NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY FUNDING

Requested Action:

- Seek congressional support for review of OMB and CBO metrics of local and regional funding of agencies.
- Seek congressional support for review of local agency funding to determine if budgets to hire and retain staff is in line with cost of living factors and also in line with the high economic development ramifications of timely and skilled review of permits.
- Seek congressional support for the USFWS to utilize its ability to receive private and public funds to augment existing budgets.
- Request continued and prioritized funding to complete regional Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs), which will have value to the regulated and environmental community.

Background: The Sacramento Region, in line with the nation, is recovering from the recession and experiencing for the first time in several years an ability to proceed with the development, and more importantly the implementation, of both vast regional planning efforts and individual private and public projects. While the economy was stagnant, planning on these efforts continued with the hope and expectation that, at minimum, the HCPs, which constitute over one million acres of the region's future development and conservation envelopes, would be completed and offer the pathway to development that ensured the best possible outcome for both the regulated and regulators.

For many reasons, that goal was not realized, but it was neither due to the withholding of significant fortune on the part of the federal, state and local agencies nor the time and resources of
a diversified and committed stakeholder community. Nonetheless, we now find ourselves at a crossroads of near completion of these HCPs and an energized economy which is primed for economic development. While the HCPs continue to receive the attention of all aforementioned parties, the ability to complete them while also addressing the needs of an economy and associated workload pressures brings into focus the potential need for national attention to not only the policy challenges to permitting both vast and small development and conservation efforts, but to the funding needs of the federal natural resource agencies that are essential to the hardwiring of every element of project delivery.

For several years, the Land Use and Natural Resources Committee has advocated for continued and increased funding for local and regional offices. The hope this year is to take that conversation to a more critical point and focus on the potential disconnect between how agency staff is funded relative to the vast role they play in the economic vitality of the Sacramento Region.