

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 22, 2016

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 31, 2016

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 5, 2016

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2087

Introduced by Assembly Member Levine

February 17, 2016

An act to add Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 1850) to Division 2 of the Fish and Game Code, relating to fish and wildlife.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2087, as amended, Levine. Regional conservation frameworks.

Existing law establishes the Department of Fish and Wildlife in the Natural Resources Agency. Under existing law, the department has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species. The California Endangered Species Act prohibits the taking of an endangered, threatened, or candidate species, except as specified. Under the act, the department may authorize the take of listed species if the take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity and the impacts are minimized and fully mitigated. Existing law prohibits an entity from substantially diverting or obstructing the natural flow of, or substantially changing or using any material from the bed, channel, or bank of, any river, stream, or lake, or from depositing certain material where it may pass into any river, stream, or lake, without first notifying the department of that activity, and entering into a lake or streambed alteration agreement if required by the department to protect fish and wildlife resources.

This bill would authorize the department, or any other public agency, to propose a regional conservation framework that would be required to contain specified information, including a regional conservation assessment. The bill would authorize the department to approve a regional conservation framework, or approve the framework with amendments, for a *an initial* period of up to ~~5~~ 10 years after certain public meetings and a public comment period regarding the proposed framework have been held and after it finds that the framework meets certain requirements. The bill would authorize a conservation action, as defined, and a habitat enhancement, as defined, that measurably advance the conservation objectives of an approved framework and that meet other specified requirements, to be used to create mitigation credits that may be used, within the framework area, to compensate for take or other adverse impacts of activities authorized pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act, to reduce adverse impacts to fish ~~and or wildlife resources~~ *resources, or both*, from activities authorized pursuant to a lake or streambed alteration agreement to less than substantial, or to mitigate significant effects on the environment pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. To create these mitigation credits, the bill would require a person or entity to enter into a mitigation credit agreement with the department that meets specified requirements. *The bill would prohibit the release of mitigation credits for use, sale, or transfer under a mitigation credit agreement unless the department approves the release in accordance with certain requirements.* The bill would authorize the department to collect fees from a person or entity that proposes to enter into a mitigation credit agreement, and from a public agency that proposes a framework, to pay for all or a portion of the department's costs relating to the mitigation credit agreement or proposed framework. *The bill would authorize the department to adopt guidelines and criteria to aid in the implementation of the mitigation credit provisions and would exempt the adoption of these guidelines and criteria from the Administrative Procedure Act.*

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 1850) is
- 2 added to Division 2 of the Fish and Game Code, to read:

CHAPTER 9. REGIONAL CONSERVATION FRAMEWORKS

1850. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that it would be beneficial to identify ~~wildlife~~ *species* and habitat conservation initiatives at a regional scale, including actions needed to address the impacts of climate change and other wildlife stressors, in order to guide voluntary investments in conservation, infrastructure planning, sustainable communities strategies, and compensatory mitigation for impacts to ~~natural~~ *ecological* resources, including impacts to threatened and endangered species, other sensitive species, natural communities, ecological processes, and wildlife corridors.

(b) The purpose of this chapter is to promote the voluntary conservation of natural resources, including biodiversity and ecological processes, ~~in order to maintain the continued viability of biological communities~~ and to enhance their resiliency to climate change and other threats. In order to further this goal, it is the policy of the state to encourage voluntary mechanisms to conserve biological and other ~~natural~~ *ecological* resources and to identify ~~natural resource~~ conservation actions, including actions needed to promote resiliency to the impacts of climate change and other ~~wildlife and fisheries stressors.~~ *stressors to species and habitat.*

(c) *It is further the policy of the state to encourage voluntary mechanisms to identify and implement advance mitigation actions that do the following:*

(1) *Can be used to compensate for project impacts, including, but not limited to, infrastructure and renewable energy projects, more efficiently.*

(2) *Are effective ecologically.*

(3) *Will help to conserve regionally important biological and other ecological resources.*

(e)

(d) In enacting this chapter, it is the intent of the Legislature to promote conservation planning that identifies ~~wildlife, fishery,~~ *species* and habitat conservation needs, including actions needed to promote ~~the~~ resiliency to the impacts of climate change and other ~~wildlife stressors, in order to guide voluntary~~ *stressors.* *It is further the intent of the Legislature to create nonregulatory mechanisms to guide* investments in conservation, infrastructure and land use planning, and compensatory mitigation for impacts

1 to natural resources, including impacts to threatened and
2 endangered species, other sensitive species, natural communities,
3 ecological processes, and connectivity.

