

February 3, 2017

The Honorable Robert Hertzberg, Chair  
Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee  
California State Senate  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 5 (De León) – The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018**

Dear Senator Hertzberg:

On behalf of California's urban forestry organizations charged with greening our Golden State through community trees, we applaud Senate President Kevin de León's introduction of Senate Bill 5 -- The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018. We continue to review the bill and compare its funding categories to those proposed by Senate President de León in 2015 in SB 317.

As you may know, the Legislature has not passed a resources bond with significant funding for parks and urban green space in 15 years. SB 5 represents a tremendous opportunity to invest in social equity and help restore California's natural legacy.

One key funding element that was included in SB 317 provided \$30 million for urban forestry, which is not included in SB 5. Specifically, SB 317 stated "the sum of thirty million dollars (\$30,000,000) from the fund shall be available to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for grants pursuant to Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 4799.06) of Part 2.5 of Division 4. These grants shall complement existing urban forestry expenditures by covering areas not included for funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, established pursuant to Section 16428.8 of the Government Code."

California's Urban and Community Forestry Program (administered by CAL FIRE) has been the State's lead program for advancing tree-based urban green infrastructure for over 15 years. The technical expertise of CAL FIRE's six regional foresters coupled with their successful existing program has been a critical component in supporting hundreds of urban forestry projects that speak directly to improving public health, expanding recreational resources, reducing stormwater runoff, and mitigating climate change impacts in densely populated and underserved areas of the state.

The U.S. Forest Service estimates that at least 40 million tree-planting sites are immediately available in California, which would add 20% more trees to our existing urban forests if all trees were planted. SB 5 could play an essential role in meeting that goal (which is currently included in the Draft 2030 Target Scoping Plan) by providing necessary fiscal resources that would be leveraged by additional private and public funds, and a community volunteer base that is one of the best in the nation.

California has never passed a resources bond in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that did not include a specific allocation for urban forestry. For this reason and those stated, we urge you to consider the language provided in SB 317 as an appropriate amendment to SB 5 when it moves through your Committee later this year.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,