March 3, 2025

Heather Hadwick
930 Executive Way, Suite 201
Redding, CA 96002

RE: Support for AB 263 continuance of Emergency Flow Requirements on Scott and Shasta Rivers

Dear Assembly Member Hadwick,

California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) and Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center have been advocating for the restoration of riparian ecosystems to accelerate recovery of salmon, and other threatened or endangered aquatic species, for more than three decades. The Ecology Center is based in Siskiyou County, and CSPA has been working throughout your district for many years, and has an office located in Siskiyou County. We are reaching out to respectfully request your support of AB 263 in order to maintain momentum on regulating minimum instream flow requirements for salmon spawning and rearing in critical tributaries to the Klamath; the Scott and Shasta Rivers.

The Pacific Fisheries Management Council recently released its forecast of returning adults, and the numbers look dire. It appears as though 2025 will be the third year in a row that California will need to close its commercial, recreational, and Tribal salmon fisheries, due to extremely low population numbers. The impacts, losses and harms caused by the demise of this keystone species to coastal fishing and indigenous communities, as well as fishermen who have raised families fishing the states once regal rivers, are devastating.

California is home to the second and third largest salmon bearing rivers in the contiguous Unites States; the Sacramento and Klamath Rivers. California's historic salmon populations literally shaped the states' economy and culture. A more iconic symbol of the state's natural heritage and ecological wealth does not exist. Long before industry was mining, logging, and growing crops at a mind-boggling scale, fisher people were harvesting immense numbers of fish throughout California's coast and rivers to

feed people, honor the creator, and engage in trade. The Shasta and Scott Rivers are two of the most productive salmon tributaries to the Klamath, and maintaining their viability post dam removal is crucial, as it will significantly influence if the multi-milliondollar public investment will achieve is stated goals, or not.

The precipitous decline of salmon in recent decades is not directly correlated with drought years, because the cause of salmon extinction is not drought or climate change. Salmon extinction is caused by the overallocation of the state's water and mega dams blocking access to historic spawning and rearing habitat. Even in wet years, certain streams get dewatered annually because of excessive surface water diversions and unlimited groundwater pumping. Indeed, industrial scale agriculture has dwindled the Shasta and Scott Rivers to a trickle in most years over the past two decades, since the state has been regulating these streams. Due to the flimsy enforcement of water quality regulations since the early 2000's, every year has been an extreme drought in the Shasta and Scott Rivers, until the recent passage of Emergency Minimum Instream Flow requirements. Though insufficient to fully recover salmon, these flow requirements have shown the most promising signs of progress in rebalancing agricultural uses with the needs of Tribes, fishing communities and future generations.

Please endorse AB 263 to maintain progress recently achieved in the Klamath and its key tributaries. Please reach out if you have any questions, or if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Angelina Cook
Restoration Associate
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance

Nick Joslin
Forest and Watershed Watch Program Manager
Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center