4 *(e) In enacting this chapter, it is not the intent of the Legislature*
5 *to prescribe or prohibit land uses, establish land use designations,*
6 *or to affect the land use authority of any public agency.*

7 1851. For purposes of this chapter:

8 (a) “Areas of Conservation Emphasis” means the biodiversity
9 analysis completed by the department in 2010, or the latest update
10 of that analysis.

11 (b) “Conservation action” means the permanent protection of
12 habitat, and restoration and management actions on permanently
13 protected habitat that help to offset the impacts of threats to focal
14 species and help to achieve biological goals and objectives for
15 those focal species.

16 (c) “Conservation easement” means a perpetual conservation
17 easement that complies with Chapter 4 (commencing with Section
18 815) of Title 2 of Part 2 of Division 2 of the Civil Code.

19 ~~(e)~~

20 (d) “Focal species” means ~~those native species within the a~~
21 ~~regional conservation framework area that are both of the~~
22 ~~following: analyzed in the framework and will benefit from~~
23 ~~conservation actions set forth in the framework.~~

24 ~~(1) Endangered, threatened, or candidate species pursuant to~~
25 ~~Chapter 1.5 (commencing with Section 2050) of Division 3 or~~
26 ~~other sensitive species.~~

27 ~~(2) Analyzed within and protected by conservation actions set~~
28 ~~forth within the framework.~~

29 ~~(d)~~

30 (e) “Habitat enhancement” means an action to improve the
31 quality of wildlife habitat, or to address risks or stressors to
32 wildlife, that has long-term durability but does not involve land
33 acquisition or the permanent protection of habitat, such as
34 improving in-stream flows to benefit fish species, enhancing habitat
35 connectivity, or invasive species control or eradication. If a habitat
36 enhancement is used to create ~~a mitigation credit~~, “~~long-term~~
37 ~~durability~~” *one or more mitigation credits pursuant to this chapter,*
38 *long-term durability* means that the habitat enhancement will
39 remain in effect for at least as long as the impact that is being
40 mitigated.

1 ~~(e) “Hydrologic Unit Code Watershed” means a watershed as~~
2 ~~described and delineated by the United States Geological Survey.~~

3 ~~(f) “Performance-based milestones” means specifically~~
4 ~~identified steps in the implementation of a conservation action or~~
5 ~~habitat enhancement, such as site protection, initiating~~
6 ~~implementation, completing implementation, or achieving~~
7 ~~performance standards.~~

8 ~~(g) “Performance standards” means observable or measurable~~
9 ~~physical or biological attributes that are used to determine if a~~
10 ~~conservation action or habitat enhancement has met its objectives.~~

11 ~~(f)~~

12 ~~(h) “Permanently protect” means doing both of the following:~~

13 ~~(1) Recording a conservation easement, in a form approved in~~
14 ~~advance in writing by the department, or establishing perpetual~~
15 ~~protection of land in a manner substantially similar to a~~
16 ~~conservation easement and approved in advance in writing by the~~
17 ~~department, that prevents development, prohibits inconsistent uses,~~
18 ~~and ensures that habitat for focal species is maintained.~~

19 ~~(2) Providing secure, perpetual funding for management of the~~
20 ~~land. land, monitoring, and enforcement.~~

21 ~~(g) “Pressure” means an anthropogenic or natural driver that~~
22 ~~could significantly change ecological conditions. Pressures may~~
23 ~~be positive or negative depending on intensity, timing, and~~
24 ~~duration.~~

