



ECOS

ENVIRONMENTAL
♦ COUNCIL ♦
OF SACRAMENTO

Post Office Box 1526 | Sacramento, CA 95812-1526

December 15, 2021

Dear ECOS Supporter,

I hope this letter finds you and yours in good health.

This is a time of uncertainty, both with increasingly obvious climate change and the pandemic. Continued sprawl development jeopardizes wildlife and habitat and worsens climate change. We need to protect the most vulnerable, both human and wild, in our communities and landscapes, and we must protect future generations. To face the climate challenge, we will need to step up, both personally and collectively.

As President of ECOS, I am impressed with the dedication of our volunteers, their long hours on climate action plans, habitat protection, transit advocacy, housing, and so much more. These efforts include analysis of environmental documents, preparation of comment letters, and many meetings with allies, media, and decision-makers.

Following are some recent ECOS accomplishments and ongoing work:

Climate: We reviewed Sacramento County's Climate Action Plan (CAP) drafts, but found many of the greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction measures vague and difficult to measure. We urge the County to obtain GHG reductions by prioritizing infill development near transit, rather than sprawl development. Sprawl increases GHG emissions due to longer vehicle trips, and consumes greenfields that sequester carbon. County staff is revising the CAP again for presentation to the Supervisors early next year. We met with the Sacramento Bee editorial board, which resulted in articles on the inadequacy of the County's CAP. Besides the County, we also focus on Sacramento City's CAP, expected to be released soon.

Land Use: We advocated for reduced GHG emissions for County master plan projects along Jackson Road: NewBridge and Jackson Township. ECOS urges the County to prioritize quality infill developments with higher density, transit-orientation, and affordability; this has been a focus of many of our educational efforts. We advocate for the building of accessory dwelling units – secondary dwellings on single-family residential lots.

Affordable Housing: ECOS helped spawn the nonprofit, "Sacramento Investment Without Displacement," which settled its lawsuit against the UC Regents after they agreed to a Community Benefits Agreement. This CBA will provide affordable housing and improved transit near the UC Davis Medical Center by Oak Park, and will provide a blueprint for CBAs in future development projects.

Transportation & Transit: We sued Caltrans in April, challenging its plan to widen the CapCity/Business 80 bridge over the American River by more than 50%, with no environmental review. This expansion is likely to induce more vehicle trips, causing more air pollution and GHGs. We understand the need to improve traffic flows there, but believe induced travel should be mitigated, such as by increased public transit. In addition, ECOS helped spawn the SacMoves Coalition. In 2020 the coalition urged more funding for transit and active transportation in the proposed Sacramento County sales tax measure; however, it was

pulled from the ballot due to the pandemic. We expect it to resurface soon as a "citizens' initiative" for the 2022 election, sponsored by the business community. We will evaluate their measure based on its support for transit.

Habitat: Our Habitat 2020 coalition works to protect our land, water, native plants, and wildlife. We successfully opposed a major new hospital and heliport adjacent to Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, in the heart of the Pacific Flyway. We also worked to acquire critical habitat by the Cosumnes River floodplain. In addition, we successfully advocated for changes to the proposed Delta Conveyance tunnel to protect species in a nearby wildlife refuge and a preserve. Through our work, the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) was approved – more than 40,000 acres will be conserved. We are confronting challenges to the Natomas Basin HCP, especially a new development application to annex conservation lands. We are opposing a proposed development in the American River floodway in Rancho Cordova. As a member of the Water Forum's Environmental Caucus, we work to protect American River habitat and fisheries, and to protect groundwater basins; as both are challenged by climate change.

Organizational: We are reorganizing ECOS to focus on slowing climate change and increasing our climate resiliency, and setting priorities for action. Here are our new committees:

- Our Climate Change Committee will include teams on land use, transportation, green building, and environmental justice. Team members will advocate for aggressive climate action by Sacramento jurisdictions.
- Our Water Committee will focus on water-related climate change impacts, and capacity in surface and ground water. These impacts include drought, snowpack, and flooding risk.
- Our Strategy Committee will work with partner organizations to prioritize regional issues and build engagement with our individual and organizational members.

ECOS has been a powerful advocacy organization in the Sacramento region, working to curb sprawl, expand transit, walking and biking, and protect open space and habitat lands for the past fifty years. Now, with the climate crisis escalating, we need to be even more effective in our advocacy. We need to persuade our regional leaders to take bold steps to reduce GHG emissions as fast as possible. To do this, we need your help.

In Summary: We at ECOS are immensely grateful for your support during the past two years, as we had to cancel our two major fundraisers because of the pandemic. Thanks to vaccines, we hope to host our annual Earth Day event on April 24, outdoors in Southside Park. However, we may not be able to host our annual indoor Environmentalist of the Year event this coming year.

We so value your help in keeping ECOS moving forward. Although our hard-working volunteers do most of our work, supporting our paid staff is vital. Please consider a tax-deductible donation to ECOS in your giving plans.

Sincerely,



Ralph Propper
President, ECOS