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[Affiliations for identification only]

September 12, 2023

Board of Directors
East Bay Regional Park District
2950 Peralta Oaks Court
Oakland, CA 94605-0381

Dear Board of Directors,

I am writing in regard to the East Bay Regional Park District's work in the area of workforce development. We have become aware that the District has a workforce development program that may be cut due to budgetary pressures.

In our work with land stewardship organizations, we emphasize the need for creating diverse opportunities for younger generations to gain skills and professional connections that enable them to become more deeply involved in conserving the areas where they live.

We are increasingly engaged in "ecological workforce development" as part of the state's 30x30 Initiative and its associated California Biodiversity Network (CBN). We are part of a CBN working group dedicated to increasing entry-level opportunities for those interested in conservation professions.

We strongly support programs that create a bridge into environmental awareness and action that disadvantaged youth may not otherwise have. There are many barriers that can prevent under-resourced youth from beginning this type of career, and programs that help overcome these barriers are a crucial piece of the puzzle to ensure equitable access to conservation and land management jobs.

It will take everyone to solve the climate and biodiversity crises, and ecological workforce development programs are a key aspect of encouraging diversity in the field. When people see their fellow community members committed to environmental work, political and public support for this work will grow.

Thank you for all the work you do.

Sincerely,

Doug Johnson
Executive Director
dwjohanson@cal-ipc.org