25 ~~(h)~~

26 ~~(i) “Sensitive species” means any special status species identified~~
27 ~~by a state or federal agency, and any species for which the~~
28 ~~department has determined that listing as endangered, threatened,~~
29 ~~or a candidate is reasonably foreseeable within the term of the~~
30 ~~framework.~~

31 ~~(i) “Stress” and “stressor” mean a degraded ecological condition~~
32 ~~resulting directly or indirectly from negative impacts of pressures,~~
33 ~~for example, habitat fragmentation.~~

34 ~~(j) “USDA Ecological Subsection” means a subsection as~~
35 ~~described and delineated by the United States Department of~~
36 ~~Agriculture, the Forest Service and the Natural Resource~~
37 ~~Conservation Service.~~

38 1852. (a) The department may approve a regional conservation
39 framework pursuant to this chapter. A regional conservation

1 framework may be proposed by the department or any other public
2 agency.

3 (b) The purpose of a regional conservation framework shall be
4 to ~~provide voluntary guidance for one or more of the following in~~
5 ~~ways that will enhance the long-term viability of native~~ *inform*
6 *actions that would advance the conservation of focal species,*
7 *habitat, and other natural* ~~resources~~; *resources and to provide*
8 *voluntary guidance for one or more of the following:*

9 (1) Identification of wildlife and habitat conservation priorities,
10 including actions needed to address the impacts of climate change
11 and other wildlife stressors.

12 (2) Investments in ~~natural~~ *ecological* resource conservation.

13 (3) Infrastructure planning.

14 (4) Identification of conservation priorities for land use planning.

15 (5) Identification of priority locations for compensatory
16 mitigation for impacts to species and natural resources.

17 (c) A regional conservation framework shall include all of the
18 following:

19 (1) An explanation of the conservation purpose of and need for
20 the framework.

21 (2) The geographic area of the framework and rationale for the
22 selection of the area.

23 (3) The focal species included in, and their current known or
24 estimated status within, the framework.

25 (4) ~~Other important species,~~ *Important* habitat, and other natural
26 and seminatural resource conservation elements within the
27 framework area, *including, but not limited to, habitat connectivity*
28 *and existing protected areas*, and an explanation of the criteria,
29 data, and methods used to identify those important conservation
30 elements.

31 (5) A summary of historic, current, and projected future stressors
32 and pressures in the framework area on the focal species, habitat,
33 and other natural resources.

34 (6) Conservation goals and measurable objectives for the *focal*
35 *species and* important conservation elements identified in the
36 framework that address or respond to the identified stressors and
37 pressures.

38 (7) Conservation actions, including a description of the general
39 amounts and types of habitat that, if restored or enhanced and

1 permanently protected, could achieve the conservation goals and
2 objectives.

3 (8) A description of how the conservation actions and habitat
4 enhancements were prioritized and selected in relation to the
5 conservation goals and objectives.

6 (9) An explanation of how the framework is consistent with or
7 complements any natural community conservation plan, *federal*
8 habitat conservation plan, *state or federal* recovery plan, ~~and or~~
9 other *approved* conservation ~~or recovery plan strategy~~ that overlaps
10 with the framework area.

11 (10) A description of how the framework's conservation goals
12 and objectives provide for adaptation opportunities against the
13 effects of climate change for ~~species covered by the framework.~~
14 *the framework's focal species.*

15 (11) Incorporation and reliance on, and citation of, the best
16 available scientific information, and a brief analysis of gaps in
17 relevant scientific information.

18 (12) A regional conservation assessment that provides context
19 at an ecoregional or subecoregional scale for the development of
20 the framework. If a regional conservation assessment has already
21 been prepared, the regional conservation framework may
22 incorporate the assessment by reference, and shall update or
23 supplement the assessment as necessary for the framework. A
24 regional conservation assessment shall do all of the following:

25 (A) Identify and summarize relevant regional pressures,
26 stressors, and conservation priorities, including priority
27 conservation areas and habitat connectivity values, included in all
28 of the following:

29 (i) Conservation plans, such as the State Wildlife Action Plan
30 and natural community conservation plans.

