



Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia, 56th Assembly District

AB 18 – California Clean Water, Climate, and Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018.

Agenda Item X
WCCA
5/8/17

BACKGROUND

According to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Plan of 2015, of the nearly 300 local/regional park directors surveyed, 55% cited rehabilitation of existing parks as the highest priority, versus 19% for new park development and 17% for new facilities in existing parks.

It has been 14 years since California last approved a “true park bond.” The protracted economic downturn in 2008 had a disproportionate impact on the local, regional and state parks infrastructure in the state as the services and investments associated with this type of infrastructure were, during this period, viewed as less critical and were oftentimes subject to cuts. As a consequence, demand for capital dollars continues to be at a fever pitch as witnessed by the 8-1 ratio of available grant dollars versus grant application requests during the last and final round of competitive awards in 2010 under the Statewide Parks Program. There has been particularly high demand in both urban and rural disadvantaged communities where many still lack access to safe parks, trails, recreation areas, and access to the great outdoors.

Previous Bonds

Recently, there have been three separate vehicles that have served as park bonds approved the voters since 2000:

Proposition 12 (2000) Total \$2.1 billion including:

- A) \$780m for local, regional parks primarily through block grant awards.
- B) \$400m for state parks to address deferred maintenance and acquisition priorities

Proposition 40(2002) Total \$2.4 billion including:

- A) \$946m for local, regional parks through both block grants and competitive grant awards
- B) \$250m for State Parks to address deferred maintenance and acquisition priorities

Proposition 84(2006) Total \$5.4 billion(Primarily Water and Flood Control Bond)

- A) \$457m for park poor/disadvantaged community funding and nature center investment
- B) \$400m for state parks to address deferred maintenance and acquisition priorities

SUMMARY

This bond builds off of the efforts made last year by Assemblymember Garcia when it was introduced as AB 2444.

Investments to improve and to further create parks and recreation areas, as well as to create trail networks that provide access from neighborhoods to parks and recreational opportunities, will help ensure all Californians have access to safe places to exercise and enjoy recreational activities. Additionally, continued investment in the state’s parks, trails, and natural resources, and greening urban areas will mitigate the effects of climate change, providing California access to its bountiful natural resources for future generations to come.

For state parks, a priority has been made for the maintenance backlog with 80% of funds going to state parks specifically allocated for deferred maintenance.

A priority will be made throughout the investments to recognize the need for poor-park and disadvantaged communities throughout the state following both the current “disadvantaged communities” definition and the “severely disadvantaged community” definition listed in the Health and Safety code.

The following investments on the back sheet will be the primary targets of the bond.

Current Amount Contained in AB 18: **\$3.005 B**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Phone: 916.319.2056 Fax: 916.319.2156

- A) Investments in the creation and expansion of safe neighborhood parks in park-poor neighborhoods in accordance with the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Act of 2008. At least 20% of funds available pursuant to this division shall be allocated to severely disadvantaged communities. Up to 10% of funds available may be allocated for technical assistance to disadvantaged communities.
- B) Investments for Local Park Rehabilitation and improvement grants to local governments on a per capita basis. Priority will be on rehabilitating existing infrastructure and to address deficiencies in neighborhoods lacking access to the outdoors.
- C) Investments in regional park districts, counties, open-space districts, open-space authorities, and other local eligible park entities.
- D) Investment in the restoration and preservation of existing state park facilities and units to preserve and increase public access to those facilities and units and to protect the natural, cultural, and historic resources of those facilities and units. Priority will be made upon the department's backlog of deferred maintenance.
- E) Investments to provide non-motorized infrastructure development and enhancements that promote new or alternate access to waterways, trails, outdoor recreational pursuits, and forested or other natural environments to encourage health-related commuting and opportunities for Californians to reconnect with nature. 25% of funds will be made available to communities for innovative transportation programs that provide new and expanded outdoor experiences to disadvantaged youth.
- F) Investments for cities, counties, and districts in nonurbanized counties under the Roberti-Z'berg-Harris Urban Open-space and Recreation Program Act – For populations less than 500,000.
- G) Investments under the RiverParkways Act, also including projects that protect and enhance urban creeks. Will also include funding for stormwater capture projects that lead to improved or enhanced space.
- H) Investments will be made into projects providing improvements in the rehabilitation or expansion of local or regional park infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of substantial visitor and tourist oriented use patterns.
- I) Investments to enhance and protect coastal and ocean resources.
- J) Investments into the protection and expansion of wildlife corridors including projects to improve connectivity between habitat areas, for projects to improve climate adaptation and resilience of natural systems, and for projects to protect and improve existing open space corridors and trail linkages related to utility or transportation infrastructure that provide habitat connectivity and public access or trails.
- K) Investments for implementing climate adaptation and resiliency projects that improve a community's ability to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Projects shall improve and protect coastal and rural economies, agricultural viability, wildlife corridors, or habitat, develop future recreational opportunities, or enhance drought tolerance and water retention.
- L) Investments in State Conservancies

