

News Release

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Over 30 Environmental Organizations and Leaders Call on California to Champion Nature and Participate in the U.N.'s Biodiversity Treaty

LOS ANGELES, CA -- In a May 26 letter sent to California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot, over 30 local, state, and national organizations and leaders are calling on California to be a global champion for nature and participate in the United Nations' biodiversity treaty. Called the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) or CBD, the United States [never joined](#) this treaty, a crucial instrument for protecting nature worldwide. If California becomes a treaty [Observer](#), it will be the first state in America to do so. California will send a message to the nation and the world that we can't afford to sit out global discussions even as we suffer from disasters, like the Covid-19 pandemic, that are [linked](#) to harms to ecosystems and make it clear that human health and the health of nature are inextricably connected.

In January, Assemblymember [Laura Friedman](#) of District 43, Chair of the Assembly's Natural Resources Committee, [asked](#) Secretary Crowfoot to pursue becoming both an Observer and member of the CBD's [Advisory Committee](#) of Subnational Governments and Biodiversity. Recognizing the power of California's leadership in global forums, Friedman states that as a global biodiversity hotspot, "California now has the opportunity to show the world that people in the US are invested in working together to combat biodiversity loss through participation in the Convention on Biological Diversity."

In recent years, California has played an increasingly prominent role on the global stage, participating in the last several United Nations Climate Changes Conferences (COP).

The 35 organizations and leaders calling for action support California's biodiversity leadership at the global level. They include statewide organizations like the California League of Conservation Voters, regional organizations like Friends of the Los Angeles River, national organizations like the Natural Resources Defense Council, and organizations working internationally like the Rainforest Action Network. Civic leaders like West Hollywood Mayor Pro Tempore John Heilman and Los Angeles District 4 City Councilmember David Ryu also signed the letter. The City of Los Angeles went a step further and recently passed a [Resolution](#) asking that the state's 2019-2020 Legislative Program include support for California participating in the CBD.

"When it comes to smart and innovative policy California leads not just nationally but globally, and now more than ever our leaders need to lean into this mentality," said Mike Young Political & Organizing Director for the California League of

MORE

Call for California to participate in U.N.'s biodiversity treaty

Conservation Voters. "Participating in the UN treaty would show just how serious we take our leadership role especially during a pandemic where prioritizing science is critical and we need to be more aware of preserving our ecosystem."

1 million species are at risk of [extinction](#), and Californians are signalling that there's no time to lose acting for nature both locally and globally. This crisis also threatens the livelihoods, health, security, and well-being of people, everywhere. In 2021, 196 CBD member states will negotiate the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework -- a plan to save nature through 2030 and beyond -- at their 15th Conference of Parties. By participating in the Convention on Biological Diversity, California will have the opportunity to help shape these plans and create a path towards a biodiverse, healthy future for Californians and the world.

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Enclosed:

* Letter to Secretary Wade Crowfoot calling on California to be a biodiversity leader.