



August 23, 2017

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski, Chair
 Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #2
 State Capitol Building
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT \$30 Million for Climate Investments in Urban Forestry

Dear Senator Wieckowski:

On behalf of California’s urban forestry community and its partners, we are writing to encourage your support for continuing the State’s investment in CAL FIRE’s Urban and Community Forestry Program through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund in the 2017-18 State Budget.

Urban forestry plays a significant role in meeting the greenhouse gas reduction targets set forth in AB 32 and SB 32, as well as meeting the mandates set forth in AB 1532, AB 1550, SB 535 and AB 398. Continued investments through CAL FIRE’s Urban and Community Forestry Program in both the short-

term and long-term will support hundreds of projects throughout California that engage communities in a myriad of greening activities, including community gardens, bioswales, and planning, planting and stewarding trees, among other valued resources. We believe an appropriation of \$30 million this year will build on the success of the 85 urban forestry efforts currently funded through the Climate Investments Program, while also helping to address a 600% oversubscription to the Program in 2014.

Nature based solutions, such as urban forestry, have direct and quantifiable GHG benefits while also providing significant climate adaptation co-benefits that can have a transformative impact on communities across California, particularly in disadvantaged communities hit first and worse by climate change. This climate-smart approach captures and cleans our water, reduces energy usage connected with the urban heat island effect, and sequesters greenhouse gases through natural infrastructure. Furthermore, when these resources are integrated with other efforts to reduce GHG emissions in other sectors, such as affordable housing, climate resilience and public benefits are amplified and investments are more cost-effective. They can also provide incentives to regions and communities to integrate green infrastructure into climate plans such as Sustainable Communities Strategies and Climate Action Plans.

The Legislature and Administration recognize the pressing need to sustain funding for urban forestry, so much so that is captured twice in programmatic priorities set forth in AB 398 – “healthy forests” and “urban greening.” These investments are especially critical in light of recent recommendations highlighted in the proposed Scoping Plan and Forest Carbon Plan that call for increasing total urban tree canopy statewide by as much as 33 percent above current levels.

We applaud your leadership in providing funding from the GGRF last year for CAL FIRE’s Urban and Community Forestry Program. We strongly urge you to continue that support now and into the future for urban forestry projects that create jobs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address critical environmental justice needs, build communities and invest in the health of California’s residents.

We urge the Senate to support this \$30 million proposal as GGRF Expenditure Plan discussions progress.

Sincerely,

Chuck Mills
California ReLeaf

Deborah Weinstein Bloome
TreePeople

Mark Kenyon
North East Trees

Joe St. John
Koreatown Youth and
Community Center

Rose Epperson
Western Chapter, International
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Nancy Hughes
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Lucas Frerichs
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The Greenlining Institute

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Erin Donley Marineau
Tree Davis

Kenneth Knight
Your Children's Trees Council

Viviana Franco
From Lot to Spot

Lee Ayres
Tree Fresno

Anne Fekner
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Tim Brick
Arroyo Seco Foundation

Mike Meador
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John Shribbs
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Emina Darakjy
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Richard Dale
Sonoma Ecology Center

Jeff Reimer
Central Coast Urban
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Nathan Higgins
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