SUPPORT – AB 18 (Garcia)



January 30, 2017

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia, Chair
Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 18 (Garcia) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Garcia,

As you know, It has been fifteen years since the Legislature advanced a park and resources bond to the ballot. The above signatories, comprised of state, regional and local park, resource, open-space and expanded access for communities of color professionals, emphatically thank you for authoring this bond and respectfully encourage your committee colleagues to endorse this measure which establishes a framework to infuse much needed financial resources into all neighborhood, regional, and state parks.

As California recovers from the recession, there is an urgent need to fix, repair, and maintain the infrastructure state and local agencies currently operate. Nowhere is that more profound than in park and recreation departments across California which are experiencing daunting backlogs of major maintenance projects that add up to billions of dollars. In fact, in addition to the identified need of state parks (Excess of \$1 billion to address capital and deferred maintenance) based on a recent California

Park & Recreation Society (CPRS) survey it has been estimated that the unfunded need for local and regional parks tops out at over \$25 billion over the next several years (LA County needs assessment identified \$21 billion alone). Thus, In order to reconcile infrastructure need, create greater public access through trails and innovative transportation, strategically protect open-space and California critical resource lands and balance this need with the demand for new park space in underserved urban areas the undersigned consider this bill reflective of a capable effort to merge programs of the past with an eye toward programs moving forward that adapt to the changing demographics, needs and use patterns of all Californians. This coalition draws particular attention to the below programs identified in this bill to address key outcomes.

1. Per Capita Program (\$420 million)
 - Both Propositions 12 and 40 contained nearly \$600 million in discretionary funds to local agencies (Per Capita and Roberti-Z' Berg-Harris grants).
 - Recent polling suggests that fair and equitable distributions statewide are strongly supported by registered voters.
 - Allows for statewide equitable distributions since it is based on population and permits agencies to address individual needs (new parks, expansion, rehabilitation, acquisition).
 - Language prioritizes recipient agencies expending proceeds on park deficiencies.
2. AB 31 (KDL) Statewide Park Program: Park Poor Communities (\$900 million)
 - Program encourages the creation of new parks in disadvantaged communities statewide with particular emphasis on urban areas.
 - There is a general correlation between high rates of childhood obesity/diabetes and inadequate recreational facilities and green space which this program seeks to address.
 - Locating parks near population clusters reduces "Vehicle Miles Traveled" (VMTs) and the state's reliance on auto related transport thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
 - During its two grant cycle rounds, program funding demand exceeded the availability of funds nine fold.
 - Further work is needed on program to expand competitiveness of projects.
3. County and Regional Park and Open Space District and Authorities Program (\$120 million)
 - There was reference to this program in previous iterations of park bond vehicles (SB 783 and SB 1086).
 - This would serve as a compliment to aforementioned AB 31. Of the \$368 million available for competitive grants through this program, less than \$10 million was awarded to county and regional park entities.
4. Expanding Access: Trails and Innovative Transportation Program (\$45 million)
 - Trail use is the number one form of outdoor recreation in the state. Accounting for billions of dollars in economic activity in California.
 - Funding for the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) has been severely curtailed over the years by virtue of reductions in federal awards and the reversion of RTP funds to the Active Transportation Program (ATP).
 - It is estimated that only \$5 million is available annually through competitive grants for trail improvements in the state.

