS will also help agencies avoid and minimize project impacts and identify priority conservation actions for compensatory mitigation, including as part of advance mitigation programs. Caltrans anticipates construction of several transportation projects over the next 10 years in Santa Cruz County, some of which will require compensatory mitigation and may benefit from advanced mitigation guided by the SCr RCIS.

In accordance with California Streets and Highway Code (CSHC) Section 8000.6(j), Caltrans is requesting approval of the SCr RCIS in part to facilitate mitigation for transportation infrastructure projects. As such, the SCr RCIS, if approved by the CDFW, shall not count against the limit on the number of regional conservation investment strategies set in Section 1861 of the CFGC.

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and mobility"

Mr. Bonham
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Caltrans understands that this letter and support for the SCr RCIS does not obligate Caltrans to implement any part of the RCIS. However, Caltrans continues to maintain support for development of a robust RCIS and future Mitigation Credit Agreements, to implement the conservation goals of the SCr RCIS.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (805) 549-3127 or tim.gubbins@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



TIMOTHY M. GUBBINS
District Director

c: Karen Weiss, Landscape Conservation Planning Program Manager, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Melinda Molnar, Office Chief of Strategic Biological Planning, Advance Mitigation, and Innovation, Division of Environmental Analysis, California Department of Transportation