



Dr. Jennifer Norris
Executive Director
Wildlife Conservation Board
715 P Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

May 5, 2026

Dear Director Norris and Members of the Wildlife Conservation Board,

As Co-Chairs and Members of the Delta Caucus, we write to respectfully request that the Wildlife Conservation Board allocate \$5 million in FY26/27 funding to ensure the acquisition of Jersey Island in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta. This project represents a rare opportunity to advance multiple state priorities through a single strategic investment, and we strongly encourage the Board’s approval of this funding.

The Delta is the hub of California’s water delivery system, yet it has historically been underinvested in relative to its statewide importance. Bringing meaningful resources to the Delta is critical not only for the region itself, but for the 27 million Californians and 750,000 acres of farmland that depend on it for a reliable water supply. Jersey Island sits in a particularly important location in the western Delta, where the failure of its levees would substantially influence the entire Delta’s salinity dynamics. While restoration of this deeply subsided island will reduce the systemic risk of salinity intrusion to the State Water Project.

The Delta also functions as a bottleneck along the Pacific Flyway, providing refuge, foraging, and breeding habitat for millions of migratory birds. Yet, 98% of the Delta’s wetlands have been lost. Jersey Island presents a rare opportunity to restore habitat at a meaningful scale, where a mosaic of ecosystems will support a wide range of native species. Investments of this size are essential to addressing habitat fragmentation and population decline, as well as move us closer to our 30x30 goal.

This project also aligns closely with the Wildlife Conservation Board’s mandate to support projects that deliver both wildlife and climate benefits. Subsidied Delta islands are a significant source of statewide greenhouse gas emissions due to peat soil oxidation. Converting Jersey Island to wetland conditions will halt a substantial portion of these emissions while rebuilding

soil to decrease levee failure risk. Few projects in California offer this combination of habitat restoration and climate mitigation at scale.

Jersey Island is a high-impact and rare opportunity that is ready to deliver durable benefits for wildlife, water reliability, and the climate. Last year, the Legislature insured that the Delta Conservancy will contribute to funding the acquisition of the Island, but funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board will be necessary to close the funding gap and allow for acquisition. We urge the Wildlife Conservation Board to prioritize funding for its acquisition in FY26/27.

Sincerely,



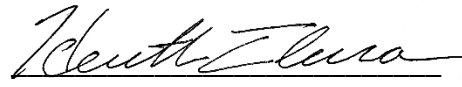
Senator Jerry McNerney, SD-05
Co-Chair, Delta Caucus



Assemblymember Lori Wilson, AD-11
Co-Chair, Delta Caucus



Senator Roger Nielo, SD-06
Co-Vice Chair, Delta Caucus



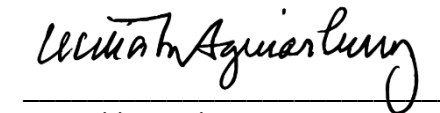
Assemblymember Heath Flora, AD-09
Co-Chair, Delta Caucus



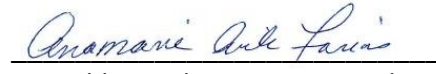
Senator Christopher Cabaldon, SD-03



Assemblymember Rhodesia Ransom, AD-13



Assemblymember Aguiar Curry, AD-04



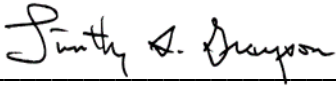
Assemblymember Anamarie Avila Farias, AD-15



Senator Jesse Arreguin, SD-07



Assemblymember Maggy Krell, AD-06



Senator Timothy Grayson, SD-09



Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, AD-16

CC:

Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot

Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Executive Officer Campbell Ingram