



Protecting Marin Since 1934

May 21, 2018

Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez-Fletcher
State Capitol, Room 214
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Support for Assembly Bill 2909 – Small Poultry Producer Protection Act

Dear Assemblymember Gonzalez-Fletcher:

The open and connected ranch lands and the ranchers that own and manage them have many shared goals with Marin Conservation League's (MCL) environmental conservation and protection mission. In 2015, MCL approved its Agricultural Policy Statement to underscore those shared goals and facilitate greater understanding of MCL's approach and relationship with Marin's agricultural community.

Because of these shared goals, MCL supported the Marin County Development Code amendments, approved in March 2017, that allowed for on-farm poultry processing in keeping with exemptions from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) for the same land use activity. In supporting those amendments, MCL put its Agricultural Policy Statement into practice, specifically its commitment to protecting the county's agricultural lands from development through multiple methods and approaches that are consistent with environmental protections. Most pressing of these is the reduction of greenhouse gas emission from transportation. As we explained in our letter to the Marin County Board of Supervisors, "updating the Code to permit animal livestock operations that meet the growing consumer market for locally produced meat is an important step in support of our local agricultural economy."

Consistent with that action, MCL supports adoption of Assembly Bill 2909 - Small Poultry Producer Protection Act. MCL's support of AB 2909 is contingent on the establishment of performance standards for these facilities, emphasizing that the level of oversight and protections for both the environment and food safety are in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations and requirements. We support the bill's purpose to fully align the USDA and CDFA policies for on-farm poultry processing so that California producers can sell directly to wholesale customers and have more flexibility in labor options for these operations. In addition, because AB 2909 will have broad statewide influence, MCL supports AB 2909 because it has the potential to reduce regional vehicle miles traveled and associated greenhouse gas emissions incurred currently by farmers that could process their poultry on-farm instead of driving to distant hubs for this service. Preliminary estimates for Marin producers alone could be a minimum of 48,000 miles a year and easily grow to more.

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As we did with the Marin County Development Code amendments of 2017, MCL views AB 2909 as an “acceptable and effective” means to facilitate agricultural diversification and sustainability in Marin County and throughout California.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Novy". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Linda Novy
President