31 (ii) Analyses designed to identify areas of high biological
32 diversity, such as the Areas of Conservation Emphasis.

33 (iii) Analyses designed to identify areas of high value for habitat
34 connectivity.

35 (B) Identify the best available scientific information and
36 analyses, including geospatial information regarding the
37 distribution of species and natural communities.

38 (C) Use spatial analysis to identify ecological relationships
39 between existing protected areas and priority conservation areas.

1 (D) ~~Enable and promote consistency among regional~~
2 ~~conservation assessments throughout California by using Use~~
3 standard or prevalent vegetation classifications and standard
4 ~~ecological subdivision ecoregional~~ classifications for terrestrial
5 and aquatic ~~data. data to enable and promote consistency among~~
6 ~~regional conservation assessments throughout California.~~

7 (E) Be consistent with approved natural community conservation
8 plans, regional habitat conservation plans, and recovery plans
9 within the ecoregion or subecoregion included in the assessment.

10 (F) ~~Briefly assess~~ Assess the climate change vulnerability of
11 identified priority conservation areas.

12 (G) Compile input and summary priority data in a consistent
13 format that could be uploaded for interactive use in an Internet
14 Web portal and *that* would allow stakeholders to generate queries
15 of conservation values ~~in subregions~~ within the region.

16 1853. (a) The department may prepare or approve a regional
17 conservation framework, or approve the framework with
18 amendments, for ~~a an~~ *an initial* period of up to ~~five~~ 10 years after
19 finding that the framework meets the requirements of Section 1852.
20 *The department may extend the duration of an approved regional*
21 *conservation framework for additional periods of up to 10 years*
22 *after finding that the framework continues to meet the requirements*
23 *of Section 1852.*

24 (b) ~~The level of detail necessary for each regional conservation~~
25 ~~framework shall be at the discretion of the department and shall~~
26 ~~be assessed independently for each framework, taking into account~~
27 ~~the requirements of Section 1852 and the intended uses and scope~~
28 ~~of the framework.~~ It is the intent of this chapter to establish general
29 guidelines and requirements that allow sufficient flexibility to
30 develop each regional conservation framework based on the best
31 available information regarding the framework area.

32 (c) (1) Prior to submitting a draft regional conservation
33 framework to the department for approval, a public agency
34 proposing a framework shall hold at least two public meetings to
35 allow interested persons and entities to receive information about
36 the proposed draft framework early in the process of preparing it
37 and to have an adequate opportunity to provide written and oral
38 comments. At least one of the public meetings shall be held at a
39 location within the framework area. ~~A public agency shall provide~~
40 ~~public notice of the meetings that shall include, at a minimum,~~

1 notice to the county clerk of each county within the geographical
2 scope of the framework, with a request to post the notice in the
3 office of the county clerk, and publication in at least one newspaper
4 of general circulation. *If preparation of a regional conservation
5 framework was initiated before January 1, 2017, the public
6 meetings required under this section may be held after January 1,
7 2017, if they are held at least 30 days before the framework is
8 submitted to the department for approval.*

9 (2) *At least 30 days before holding public meetings to distribute
10 information about the development of a draft regional conservation
11 framework, a public agency proposing a framework shall provide
12 notice of the regional conservation framework public meetings as
13 follows:*

14 (A) *On the public agency's Internet Web site and any relevant*
15 *LISTSERV.*

16 (B) *To each county or city within or adjacent to the regional
17 conservation framework area.*

18 (C) *To each public agency, organization, or individual who has
19 filed a written request for the notice.*

20 (2)

21 (3) *At least 60 days before submitting a draft regional
22 conservation framework to the department for approval, the public
23 agency proposing the framework shall notify the board of
24 supervisors in each county within the geographical scope of the
25 framework and provide the board of supervisors with an
26 opportunity to submit written comments.*

