

March 24, 2017

Senator Bob Wieckowski, Chair  
Senate Committee on Environmental Quality  
State Capitol, Room 2205  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
*Sent via fax: 916-322-3519*

**RE: Senate Bill 49 (De León/Stern) - SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Wieckowski and Members of the Committee:

California Coastkeeper Alliance unites 12 locally-based Waterkeeper organizations to fight for swimmable, fishable, drinkable waters for California communities and ecosystems. On behalf of the Alliance, I write in strong support of the California Environmental, Public Health, and Workers Defense Act (Senate Bill 49), one of the most critical bills that will come before the Legislature this year. SB 49 protects our state against the federal dismantling of fundamental protections in the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and Clean Air Act upon which our economy and communities depend.

SB 49 safeguards existing federal protections by establishing strong, enforceable state analogs. These baseline federal protections have fostered California's economic growth and progress for decades by protecting communities from public health crises, sustaining a vibrant recreation, tourism, and hospitality economy, and driving modern innovation of clean technologies. As such, retaining these federal safeguards is essential if California wishes to remain a global environmental and economic leader.

In the early months of the Trump Administration, we have seen numerous efforts to undermine these basic protections. Multiple bills have been introduced in the House of Representatives that would dramatically weaken the Clean Water Act, including proposals to dismantle the citizen suit provision, limit the scope of waters protected under the Act, and give polluters a competitive advantage by allowing them to cut corners, at the expense of the public and the economy. SB 49 would lock in essential Clean Water Act measures as a baseline in California, including the private right of action. The private right of action provision in SB 49 is crafted in such a manner that it is only activated *if* that federal right is curtailed through a change in the standards or a repeal of the citizen suit provision. It does not increase the exposure of businesses or agencies to litigation because it would merely allow for a process to codify into state law an existing right under federal law.

By passing this bill, we can keep California on a path of economic and environmental sustainability and defend fundamental protections that make our air and water cleaner, our economy more resilient, and ultimately, ensure more people in our state can enjoy a high quality of life. We strongly support SB 49 and ask for your 'Aye' vote to safeguard indispensable health and safety protections.

Sincerely,



Sara Aminzadeh, Executive Director