



March 14, 2019

The Honorable Cathleen Galgiani  
Chair, Senate Agriculture Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 583  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 253 (Dodd) – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Galgiani,

On behalf of a broad coalition, we are writing in strong support of Senate Bill 253. The bill would establish and incentive-based conservation program at the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Senate Bill 253 would require the program to optimize wildlife habitat benefits while supporting the economic viability of California agriculture by providing incentives and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers.

The undersigned organizations recognize the tremendous role agriculture serves as a major industry in California, generating over \$100 billion in related economic activity. SB 253 seeks to aid agricultural producers who want to make wildlife-friendly improvements on their land, through a voluntary process. The financial and technical assistance would be specifically focused on the creation of fish and wildlife habitat; providing added environmental benefits such as improved water quality, erosion control, and conserved groundwater.

The conservation activities and practices highlighted by this legislation, benefit fish and wildlife while also boosting the land's resiliency and production. California is the country's largest agricultural producer and the state should do more to enhance one of our most valuable natural resources, working landscapes. A state incentive program is a needed step to achieve this goal and deliver broad environmental benefits. We thank Senator Dodd for his leadership on the issue and respectfully request your support when the bill is heard in the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Volberg  
Director of Water Law & Policy

Gary Link  
Director of Public Policy  
Ducks Unlimited

Ric Ortega  
General Manager  
Grasslands Water District

cc: The Honorable Members of the Senate Agriculture Committee  
The Honorable Bill Dodd