27 (3) ~~Within~~

28 (4) *After a draft regional conservation framework is submitted
29 to the department for approval, the department shall have 30 days
30 within which to deem the draft regional conservation framework
31 complete or to explain to the public agency submitting the
32 framework what is needed to complete the framework. Within 30
33 days of deeming a draft regional conservation framework complete,
34 the department shall make the draft framework available to the
35 public on its Internet Web site for review and comment for a period
36 of at least 30 days.*

37 (d) *The department shall make all approved regional
38 conservation frameworks, including all updates to scientific
39 information and analyses used in a regional conservation
40 framework, available on its Internet Web site.*

1 (e) *The department shall require the use of consistent metrics*
2 *that incorporate both the area and quality of habitat and other*
3 *natural resources in relation to a regional conservation*
4 *framework's conservation objectives to measure the net change*
5 *resulting from the implementation of conservation actions and*
6 *habitat enhancements.*

7 1854. (a) ~~Regional conservation frameworks and mitigation~~
8 ~~agreements shall not affect the authority or discretion of any public~~
9 ~~agency, except as specifically provided in this chapter. Nothing~~
10 ~~in this chapter increases or decreases the authority or jurisdiction~~
11 ~~of the department to regulate regarding any land use, species,~~
12 ~~habitat, area, resource, plan, process, or corridor.~~

13 (b) The approval or existence of a regional conservation
14 framework or mitigation credit agreement pursuant to this chapter
15 does not do any of the following:

16 (1) *Modify in any way the standards for issuance of incidental*
17 *permits or concurrence determinations pursuant to Section 2081*
18 *or 2080.1, issuance of take authorizations pursuant to Section*
19 *2835, or the issuance of lake or streambed alteration agreements*
20 *pursuant to Section 1602.*

21 ~~(1)~~
22 (2) Establish a presumption under the California Environmental
23 Quality Act (Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of
24 the Public Resources Code) that ~~any project's impacts are, or are~~
25 ~~not, potentially significant.~~ *the regional conservation framework*
26 *provides substantial evidence in connection with any determination*
27 *of whether a proposed project may or may not result in significant*
28 *environmental effects and does not in any way limit a lead agency's*
29 *or responsible agency's discretion to determine, based on*
30 *project-specific information, whether a proposed project may or*
31 *may not result in significant environmental effects.*

32 ~~(2)~~
33 (3) Prohibit or authorize any project or project impacts.

34 ~~(3)~~
35 (4) Create a presumption or guarantee that any proposed project
36 will be approved or permitted, or that any proposed impact will
37 be authorized, by any state or local agency.

38 ~~(4)~~

1 (5) Create a presumption that any proposed project will be
2 disapproved or prohibited, or that any proposed impact will be
3 prohibited, by any state or local agency.

4 ~~(5)~~

5 (6) Alter or affect, or create additional requirements for, the
6 general plan of the city, county, or city and county, in which it is
7 located.

8 ~~(6)~~

9 (7) Have a binding or mandatory regulatory effect on private
10 landowners or project proponents.

11 1855. (a) A conservation action or habitat enhancement that
12 measurably advances the conservation objectives of an approved
13 regional conservation framework may be used to create mitigation
14 credits that can be used to compensate for impacts to species,
15 habitat, and other natural resources, as provided in this section.
16 To be used to create *these* mitigation credits, a conservation action
17 or habitat enhancement shall be implemented *successfully* in
18 advance of the impacts. *The requirements of this section apply*
19 *only to the generation of mitigation credits under mitigation credit*
20 *agreements pursuant to this section.*

21 (b) For a conservation action or habitat enhancement identified
22 in a regional conservation framework to be used to create
23 mitigation credits pursuant to this section, the regional conservation
24 framework shall include, in addition to the requirements of Section
25 1852, all of the following:

26 (1) An adaptive management and monitoring strategy for
27 conserved habitat and other conserved natural resources.

