



April 30, 2019

The Honorable Bill Quirk
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 2163
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AJR 8 – Nutria Eradication - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Quirk:

On behalf of California Waterfowl Association, we are pleased to support AJR 8, your resolution to encourage Congressional action to include California in the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003.

Nutria are a clear and present danger to the habitat and wildlife purposes to the Grasslands Ecological Area (GEA) in Merced County. The wetlands within the GEA are the largest contiguous freshwater complex west of the Rocky Mountains, encompassing nearly 200,000 acres of wetland and upland ecosystem habitat and comprising the largest component of the remaining approximately 5 percent of historical wetlands that once covered vast tracts of California's Central Valley. The wetlands within the GEA are designated as a critically important habitat area by two international treaties and numerous wildlife organizations and are recognized as among the five most important wetland ecosystems on the North American continent.

Two thirds of the ecological area is privately owned and maintained almost exclusively as managed wetlands at 250 duck clubs with over 2,500 landowners. The vast majority of these private lands have entered into conservation easement agreements with either federal or state agencies, or both, permanently protecting this area as habitat for future generations. Of the remaining area, two thirds is managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and

the remaining one third as federal refuge properties overseen by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

California Waterfowl supports AJR 8 because of the existential threat posed to landowners and public lands by invasive non-native nutria. Nutria live in waterways and water bodies, burrowing into banks, levees, canals, and have the potential to weaken these vital structures destroying property and ruining conservation habitat.

AJR 8 also encourages Congressional funding of \$4,000,000 to help fight this invasive pest on the ground in California. These resources are sorely needed to help hire trappers, fund management and logistical coordination, and other priorities related to the eradication effort.

We wish to offer our sincere appreciation and support for AJR 8 and thank you for your efforts to help eradicate nutria in California's Central Valley.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Hennelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "M" and a long, trailing "y".

Mark Hennelly
Vice President, Legislative Affairs and Public Policy