

From: [Defenders of Wildlife](#) on behalf of [Karen Mathes](#)
To: [commentletters](#)
Subject: Save California's Wetlands
Date: Thursday, August 17, 2017 10:57:54 AM



Aug 17, 2017

Chair Felicia Marcus

Dear Chair Marcus,

The SWRCB has blatantly favored agribusiness with many decades of excessive allocations which were not only destructive to the environment but to human lives, and completely unnecessary to any legitimate or fair job and food production. We have such a very, very small remnant of our wetlands and our former grand and beautiful, life-sustaining and life-enhancing environment, you must do EVERYTHING possible to protect and restore for the good of all. Consider the public trust. You can do it both legally and morally. Do it

As a Defender of Wildlife, I am writing to urge you to act quickly to adopt a statewide wetlands policy that will protect California's wetlands.

Wetlands are essential for ducks, shorebirds, fish, snakes, turtles and many other animals. They also protect against floods, recharge groundwater and improve water quality. Yet these precious habitats are under attack. California has lost over 90 percent of its historic wetlands, and additional wetland acres are destroyed and degraded every year.

Current state and federal protections for wetlands are inadequate, and if the board fails to act fast, we could lose these precious resources forever. Once the Trump administration repeals and weakens the federal Clean Water Rule, many important California wetlands, including vernal pools, will be stripped of Clean Water Act protections. With the federal government out of the picture, effective state regulation is essential, and the current system isn't working.

By finalizing the draft wetlands policy soon, you can fill the void left by Trump's rollbacks and help to preserve California's wetlands and wildlife.

Before adopting the policy, a few changes are necessary to make sure it's effective. The compensatory mitigation requirements should be strengthened to ensure that every lost wetland acre is replaced, the requirements for analysis of alternatives should be improved so that every project can avoid and minimize wetland impacts, and a loophole that could allow for the destruction of wetlands on some agricultural lands needs to be closed. With these changes, you can protect our wetlands and help make sure California complies with its no-net-loss obligations.

Please act fast to save California's wetlands. The board's leadership

on this issues is more important than ever before. I hope that you will rise to the occasion.

Sincerely,

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