28 (2) A process for updating the scientific information used in the
29 framework, and for *tracking the progress of, and* evaluating the
30 effectiveness ~~of of~~, conservation actions and habitat enhancements
31 identified in the framework *in* offsetting identified threats to focal
32 species and ~~to achieve~~ *in achieving* the framework's biological
33 goals and objectives, at least once every five years.

34 (3) Identification of a public or private entity that will be
35 responsible for the periodic evaluation and for updating the
36 framework ~~periodically~~ *at least once every five years* to incorporate
37 the best available scientific information and analyses.

38 (c) A mitigation credit created in accordance with an approved
39 regional conservation framework may be used for the following:

1 (1) To compensate for take or other adverse impacts of activities
2 authorized pursuant to Chapter 1.5 (commencing with Section
3 2050) of Division 3 within the regional conservation framework
4 area.

5 (2) To reduce adverse impacts to fish ~~and or wildlife resources~~
6 *resources, or both*, from activities authorized pursuant to Chapter
7 6 (commencing with Section 1600) within the regional conservation
8 framework area to less than substantial.

9 (3) To mitigate significant effects on the environment within
10 the regional conservation framework area pursuant to the California
11 Environmental Quality Act (Division 13 (commencing with Section
12 21000) of the Public Resources Code) and Guidelines for
13 Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act
14 (Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 15000) of Division 6 of
15 Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations).

16 *(d) The department shall ensure the long-term durability of a*
17 *habitat enhancement. If a habitat enhancement is used to provide*
18 *compensatory mitigation, the habitat enhancement shall remain*
19 *in effect for at least as long as the impact that is being mitigated.*

20 ~~(d)~~

21 *(e) To create mitigation credits pursuant to this section, a person*
22 *or entity, including a state or local agency, shall enter into a*
23 *mitigation credit agreement with the department. The mitigation*
24 *credit agreement shall establish the type and number of mitigation*
25 *credits created by the conservation action or habitat enhancement*
26 *and the terms and conditions under which the mitigation credits*
27 *may be used. The person or entity may create and use, sell, or*
28 *otherwise transfer the mitigation credits; credits upon department*
29 *approval that the credits have been created in accordance with the*
30 *agreement. To enter into a mitigation credit agreement with the*
31 *department, a person or entity shall submit a draft mitigation credit*
32 *agreement to the department for its review, revision, and approval.*
33 *The department may enter into a mitigation credit agreement if it*
34 *determines that the mitigation credit agreement provides does all*
35 *of the following:*

36 ~~(1) The person or entity's contact information.~~

37 ~~(2) A description of the proposed conservation action or habitat~~
38 ~~enhancement.~~

39 *(1) Provides contact information for, and establishes the*
40 *qualifications of, the person or entity entering into the agreement,*

1 *the entity that will manage the site of the conservation action or*
2 *habitat enhancement, and any contractors or consultants.*

3 *(2) Fully describes the proposed conservation actions or habitat*
4 *enhancements.*

5 *(3) A—Identifies the location of the conservation actions or*
6 *habitat enhancements, including a location map, address, and size*
7 *of the site where the proposed conservation action or habitat*
8 *enhancement will be implemented.*

9 *(4) Color—Provides color aerial and ground-level photographs*
10 *that reflect current conditions on the site and surrounding*
11 *properties.*

12 *(5) A draft of the proposed mitigation credit agreement that*
13 *includes an explanation of how the proposed conservation action*
14 *or habitat enhancement will be implemented and how the proposed*
15 *mitigation credits will be created and used, including all of the*
16 *following:*

17 *(5) Explains how the mitigation credits will be created,*
18 *including, but not limited to, information regarding proposed*
19 *ownership arrangements, long-term management strategy, and*
20 *any phases of implementation.*

21 *(6) Includes a natural resources evaluation that documents*
22 *biotic and abiotic baseline conditions, including past, current, and*
23 *adjacent land uses, vegetation types, species information,*
24 *topography, hydrology, and soil types.*

25 *(7) Identifies public lands and permanently protected lands in*
26 *the vicinity of the conservation actions or habitat enhancements.*

