



Media Contacts:

Roseryn Bhudsabourg
Office of Assembly Member Ash Kalra
(916) 319-2027

Roseryn.Bhudsabourg@asm.ca.gov
<https://a27.asmdc.org/>

Alisha Maniglia
Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
(669) 210-9590

amaniglia@openspaceauthority.org
www.openspaceauthority.org

**Coyote Valley Conservation Program Bill Introduced
by Assemblymember Ash Kalra Lays the Groundwork
for a More Climate Resilient Future**
AB 948 highlights statewide importance of protecting Coyote Valley

San Jose, Calif. (April 5, 2019) – As agencies across the state are beginning to emphasize the importance of protecting our natural lands and their resources, Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-San Jose) today announced the introduction of AB 948, which would create the Coyote Valley Conservation Program to be administered by the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority. If the bill is passed, Coyote Valley will receive statewide recognition as a landscape of significant importance for its natural infrastructure benefits including flood risk reduction, wildlife protection, and climate resilience.

Nestled between the fast-growing cities of San Jose and Morgan Hill, the Coyote Valley is a unique natural and agricultural landscape that provides an essential corridor for wildlife moving between hundreds of thousands of acres of open space in the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range, where over \$3.5 billion has already been spent to conserve habitat. AB 948 designates a Conservation Program area covering over 17,000 acres to create a structure for realizing restoration, preservation, and recreation projects.

“I am proud to introduce AB 948, which would help preserve Coyote Valley as a remarkable place for people, wildlife, and our natural environment for generations to come,” said Assemblymember Kalra. “Coyote Valley is not only a unique natural treasure in Santa Clara Valley; its floodplains, wetlands, and agricultural lands are also critically important to the region’s climate resilience—this enhances the ability of our natural and urban communities to respond and adapt to increasing droughts, fires, and floods brought on by climate change.”

Coyote Valley contains 2,500 acres of floodplains and fully half of Silicon Valley's undeveloped aquifer recharge areas. By recharging drinking water aquifers and absorbing and slowing floodwaters, Coyote Valley provides important public safety and resilience benefits for downstream urban communities in the face of a changing climate.

AB 948 recognizes the important role of the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, a local public open space special district created by state legislature in 1993. The Authority would protect and restore the Coyote Valley as a multi-benefit landscape, for wildlife, water resources, outdoor recreation, and agriculture. The Authority and public and private conservation partners have already protected over 3,300 acres within the proposed program area guided by adopted plans including the *Coyote Valley Landscape Linkage* and *Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Plan*.

"Coyote Valley has been under the threat of development for over 40 years. Now is the time to protect this irreplaceable landscape for nature and people and acknowledge the important role Coyote Valley plays in the sustainability and resiliency of the greater south bay region," said Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager of the Open Space Authority. "We hope AB 948 will help guide future state resources to protection, restoration, and public enjoyment of this amazing place," said Mackenzie. Coyote Valley has long faced intense development pressure and the passage of this bill may position Coyote Valley to access natural resources bond funding to implement the conservation and restoration vision for Coyote Valley.

The Coyote Valley Conservation Program also encourages the Authority to expand on important local partnerships to implement restoration and preservation projects. The Authority is currently working closely with the City of San José to reduce flood risk by preventing development of natural floodplains in Coyote Valley. AB 948's creation of a Coyote Valley Conservation Program builds on the passage of Measure T by the City of San José in November 2018, a \$650 million infrastructure bond that includes up to \$50 million for land acquisition in Coyote Valley for natural flood control and environmental quality.

"Assemblymember Kalra's proposal builds on the City's extensive work with our environmental partners, particularly the Open Space Authority and Peninsula Open Space Trust, to preserve Coyote Valley for future generations," said San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo. "Coupled with the \$50 million in Measure T funds approved by voters last year, AB 948 can help us protect our water supply, preserve wildlife, and reduce flooding risk. I look forward to working with our community partners on this once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect Coyote Valley."

AB 948 is coauthored by Assemblymembers Kansen Chu (D-San Jose), Robert Rivas (D-Hollister), and Mark Stone (D-Monterey Bay) and Senators Jim Beall (D-San Jose) and Bill Monning (D-Carmel).

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About Assemblymember Ash Kalra, District 27

Assemblymember Ash Kalra was first elected to the California Legislature in 2016, representing the 27th District, which encompasses approximately half of San Jose and includes all of downtown. In 2018, he was re-elected to his second term. Assemblymember Kalra is the Chair of the State Assembly Labor & Employment Committee. He previously served as Chair of the Aging & Long-Term Committee and continues to serve as a Committee Member, as well as serving on the Judiciary, Education, and Water, Parks & Wildlife Committees. Assemblymember Kalra has established himself as a leader on issues ranging from the environment and clean energy, criminal justice reform, health care sustainability, housing affordability, growing our transportation infrastructure, and expanding economic opportunity to all Californians. Assemblymember Kalra previously served as a San José City Councilmember for eight years and was a deputy public defender in Santa Clara County for 11 years prior to the City Council. He is the first Indian-American to serve in the California Legislature in state history.

About the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority conserves the natural environment, supports agriculture, and connects people to nature, by protecting open spaces, natural areas, and working farms and ranches for future generations. Since 1993, the Authority has protected over 25,000 acres of open space, preserving the region's scenic beauty, protecting water resources and other natural capital, and providing outdoor recreation opportunities for Santa Clara Valley residents. Visit [openspaceauthority.org](https://www.openspaceauthority.org) for more information.