

Climate change, water shortages, market shifts, and urban growth all pose a challenge to maintaining enough rice acreage to guarantee a viable habitat for these species.

The recent UC Davis study “The Rice Footprint” sets forth a plan to maintain this critical ecosystem, which would cost an estimated \$2 billion to restore if we fail to preserve it.

AB 1551 supports this crucial conservation work by identifying implementation of the Rice Footprint as a priority of the California Rice Commission.”

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

None received

COMMENTS:

Rice agriculture plays a vital role in California’s conservation efforts. However, climate changes, water availability, agricultural crop markets, and urban expansion have raised uncertainties that affect the role of the rice industry and wildlife conservation. According to the University of California’s Center for Watershed Sciences, California’s “working” ricelands, especially winter-flooded rice fields, provide surrogate wetlands that host a diverse number of species in the Central Valley. For example, rice fields are critical for Giant Gartersnakes, wintering waterfowl, wintering and breeding shorebirds, Sandhill Cranes, native fishes, and many other species¹.

RELATED LEGISLATION:

AB 623 (*Chapter 567, Statutes of 1998*): Established the California Rice Commission.

PRIOR ACTIONS:

Assembly Floor:	64 - 0
Assembly Appropriations Committee:	
Assembly Agriculture Committee:	8 - 0

¹ <https://watershed.ucdavis.edu/project/conservation-footprint-california-rice>

SUPPORT:

Audobon California
California Rice Commission
The Nature Conservancy

OPPOSITION:

None received

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