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April 3, 2013

Support Farmland Conservation!

Call in Support of the California Farmland Protection Act – AB 823

Under AB 823, for every acre of California farmland that is lost to development, another acre would be permanently protected.

The bill will be heard by the Assembly Natural Resources Committee on April 15th. Please call Committee Chair Wesley Chesbro and the committee members in support. [Click here for a list of members](#). It's easy to call. See details below.

BACKGROUND

California is the number one agricultural state in the country, but we're losing farmland at an alarming rate. An average of 30,000 acres of California farmland is permanently converted to non-agricultural uses every year. A thriving agricultural sector is critical to the long-term strength of California's economy, our food security and natural resource protection; we must ensure that appropriate policies are in place to preserve valuable agricultural land.

In addition, the preservation of agricultural land is of vital

importance in limiting the impacts of climate change. Research funded by the California Energy Commission's Public Interest Research (PIER) program found that an acre of irrigated cropland emits 70 times fewer GHG emissions than an acre of urban land.

Current policy tools are failing to adequately mitigate for the permanent loss of agricultural land and its consequences.

AB 823

This proposal would – for the first time – establish clear minimum requirements for mitigating the loss of agricultural land related to a project, including requirements to: conserve agricultural lands that are at least the same acreage as the farmland that is being converted to nonagricultural uses; establish that the soil quality of the conserved land is at least comparable to the converted agricultural land; ensure that the conserved land has an adequate water supply for agricultural purposes, and that the conserved land is located as close to the converted land as feasible.

In addition, AB 823 would provide certainty for developers by detailing additional steps they could take so that the project could be deemed by statute to have been fully mitigated with regard to the impacts associated with the loss of agricultural land.

AB 823 is authored by Assemblymember Susan Talamantes Eggman (D-Stockton) and co-authored by Assemblymember Das Williams (D-Santa Barbara). Along with CalCAN, the bill co-sponsors are American Farmland Trust, Community Alliance with Family Farmers.

For more information on AB 823, [click here](#).

CALL TODAY:

It's easy to call, and takes only 90 seconds. Call the Assembly Natural Resource Committee Chair Wesley Chesbro in support of AB 823. Ask to speak to the staff person who handles agriculture issues. The message is simple:

"I am calling to ask Assemblymember Chesbro to support AB 823, the California Farmland Act. AB 823 will help protect one of California's most valuable resources – farmland. California lacks adequate policy tools to support farmland conservation. Please support AB 823."

If you can, please also reach out to the other Assembly

Natural Resource Committee members, found here:

<http://antr.assembly.ca.gov/membersstaff>

Please let us know you called. Drop us a line to:

info@calclimateag.org.

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