

predicated on the assumption that the proposed Hurok Hawk Conservancy will mirror other small state conservancies housed under CNRA and will acquire and manage land in perpetuity. CNRA notes that as the Conservancy completes more land acquisition projects over the next ten years, it may require additional permanent staff.

- 2) Ongoing cost pressures of an unknown but significant amount, likely in the millions of dollars, for the Conservancy to implement projects, programs, and activities consistent with its mission (General Fund, Huron Hawk Conservancy Fund, future bond funds).
- 3) Minor and absorbable costs to the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wildlife Conservation Board, Department of Parks and Recreation, and State Lands Commission.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Conservancies offer an opportunity to support projects to the benefit of the natural environment and local communities. The defined Huron Hawk area stands as a vacant 3,000 acre plot of land home to a multitude of flora and fauna alongside a local community readily interested in projects to improve the site. However, there is an absence of any central entity or governmental body to facilitate the funding and development of these projects. The establishment of the Huron Hawk Conservancy would promote equitable access to a healthy environment for the underserved Central Valley region.

- 2) **Background. State Conservancies.** There are 11 conservancies under CNRA that are charged with the protection and preservation of the lands within their statutorily specified jurisdictions. The conservancies also work to provide recreational opportunities, facilitate climate adaptation, connect people to the regional landscapes, and bring state investments to the region. Every conservancy typically has a governing board, mission statement, geographic territory, and stipulated powers, duties, and limitations.

The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 (Proposition 4) authorizes various funding amounts for each of the existing conservancies. The Conservancy proposed by this bill would not be eligible for the conservancies' line-item Proposition 4 funding.

Huron Hawk Area. The San Luis Canal Westside Detention Basin within Fresno County and near the City of Huron is the largest publicly owned riparian habitat in the Tulare Basin and consists of an area with important opportunities for ecological, recreational, educational, and economic benefits to the neighboring central valley area.

The project site is owned by the United States Bureau of Reclamation and co-managed by the Department of Water Resources, in addition to being monitored by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The author notes the area has 3,000 acres of unique and unutilized potential that can support nearby communities. The author further contends that

while many local groups have expressed interest in conducting projects that can improve the site and provide environmental, educational, and recreational benefits to the region, no central entity exists to coordinate projects or collect and distribute funding, and no existing conservancy contains this site in its jurisdiction.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 721 (Soria) of the current legislative session is substantially similar to this bill and was held on this committee's suspense file.

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