



February 20, 2024

The Honorable Marie Waldron
 California State Assembly
 1021 O Street, Suite 6140
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1828: Personal income taxes: voluntary contributions: Endangered and Rare Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Species Conservation and Enhancement Account: Native California Wildlife Rehabilitation Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund: covered grants. - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Waldron,

The undersigned nonprofit organizations offer our support for your AB 1828 to continue to allow California income tax filers to voluntarily 'check off' a specified amount to fund native wildlife rescue organizations in California or to support the Department of Fish and Wildlife's efforts to protect endangered and rare fish, wildlife, and plant species.

Dozens of nonprofit native wildlife rehabilitation organizations have received grant funds from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife made possible through the generosity of taxpayers through the Native California Wildlife Rehabilitation Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund since it was created in 2018. As the sole government source of funding for our work, we strongly support extension of the Fund for another seven years, as AB 1828 would authorize.

The Native California Wildlife Rehabilitation Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund has been an unquestionable success since its launch in 2018, raising over a quarter million dollars in its first year and exceeding that threshold each year since. The grants funded by the

contributions to support native wildlife rehabilitation have made it possible for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to award more than \$2 million dollars to fifty-five (55) licensed, nonprofit rehabilitation organizations to date. Many eligible wildlife rehabilitators in California have received much-needed financial assistance through this competitive grant program.

- 2023 grants: 47 permitted wildlife rehabilitators applied for \$629,000 in funding
- 2022 grants: 47 permitted wildlife rehabilitators applied for \$547,000 in funding
- 2021 grants: 45 permitted wildlife rehabilitators applied for \$549,000 in funding

The Department's Native Wildlife Rehabilitation Grants Program supports California's diverse community of wildlife rehabilitation professionals throughout the state. Grants funds are used to advance the recovery and rehabilitation of injured, sick, or orphaned native wildlife. Funds have supported facility operations, innovations in animal care (e.g., refinement of wildlife rehabilitation techniques, pre-release conditioning), enclosure design improvements, dietary or behavioral enrichment, species-appropriate diet; and wildlife conservation education efforts (often in underserved communities).

This grant funding is critical for organizations like ours to continue our mission of protecting California's wildlife.

We also appreciate AB 1828's inclusion of language authorizing advance payments as an option for ensuring grant funds can get out expeditiously, and to limit administrative burden for both the state and these nonprofits. Given the small size of these grants (e.g., the range is from \$3,000 to \$19,000), this authorization is justified and will help ensure equitable and timely distributions.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue and please let us know how we can assist in supporting AB 1828 as the bill advances through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

January Bill
Botulism Director
Bird Ally X

Cambria Wells
President, Board of Directors
California Council for Wildlife
Rehabilitators

Michelle Hawkins
Professor
California Raptor Center

Jennifer Brent
Executive Director
California Wildlife Center

Kassandra Quackenbush
Wildlife Rehabilitation Manager
Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care

Eliza Cameron
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Laura Murphy
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Linnaea Furlong
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Eve Egan
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Native Animal Rescue

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Lauren Hamlett
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Camilla Fox
Founder & Executive Director
Project Coyote

Jon Enyart
Senior Director of Project Wildlife
San Diego Humane Society - Project
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Jill Tripoli
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Doris Duncan
Executive Director
Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue

Scott Delucchi
President & CEO
SPCA Monterey County

Karolyn Verville, PhD
President
Sunshine Haven Wildlife Rehabilitation

Ashton Kluttz
Executive Director
The Bird Rescue Center

Debbie McGuire
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Lila Travis
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