27 *(A) The proposed*

28 *(8) Fully describes the proposed type and quantity of mitigation*
29 *credits and the supporting rationale.*

30 *(B) A proposed service area defined by a USDA Ecological*
31 *Subsection or Hydrologic Unit Code Watershed unit.*

32 *(C) An explanation of*

33 *(9) Explains how the proposed conservation action actions or*
34 *habitat enhancement is consistent with enhancements will*
35 *measurably advance conservation objectives of the regional*
36 *conservation framework, including how the action will help to*
37 *achieve the framework's biological goals and objectives.*
38 *framework that have not yet been achieved.*

39 *(D) Metrics*

1 (10) *Identifies metrics or indicators by which the proposed*
2 *conservation action or habitat enhancement's contribution to*
3 *achieving the framework's conservation goals and objectives can*
4 *feasibly be measured with existing technology. The net ecological*
5 *gain from the implementation of conservation actions and habitat*
6 *enhancements shall be reported using consistent metrics that*
7 *measure the increment of gain in the area and quality of habitat*
8 *or other natural resource values compared to baseline conditions,*
9 *and measures the increment of gain in relation to the regional*
10 *conservation framework's conservation objectives.*

11 ~~(E) The proposed~~

12 (11) *Describes the proposed landownership of the site or sites*
13 *of the conservation—action actions or habitat—enhancement.*
14 *enhancements.*

15 ~~(F) How the site of the conservation action will be permanently~~
16 ~~protected and managed in perpetuity, including, if applicable, a~~
17 ~~draft conservation easement.~~

18 (12) *Includes a template conservation easement for the sites of*
19 *any conservation action and an explanation of how the long-term*
20 *durability of the sites of any habitat enhancements will be ensured.*

21 ~~(G) How the~~

22 (13) *Ensures that the implementation of the conservation action*
23 *or habitat enhancement, including long-term protection and*
24 *management of the site, will be funded. funded in accordance with*
25 *Chapter 4.6 (commencing with Section 65965) of Division 1 of*
26 *Title 7 of the Government Code.*

27 ~~(H) A draft of the long-term management plan for the site.~~

28 ~~(I) A draft long-term monitoring and adaptive management plan~~
29 ~~for the site.~~

30 ~~(J) Drafts of habitat restoration plans and performance criteria,~~
31 ~~if applicable.~~

32 (14) *Includes a template monitoring and long-term adaptative*
33 *management plan.*

34 ~~(K) An explanation of~~

35 (15) *Explains the terms and conditions under which the*
36 *proposed mitigation credits may be sold or otherwise transferred*
37 *and how the proposed mitigation credits will be accounted for,*
38 *including the specific methods proposed for reporting and*
39 *maintaining—records a record of credit creation, release, and use,*
40 *sale, or transfer.*

1 (16) Includes enforcement provisions.

2 (17) Ensures that, for each site on which the conservation
3 actions or habitat enhancements will be implemented, the following
4 shall be prepared and submitted to the department for review for
5 adequacy and approval prior to implementation:

6 (A) Site-specific conservation objectives of the conservation
7 actions or habitat enhancements and how they reflect a measurable
8 advancement of the conservation objectives of the regional
9 conservation framework.

10 (B) Preliminary natural resources surveys that document biotic
11 and abiotic baseline conditions, including past, current, and
12 adjacent land uses, vegetation types, species information,
13 topography, hydrology, and soil types.

14 (C) For conservation actions, the conservation easement that
15 will be used to permanently protect the site, and for habitat
16 enhancements, the instrument that will be used to ensure their
17 long-term durability.

18 (D) A management plan that includes the short-term and
19 long-term management actions necessary to ensure that the
20 conservation actions or habitat enhancements achieve their
21 site-specific conservation objectives.

22 (E) If mitigation credits are proposed to be created from habitat
23 enhancements or conservation actions that include restoration of
24 ecological resources, detailed plans, including as-built designs
25 and ecological performance standards.