- Parks Forward report identifies deficiencies in transit and transportation opportunities as a barrier to nature and outdoor experiences among challenge youth and families.
5. State Parks (\$330 million)
 - California State Parks 150 year anniversary came and went without any fanfare. This bill celebrates the great legacy and contribution state parks has made to the Californians across the state by reinvesting in our system of parks.
 - State parks has identified an unmet need of greater than \$1 billion to address aging and substandard infrastructure in our system. This bill requires that no less than \$80 of available proceed be used in this manner.
 6. Strategic Investments in Lands and Waterways to protect natural resources, open-space landscapes and promote public access.
 - California River Parkway is oversubscribed nearly 5-1. Investments in settings such as the LA River will promote diverse public use of a linear greenway to reconnect the major tributary within the LA basin to its 10+ million residents.
 - The State Coastal Conservancy and the Bay area Program has a long history of working with local and regional agencies on multi-benefit projects in and around the Bay Area to enhance bay and shoreline properties while promoting public access to the 9+ million residents within the larger Bay Area Region.

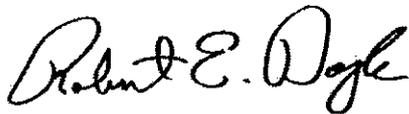
In closing, AB 18 provides a tremendous return on investment (ROI) for California as the outdoor recreation industry represents an \$87 billion economic driver in the state and underwrites more than 700,000. We believe California needs to refuel this economic engine to protect and enhance the investments to parks and natural land infrastructure. Hence, we respectfully request your support for this legislation and ask that the recommendations above be considered.

For more information, please contact Doug Houston at (916) 447-9884.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Stephens
Executive Director, California Park & Recreation Society (CPRS)



Robert E. Doyle
General Manager, East Bay Regional Park District



Rue Mapp
Founder & Chief Executive Officer, OutDoor Afro



Rick Sloan
President, California Association of Recreation and Park Districts (CARPD)



José G. González
Founder, Latino Outdoors



Douglas D. Houston
Executive Director, State Park Partners Coalition (SPPC)



Caryl Hart, Ph.D.
Director, Sonoma County Regional Parks



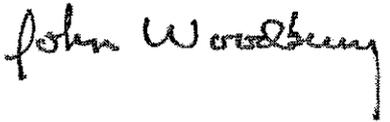
Rachel Norton
Interim Chief Executive Officer, San Francisco Parks Alliance



Stephen E. Abbors
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Andrea Mackenzie
General Manager, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority



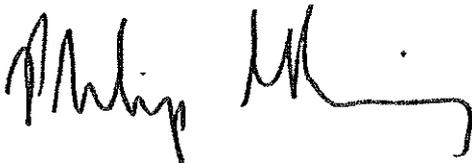
John Woodbury
General Manager, Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District



Laura R. Cohen, J.D.
Director, Western Region, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy



Steve Hoagland
President, California Association of Park & Recreation Commissioners & Board Members



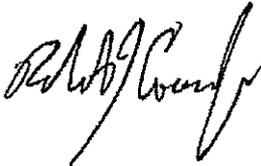
Phil Ginsburg
General Manager, San Francisco Recreation and Park District



Mark Stanley
Executive Director, Watershed Conservation Authority



Robb Courtney
Director, Santa Clara County Parks



Bob Coomber
Board Chair, Livermore Area Recreation and Park District

Cc: The Honorable Members of the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee and Consultant
Assembly Republican Caucus Consultant