

CALIFORNIA FISH AND WILDLIFE  
STRATEGIC VISION PROJECT

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COMMENTS AND SUBMISSIONS FOR REVIEW

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Through February 20, 2012

**From:** Dan Dooley

**Sent:** Thursday, February 16, 2012 10:31 AM

**To:** Melissa Miller-Henson; CFWSV\_ExecCmte@lists.resources.ca.gov

**Subject:** Re: [CFWSV\_ExecCmte] Feb. 16 meeting materials (for real this time!)

John and members of the EC;

I have particular concerns about a couple of the recommendations of the BRCC. One in particular that seems ill considered is the contraction of the role of the Commission. Of particular concern is the removal of the Commissions role with respect to listing of species under the state endangered species act. I recommend that these proposals be referred back to the SAG before consideration by the EC.

Daniel M. Dooley  
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510-987-0060

**From:** Kristopher Tjernell [mailto:ktjernell@csgcalifornia.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2012 1:02 PM  
**To:** Melissa Miller-Henson; Kealii Bright  
**Subject:** NGO letter to the Exec. Committee re: DFG Visioning

Dear Melissa and Kealii,

Attached, please find a letter from Ocean Conservancy, TNC, and California Trout regarding the upcoming Exec. Committee meeting, the visioning process going forward, and some suggestions for continued focus.

As always, let me know if you have any questions.

Best,  
Kris

Kristopher Tjernell | Conservation Strategy Group

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February 14, 2012

Secretary Laird and Members of the Executive Committee  
California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision Project  
California Natural Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: California Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision (CFWSV) Project - Interim Strategic Vision**

Dear Secretary Laird and Members of the Executive Committee:

Please accept the following comments on behalf of California Trout, Ocean Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy. As members of the CFWSV Stakeholder Advisory Group, we have spent the last several months working with a large and diverse group of interests to first identify concerns and then develop recommendations related to a new Strategic Vision for the Department of Fish and Game and Fish and Game Commission as required by AB 2376 (Huffman, 2010). From our perspectives, this effort has proven both challenging and rewarding. While the individual members of the stakeholder group had many different ideas and viewpoints on specific issues or recommendations, we have been pleased to discover a widely shared commitment amongst that group to improving protection of the public trust resources of the State of California and providing the Department of Fish and Game the tools and resources it needs to effectively manage these resources for the future.

Over the past six months, the CFWSV Stakeholder Advisory Group has made substantial progress in brainstorming ideas and recommending potential solutions. This effort has generated literally hundreds of ideas on a wide variety of issues, big and small. Unfortunately, given the volume and variety of ideas generated, many important issues considered by the Stakeholder Advisory Group were not vetted adequately to make the cutoff for the Executive Committee's February 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. Additionally, we are concerned that the BRCC and the Executive Committee now confront an amalgam of ideas, rather than a clear framework of priorities for reform that will help build support and wider public engagement with the Department and the Fish & Game Commission.

As the Executive Committee reviews the many recommendations from the Stakeholder Advisory Group, Blue Ribbon Citizen Committee, and the public, we would like to underscore what we believe to be a few particularly important priorities.

**Funding** –Stabilizing and improving funding for the Department of Fish and Game and Fish and Game Commission is critical to the long-term ability of California to protect its wildlife and habitats. We support the BRCC's recommendation regarding consolidating the currently unwieldy number of

dedicated accounts to reduce administrative costs and increase flexibility as a worthwhile first step. We also support a comprehensive review of all user fees to ensure they are set appropriately and adequately cover the costs of management. Additionally, we believe that identifying viable methods of generating new and more stable sources of revenue for the Department should be a top priority going forward. Overall, it is imperative that the department achieve a deeper level of budgetary transparency and accountability to strengthen performance accountability among the Department's many stakeholders and policymakers. This step is an important foundational measure that is necessary towards ultimately achieving more robust and predictable revenue for the Department to perform its work and meet performance goals and objectives.

**Enforcement**—Our organizations are deeply concerned that California's current limited enforcement capacity puts wildlife and habitat at risk. We view increasing the number of game wardens and providing them the administrative support and tools they need to be effective must be a high priority that also directly affects public faith and confidence in the work of the Department. We also support increasing penalties for poaching and establishing a state wildlife crimes prosecutor task force to provide consistency and thoroughness in the enforcement of laws.

**Regulatory Reform**—Our organizations recognize that in too many cases, regulations intended to protect against environmental harm are having the unintended consequence of serving as a disincentive to undertake critical restoration efforts. We urge the Executive Committee to prioritize recommendations designed to remove barriers to much needed restoration. We also support the recommendation to review existing Fish and Game Code and Title 14 statute to 'clean up the code' to reduce duplication and simplify regulatory compliance.

**Partnership Development** -We believe that improved and increased use of partnerships, both formal and informal, will be increasingly important to the long-term effectiveness of the Department of Fish and Game. Specifically, we urge pursuit of the necessary legal authority to facilitate a wide range of collaboration between DFG and other agencies as well as between DFG and non-for-profit organizations.

**Science and Ecosystem Based Management**—We believe it is essential for credible science to play a central role in a transparent decision making processes by managers, field programs, and policy makers. We also encourage the Department to pursue ecosystem based management and prioritize proactive management actions that have benefits for multiple species and habitats. This approach to deeper application of science on a landscape scale will ultimately result in smarter, more efficient resource management decisions.

As members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group ourselves, we understand and appreciate the incredible dedication that has been shown by our fellow stakeholders over the past months and believe this input has been very valuable to the process. We urge that the Stakeholder Advisory Group continue to play a meaningful role in the CFWSV process over the months to come but also note that continuation of the intense meeting schedule of the recent months is not tenable for most participants.

Moving forward, we believe the Blue Ribbon Citizen Commission and the Executive Committee should now prioritize those actions and recommendations they feel are both most feasible and most likely to result in measurable improvement of the Department's performance in the near future, particularly on those issues that may require legislative action. We believe that a methodical approach which serves to demonstrate meaningful reforms in the short term will enhance confidence among stakeholders and

policymakers that the Department can achieve important reforms that better align its work with natural resource management challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Curtis Knight  
California Trout



Kaitilin Gaffney  
Ocean Conservancy



Jay Ziegler  
The Nature Conservancy