26 (F) A property analysis record or other comparable economic
27 analysis of the funding necessary to support site-specific
28 maintenance activities, such as monitoring and reporting, in
29 perpetuity.

30 (G) The sources for, and the terms under which, the endowment
31 for long-term protection, management, and enforcement will be
32 funded.

33 (H) A current preliminary report covering the site of the
34 conservation actions or habitat enhancements that identifies the
35 owner of the fee simple title and shows all liens, easements, and
36 other encumbrances and depicts all relevant property lines,
37 easements, dedications, and other features.

38 (I) A declaration of whether or not the proposed site has been
39 or is being used as mitigation, is designated or dedicated for park

1 or open space use, or designated for purposes that may be
2 inconsistent with habitat preservation.

3 (J) Details of any public funding received for acquisition or
4 restoration of, or other purposes related to, the proposed site.

5 (K) A phase I environmental site assessment of the site dated
6 not more than six months prior to the date of submission to the
7 department. This assessment shall be performed in accordance
8 with the ASTM International Standard E1527-05 “Standard
9 Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I
10 Environmental Site Assessment Process” or any successive ASTM
11 International standard active at the time of the assessment.

12 (18) Includes a proposed credit ledger and credit release
13 schedule that meets the requirements of subdivision (f).

14 ~~(6) Other information;~~

15 (19) Includes any other information, analysis, and legal or
16 financial assurances of implementation as the department deems
17 necessary or appropriate.

18 (f) (1) The release of mitigation credits for use, sale, or transfer
19 under a mitigation credit agreement shall require the department’s
20 approval in accordance with this subdivision.

21 (2) The release of mitigation credits shall be tied to
22 performance-based milestones and achievement of ecological
23 performance standards. The credit release schedule for each
24 mitigation credit agreement shall reserve a substantial share of
25 the total credits for release after those ecological performance
26 standards are fully achieved.

27 (3) The terms of the credit release schedule shall be specified
28 in the mitigation credit agreement. When conservation actions and
29 habitat enhancements are implemented and meet the
30 performance-based milestones specified in the credit release
31 schedule, credits shall be created in accordance with the credit
32 release schedule. If a conservation action or habitat enhancement
33 does not meet those performance-based milestones, the department
34 may suspend the release of credits, reduce the number of credits,
35 or otherwise modify the credit release schedule accordingly.

36 (4) In order for mitigation credits to be released, the person or
37 entity that has entered into a mitigation credit agreement shall
38 demonstrate to the department that the appropriate
39 performance-based milestones for credit release have been met.

1 *The department shall determine whether the milestones have been*
2 *met and the credits may be released.*

3 (e)

4 (g) Nothing in this chapter is intended to limit or impose
5 additional conditions on the creation or sale of mitigation credits
6 by a conservation bank or mitigation bank approved by the
7 department pursuant to Chapter 7.9 (commencing with Section
8 1797).

9 (f)

10 (h) The creation of mitigation credits pursuant to this section
11 from a conservation action or habitat enhancement implemented
12 within the plan area of an approved natural community
13 conservation plan shall not duplicate or replace mitigation
14 requirements set forth in the natural community conservation plan
15 and shall require the advance written approval of the plan's
16 implementing entity. *Mitigation credits created pursuant to this*
17 *section may be used for covered activities under an approved*
18 *natural community conservation plan only in accordance with the*
19 *requirements of the plan.*

20 1856. The department may collect fees from a person or entity
21 that proposes to enter into a mitigation credit agreement, and from
22 a public agency that proposes a regional conservation framework,
23 to pay for all or a portion of the department's costs relating to the
24 mitigation credit agreement or proposed framework.

25 1857. *The department may adopt guidelines and criteria to aid*
26 *in the implementation of Section 1855. Chapter 3.5 (commencing*
27 *with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the*
28 *Government Code does not apply to the development, adoption,*
29 *or amendment of guidelines or criteria pursuant to this section.*
30 *These guidelines and criteria shall be posted on the department's*
31 *Internet Web site.*