



SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

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December 21, 2017

Secretary. John Laird
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 9th Street, #1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Laird:

I am pleased to send you the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-17 Annual Report. This report meets the requirement pursuant to Public Resources Code, Section 33350 and provides some additional information on the accomplishments of the SNC during the year.

John Muir said it best, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe." The same can be said for California's connection to the Sierra Nevada. Our past, present, and future are inextricably linked to the resources provided by the Sierra Nevada Region. The rush for gold in the Sierra foothills lured people from all over the world to California, and the outstanding recreational opportunities offered by the Sierra Nevada Region draw millions of visitors today. California's reservoir and aqueduct system, fed by Sierra rain and snow, fuel the world's sixth largest economy by providing more than 60 percent of the drinking and irrigation water Californians use. In addition, the forests of the Sierra Nevada are one of California's most productive climate regulators and are a key player in California's cutting edge efforts to combat climate change.

However, these critical resources are at risk. Many Sierra forests are overcrowded and unhealthy and have become weakened by insects, disease, warmer temperatures, and a cycle of drought then flood. More acres have burned across the west slope of the Sierra Nevada in the current decade than in any other decade on record, and an uncharacteristic proportion of these acres are burning at high severity, leaving little to no vegetation behind. As a result, our forests are rapidly shifting from a stable, productive carbon sink to a volatile carbon source, and the steady flow of clean water from Sierra snow and streams is being replaced by a drip one year, and a flood the next. Without a significant push to restore the Sierra Nevada Region, the range of benefits we have all come to rely on may be severely diminished.

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Since our inception, the SNC has been working to preserve, protect, and improve Sierra benefits for all of California. Our efforts have included awarding over \$60 million in bond funds for projects that protect and enhance the health of California's watersheds, and creating the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program – a coordinated, integrated, collaborative program to restore the health of California's primary watershed through increased investment and needed policy changes. By improving forest health, protecting critical natural resources, supporting local economies, and reducing the risk of large, damaging wildfires, we are working on behalf of California to protect and restore the Range of Light. To learn more about these projects and other efforts the SNC is undertaking, I encourage you to read our enclosed FY 2016-17 Annual Report.

SNC FY 2016-17 Budget Activity

The SNC is funded by the Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF); Proposition 84, The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006; and Proposition 1, The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014. Pursuant to Public Resources Code, Section 33350, I am pleased to report on the following expenditures for FY 2016-17:

Support			
Fund	Budget	Expenditures	% Spent
ELPF – 0140	\$4,385,000	\$4,373,776	99.7%
Prop 1 – 6083	\$216,000	\$199,970	93%
Prop 84 – 6051	\$129,000	\$123,905	96%

Local Assistance			
Fund	Budget	Expenditures	% Spent
Prop 1 – 6083	\$4,616,700	\$4,123,708	89%
Prop 84 – 6051	\$403,000	\$193,785	48%

If you would like additional information about our projects or programs, or would like to discuss matters identified in the report, please feel free to contact me at (530) 823-4667 or jim.branham@sierranevada.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Jim Branham
Executive Officer