

**Attorney General Jerry Brown**

**Governor Pete Wilson**

**Governor George Deukmejian**

**Governor Gray Davis**

February 4, 2009

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor of California  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

The California Conservation Corps is one state agency that taxpayers should be proud to support. It has instilled the work ethic and job skills in thousands of young men and women since 1976 and worked tirelessly to protect and enhance California's natural resources. Despite very tough economic times, the CCC should not be eliminated.

Perhaps the Corps' most vital role occurs during natural disasters. We have all seen first-hand CCC crews responding to floods, fires, earthquakes, oil spills and more. Crews are dispatched within hours and work long days until the job is done. After more than 30 years, the Corps is embedded as one of California's premier emergency response forces and one of the most cost-effective.

In 2008 alone, the CCC spent 141 straight days assisting fire agencies on wildfires and saved the state \$20 million over what it would have cost using other labor sources to respond to these fires. In the same year, the Corps saved taxpayers \$30.8 million through the completion of projects done for state departments such as CAL FIRE, State Parks, Caltrans and Water Resources.

Your proposed budget would redirect a portion of the CCC's funding to the local nonprofit conservation corps programs for training in emergency response. Representatives of these programs say they're not interested or prepared to take on this statewide role. And if they were, your proposal leaves no Corps, state or local, in 18 communities currently served by the CCC. It significantly diminishes corps activities in nine other cities as well. Virtually all Corps operations based in rural areas, both residential and nonresidential, would be eliminated, a loss of 1,310 green jobs for hard-working young men and women. Without the CCC residential program, there will be no opportunities for foster youth, for young adults from high-intensity gang areas or for others lacking a stable home environment.

The CCC hires mostly unemployed youth who would otherwise be a financial burden to the state on the unemployment or welfare rolls. In the Corps, however, they develop solid skills and are motivated to pursue a career and an education. Their confidence skyrockets and most become contributing members of the state's workforce.

President Obama has expressed support for programs similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s with a modern-day "green corps" focus. It is likely there will be funding provided to the states for these efforts, and the CCC with 30 years of experience is poised to act on these initiatives.

Today's CCC is in large part the legacy of the late B.T. Collins, who poured his heart and soul into the program. Because of his devotion to the Corps, both as its director and beyond, the program has continued to thrive and has benefited the lives of more than 100,000 participants.

Governor, we urge you to reconsider your budget proposal. Save the CCC and allow it to continue its work for our youth and natural resources and for all Californians.

Sincerely,

  
Attorney General Jerry Brown  
34<sup>th</sup> California Governor

  
George Deukmejian  
35<sup>th</sup> California Governor

  
Pete Wilson  
36<sup>th</sup> California Governor

  
Gray Davis  
37<sup>th</sup> California Governor