SUMMARY

AB 3030 would declare the policy goal of the state to conserve at least 30 percent of the land and 30 percent of the ocean within the state by 2030, which is the minimum step necessary to adequately address the extinction, climate, and biodiversity crisis.

BACKGROUND

In May 2019, the United Nations Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) released a landmark report detailing the expected crisis and decline of biodiversity across the globe. The conclusions in the report are stark, stating that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history—and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world.¹

This crisis is as urgent a threat to the planet and to people as the climate crisis, and each challenge contributes to the other. The current species extinction rates are tens to hundreds of times higher than they have been in the past 10 million years,² and it is expected to rise even higher.

The well-being of humankind depends on solving this problem and preventing natural environmental systems from collapsing. Without enough of nature protected, we will lose many of the services that provide the foundation for our society and risk the loss or deterioration of our food sources, our clean water, and our stable climate.

Though conservation is effective at mitigating biodiversity loss, the scale at which it has been implemented globally has been inadequate to reverse these worrying trends. We need to protect more of nature, and the most important tool at our disposal is creating protected areas.

Fortunately, we are on the cusp of a critical opportunity for coordinated global action to safeguard nature and humanity’s future. A report in a series of publications by the Center for American Progress that examined how the United States can thoughtfully, equitably, and justly protect at least 30 percent of its land and ocean area by 2030, also referred to as the “30x30” conservation goal. This report outlined eight initial principles for pursuing a 30x30 goal in a way that reflects the needs and priorities of all people, honors the sovereignty of tribal nations, builds upon the strong private and public land conservation traditions of the United States, and effectively conserves the diversity of natural systems that future generations will need to survive and prosper.³

To safeguard clean air, clean drinking water, and food chains that support all life on Earth, scientists recommend protecting at least 30 percent of all lands and oceans by 2030 and, eventually, conserving at least half the planet in a natural condition.⁴ By pursuing these ambitious but achievable conservation goals, humanity can still prevent the majority of animals and plants from going extinct.


SOLUTION

AB 3030 creates a roadmap for reversing the conservation, climate, and wildlife crises by adopting this goal of setting aside land and ocean within our state for conservation, joining a facilitated, coordinated global call-to-action not only among governments but also among companies, cities, and citizens.

California is already a global biodiversity hotspot with more than 600 species in decline and having lost more than a million acres to development in the last decade. At the same time, California has demonstrated its commitment by already protecting 22 percent of its land and establishing its groundbreaking Marine Protected Area network.

Building on past leadership, a statutory commitment from California to protect a representative 30 percent of our lands and oceans in the next decade will help ensure that wildlife can thrive, so that all Californians can enjoy the benefits that nature provides, and that wild areas can continue to enhance the strength and well-being of our state and the planet. This bill also places into state policy a commitment to working with the federal government, local communities, Native American tribes, and private landowners to conserve natural places and resources, as well as improving access to nature for all people in the state, including for communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities.

By adopting AB 3030, California will become the first state to officially embrace this goal, setting an important example for the rest of the world as countries gather in October 2020 in China for the 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference. That conference will be a critical moment for environmental decision-making.

With AB 3030, California will continue to lead by example by implementing policies and initiatives that we know can maintain and preserve California’s biodiversity.

SPONSORS

Audubon California
Defenders of Wildlife
Natural Resources Defense Council

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