

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 1789 (Bennett)

As Amended August 11, 2022

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) to prepare a full update of the California Recreation Trails System Plan (trails plan) by January 1, 2024 and report to the Legislature on progress in implementing the plan.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Strike provisions giving permissive authority to the State Park and Recreation Commission for trail planning and other trails-related functions.
- 2) Remove biking from the list of examples of recreational activities for which improvements may be undertaken within state parks.
- 3) Delete obsolete provisions requiring the Director of State Parks to prepare a list of recommended priority trail system projects for the state park system and submit that list to the Governor for consideration for inclusion in the budget.
- 4) Make other technical, non-substantive, and conforming changes.

COMMENTS

Trends in trails use. According to surveys conducted by the Outdoor Industry Association, trail use is the most popular outdoor activity in the nation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, park and natural surface trail use saw marked increases in visitation. For example, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District saw a 100% increase in preserve and trails visitations during 2020 over the previous year. The state's largest regional park entity, the East Bay Regional Park District, reported similar statistics.

State Parks trails. State Parks manages more than 5,200 miles of trails. Additional thousands of miles of trails are found on other state lands, federal lands, and in regional, county and city parks. These trails range from meandering and narrow footpaths that may provide beach access or entry into a redwood forest to a variety of other types of trails that can accommodate bicyclists, runners, equestrians, hikers, in-line skaters, and wheelchair users.

California Recreational Trails Act. In 1974, the Legislature passed the California Recreational Trails Act (CRTA), which requires the Director of State Parks to prepare and maintain a comprehensive trails plan for the development and operation of a statewide system of recreation trails. The trails plan assesses present and future demand for recreational trail use and recommends a system of trail routes designed to provide a wide range of recreational opportunities. State Parks first completed the trails plan in 1978 and later updated it in 2002. The 2002 plan update identified 12 goals, including to develop adequate and stable funding for planning, acquisition, development and management of trails; to prepare regional and statewide inventories of existing, planned, and potential trails; and to promote and encourage the incorporation of trails and greenways development and linkages into all local and statewide land use planning.

The CRTA requires the State Parks director to submit a report that highlights progress on this plan to the Legislature every two years. The last available update is from 2011. It reported on progress on the 12 goals and on specific trails around the state. In particular, it noted a need for more funding for trail maintenance, planning, and increasing access. The report also highlighted conflicts on multi-use trails among different types of trail users.

Current and recent funding programs. The federally funded Recreational Trails Program (RTP) makes approximately \$1.7 million available annually in California for grants for non-motorized recreational trails and related projects. This includes funding pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails projects. Funded projects may also serve as non-motorized transportation corridors. Routine maintenance is not eligible for funding under this program.

The Active Transportation Program (ATP), created by SB 99 (Budget and Fiscal Review Committee), Chapter 359, Statutes of 2013, consolidated existing federal and state transportation programs into a single program. This included the reallocation of some funds which had previously funded natural surface trails. SB 1 (Beall), Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017, makes \$100 million available annually to the ATP from revenues from the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account. Projects eligible for funding under the ATP include recreational trails and trailheads, park projects that facilitate trail linkages or connectivity to non-motorized corridors, and conversion of abandoned railroad corridors to trails.

In 2018, Proposition 68 created the Trails and Greenways Program, administered by the California Natural Resources Agency. The bond allocated \$30 million for trail investments. Grant applicant demand exceeded the amount of available funds with \$400 million in requests.

According to the Author

"During the pandemic, our parks and trails were highly utilized as an outlet for stress and connection. This difficult time, put a spotlight on how integral access to outdoor spaces are to our overall well-being. Despite some modest federal and state investments in the past, we have not funded infrastructure improvements in our trails systems. This bill would require regular updates to the California Recreational Trails System Plan and that these updates be reported to the Legislature."

Arguments in Support

The City of Moorpark supports this bill arguing that "California's recreational trails are one of the most popular forms of outdoor engagement, and they have seen increased visitation since the COVID-19 pandemic began. To meet this increase in demand, trail infrastructure needs further investment to address the added stress our trails have experienced over the past several years."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, there are one-time costs of up to \$125,000 (General Fund) for State Parks to update the California Recreational Trail System Plan by January 1, 2024.

VOTES:**ASM WATER, PARKS, AND WILDLIFE: 13-0-2**

YES: Bauer-Kahan, Megan Dahle, Bennett, Friedman, Cristina Garcia, Kalra, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Blanca Rubio, Salas, Smith, Villapudua, Ward

ABS, ABST OR NV: Bigelow, Levine

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 12-0-4

YES: Holden, Bryan, Calderon, Carrillo, Mike Fong, Gabriel, Eduardo Garcia, Levine, Quirk, Robert Rivas, Akilah Weber, Wilson

ABS, ABST OR NV: Bigelow, Megan Dahle, Davies, Fong

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 75-0-3

YES: Aguiar-Curry, Arambula, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Bigelow, Bloom, Boerner Horvath, Mia Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Carrillo, Cervantes, Chen, Choi, Cooley, Cooper, Cunningham, Megan Dahle, Daly, Davies, Flora, Mike Fong, Fong, Friedman, Gabriel, Gallagher, Cristina Garcia, Eduardo Garcia, Gipson, Gray, Grayson, Haney, Holden, Irwin, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Kiley, Lackey, Lee, Levine, Low, Maienschein, Mathis, Mayes, McCarty, Medina, Mullin, Muratsuchi, Nazarian, Nguyen, Patterson, Petrie-Norris, Quirk, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Reyes, Luz Rivas, Robert Rivas, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Salas, Santiago, Seyarto, Smith, Stone, Ting, Valladares, Voepel, Waldron, Ward, Akilah Weber, Wicks, Wilson, Wood, Rendon

ABS, ABST OR NV: Berman, O'Donnell, Villapudua

SENATE FLOOR: 40-0-0

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Atkins, Bates, Becker, Borgeas, Bradford, Caballero, Cortese, Dahle, Dodd, Durazo, Eggman, Glazer, Gonzalez, Grove, Hertzberg, Hueso, Hurtado, Jones, Kamlager, Laird, Leyva, Limón, McGuire, Melendez, Min, Newman, Nielsen, Ochoa Bogh, Pan, Portantino, Roth, Rubio, Skinner, Stern, Umberg, Wieckowski, Wiener, Wilk

UPDATED

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