

**** PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ****



Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks
Melanie Schlotterbeck
714-501-3133 (cell)
GreenVision@FHBP.org
www.FHBP.org

REGIONAL CONSERVATION GROUP RECOGNIZED FOR 25 YEARS OF SERVICE FOR SENATE DISTRICT 36

Newport Beach, CA, Friday, December 2, 2022 – The regional nonprofit, Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks (FHBP), is recognized for its long-time community service by State Senator Patricia Bates (District 36) at a small celebration at Upper Newport Bay’s Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center. Honoring its 25 years of work in the field of conservation, land use, and transportation mitigation, the Senator recognized the meaningful contributions FHBP has made to the local and regional conservation landscape.

“One of the most important lessons learned through my work with Senator Bates is that finding common ground is not only possible, but it also leads to important successes,” commented Melanie Schlotterbeck, FHBP Green Vision Project Coordinator.

Through multiple coalitions, FHBP has found a niche in the conservation movement that uses strength in numbers, and a coordinated approach, to protect landscapes in and around Orange County. One of the first tools it devised was the Green Vision Map, which lays out the vision for conservation actions in and around Orange County. More than 80 conservation and community groups support the Green Vision Project’s goal to find and create funding for parks, water quality and preserving open spaces.

Working closely with decision makers and agencies, FHBP uses innovative tools to promote conservation and, where appropriate, support housing in existing urban areas. FHBP was instrumental in the negotiation, creation and implementation of the Orange County Transportation Authority’s Environmental Mitigation Program. Since 2005, the organization has shepherded the mitigation program into the success it is today.

“I had the pleasure of working with Melanie as the Mitigation Program’s Environmental Coalition representative,” adds Senator Bates, “This work led to the acquisition of seven preserves by the Authority totaling over 1,300 acres and the restoration of roughly 350 acres across a dozen sites.”

FHBP now has its sights set on creating a mitigation program with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) supported by a six-county-wide decision-making tool called the SoCal Greenprint. Over the last 12 years, FHBP has worked with SCAG staff and policy makers to incorporate natural lands preservation policies that meet state goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled, while also allowing sustainable growth in priority transit areas.

By way of background, in 1997, 10 Orange County environmental volunteers created FHBP after the Orange County bankruptcy raided funds dedicated for OC Parks. The volunteers realized that a new consolidated approach that strengthened and coordinated the voices of parks, water, open space, and environmental education groups, was needed. FHBP continues to advocate for policies and projects that improve parklands and natural lands ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.

###

Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks is a nonprofit organization that has, for 25 years, promoted, protected and enhanced the harbors, beaches, parks, trails, open spaces, natural preserves, and historic sites in Orange County. For more information, visit our website at: www.FHBP.org.