



California just became the first state to commit to 30 by '30.

Here's what that means:

10/29/2020

|

What did California do?

On Oct. 7, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an executive order that made California the first state in the nation to commit to a '30 by '30' goal — a pledge to conserve 30 percent of the state's land and waters by 2030.

In 2020, we live in a world of incredible material abundance, but we're running short on nature. Our country is losing two football field's worth of forest, meadow, grassland, desert, beachfront, or wetland to human development every single minute. That loss is acutely felt in California, which also saw more than [4 million](#) acres of land burned during one of the most catastrophic wildfire seasons on record.

Before the governor issued his order, Environment California supported a '30 by '30' bill in the state legislature, raising awareness and gathering support for the issue. Now, Environment California applauds Gov. Newsom's commitment, which has sweeping potential for land and species protection and climate mitigation.

How does the plan boost conservation?

Protecting 30 percent of our lands and oceans will mean more places where we can hike among trees and wildflowers, more mountaintops where we can see nothing but forests below, and more coastlines where all we can hear are waves.

Studies also show that conserving natural lands and waters is one of the best ways to protect biodiversity and prevent species extinctions.

Scientists warn we're in the middle of a 'sixth mass extinction.' As many as [1 million species](#) plant and animal species are at risk of extinction — many could become extinct within decades.

When we protect our lands and waters, we protect these species. Scientists have determined that conservation efforts could prevent more than [70 percent](#) of the predicted animal and plant extinctions on land. If we want to protect all our species, from the endangered Tricolored blackbirds to the endangered San Diego ambrosia flowers, we have to protect their habitat.

California's on the front lines of the climate crisis. Since 2010, the Golden State has suffered [8 of the state's 10 largest fires](#). The wildfires, heatwaves and droughts in California are a direct consequence of planet warming, but we're not losing hope. Studies show that conservation efforts, such as returning 20 percent of the world's farmlands to nature, could soak up nearly 50 percent of the carbon dioxide that has built up since the Industrial Revolution.

Sometimes, the best environmental defense comes from the environment itself. Gov. Newsom's executive order will let nature heal itself, while raising the bar for national — and even international — conservation standards, since experts expect [the issue of conservation could take center stage at a major United Nations conference](#) next summer.

What do we do next?

In California, we're working to secure the passage and adoption of concrete policies that would turn Gov. Newsom's pledge into reality. We want California's commitment to set the standard for conservation — but the buck doesn't stop there.

Across the country, we're working to conserve our land and oceans by:

- Calling on other states to pass comprehensive conservation legislation
- Working to reverse trends and rollbacks that turned our conservation efforts in the wrong direction
- Calling to ensure protections in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuaries

- Adopting a concrete goal, via a Congressional resolution, of protecting 30 percent of American lands and waters by 2030

What you can do

The places we love and need to protect species and climate are being lost to the consequences of climate change and habitat loss from oil drilling, overfishing and other threats. We're setting a national target of protecting 30 percent of our land and 30 percent of our ocean by 2030. [Add your name to our resolution.](#)