



CITY OF MURRIETA

June 24, 2020

The Honorable Ken Calvert
United States House of Representatives
2205 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: H.R.2956 - Western Riverside County National Wildlife Refuge

Dear Representative Calvert:

On behalf of the City of Murrieta, we support your bill, H.R. 2956, which would establish the Western Riverside County National Wildlife Refuge. This important piece of legislation would provide a critical addition to efforts in western Riverside County to preserve habitat, enhance quality of life and enable needed infrastructure.

We are encouraged to see that H.R. 2956 advance out of the House Natural Resources Committee, with the bill now on the House floor for consideration. We would like to add our voice to those calling for its passage.

We concur in your statement that, "Riverside County is now one step closer to being home to a new wildlife refuge that would help it balance its commitment to conserving animal habitat with its need for future growth. As we move forward, it's critical that all stakeholders, including the federal government, meet their conservation responsibilities to ensure the successful implementation of our planning efforts, including vital transportation improvement projects."

As members of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority, we support the consolidation of the current checkerboard conservation lands into a National Wildlife Refuge creating a framework for the federal government to meet its obligations under the MSHCP Implementing Agreement. Upon enactment, we look forward to the many benefits that H.R. 2956 would provide:

- Establish the boundary for a new wildlife refuge;
- Allow for the immediate inclusion of non-federal conservation lands that have already been acquired to meet the terms of the MSHCP;
- Provide certainty for development of the transportation infrastructure required to meet the future needs of southern California;
- Create new public access and enhance recreation for the entire region; and
- Create a mechanism for federal agencies to inventory lands within the Refuge boundary established by this legislation to determine their suitability for inclusion.

Establishing this land as a wildlife refuge will ensure public access and enhanced recreation opportunities for the entire region. We thank you for sponsoring this legislation and look forward to its passage and implementation. If you have any questions, please contact Louie Lacasella, City Manager's Office at (951) 461-6008 or llacasella@MurrietaCA.gov.



Sincerely,

CITY OF MURRIETA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gene Wunderlich", is written over the official name of the city.

Gene Wunderlich
Mayor

Cc: Murrieta City Council
Erin Sasse, League of California Cities Public Affairs Manager