



The SummerTree Institute

Making Environmental Education Irresistible

September 25, 2023

San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

By Email to COB@sbcounty.gov

RE: Item 82, Resolution regarding Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS)

Chair Rowe and Members of the Board:

Please accept the following comments from The SummerTree Institute regarding the RCIS item referenced above. While the County's support of the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy has much merit, we have serious concerns regarding Provision 7 in the resolution, and request that that provision be removed from the resolution.

We do support points made in the resolution that are consistent with the voluntary and non-regulatory positions in the program. However, the points in Provision 7 are contrary to the health of desert ecosystems, ecological sustainability, and the intent of the overall RCIS. By omitting much of the desert ecosystem that contributes significantly to biodiversity, carbon sequestration capacity, and the ecotourism value of protected, intact desert landscapes, even if all lands within that system do not each support an endangered species, we would undermine the intent of the RCIS. Even the State's current 30x30 planning effort recognizes the importance of desert ecosystems that do not necessarily contain endangered species, but none the less provide critical value to California's future sustainability by providing vital biodiversity protection, maintaining carbon sink capacity, and protection of lands for wildlife corridors and human equity accessibility.

We do appreciate the clarification of the important aspects of this program, but urge you to remove Provision 7 from the resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Kobaly
Executive Director
The SummerTree Institute