




**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

DATE	May 7, 2025
TITLE	Recommendation to Support State Legislation
DIVISION	General Manager's Office
FROM	Erich Pfuehler, Division Lead of Government and Legislative Affairs
APPROVED	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

RECOMMENDATION

The Board Legislative Committee concurs with the General Manager's recommendation to support the following legislation: SB 601, AB 902 and AB 1426.

BACKGROUND

As part of the 2025-2026 Legislative Session, the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) Board of Directors will take formal positions on bills as they are introduced and considered by their respective Legislatures. To guide bill analysis, the Park District's Board of Directors established seven key advocacy goals through Resolution NO.: 2024 – 12 – 288. These advocacy goals strive to align funding and policy advocacy with identified project and program needs and priorities. Guided by the Park District mission, elected Board of Directors and General Manager, Government and Legislative Affairs staff work to align advocacy goals with Park District need. Overarching principles include equitable service delivery, advancing climate resiliency adaptation and mitigation, guiding work with an environmental ethic, supporting inclusive interpretation and educational opportunities, increasing conservation through land acquisition and ensuring the fiscal health of the Park District. The specific goals are as follows:

Climate – Friendly Transportation: To expand accessible active and public transportation to and within East Bay parks and trails.

Ecosystem Stewardship: To support ecosystem health through restoration, acquisition and habitat enhancement, and improved efficiencies in regulatory approvals.

Equitable Park Access: To ensure equitable access to parks so all East Bay communities can enjoy the physical and psychological benefits of nature.

Extreme Weather Preparedness: To address sea level rise, lake health and other climate-related challenges with nature-based infrastructure and proactive mitigation strategies.

Green Jobs: To guide the development of career pathways for all in the parks, recreation, outdoor and environmental fields.

Welcoming Visitor Use Facilities: To ensure all visitors feel welcomed to East Bay parks and trails by providing facilities which are safe, accessible, inclusive and sustainable.

Wildfire Resilience: To minimize the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the East Bay by using proactive, ecologically sound vegetation management strategies.

ANALYSIS

The legislation proposed for support by the Park District, as listed below, has been identified based on its alignment with at least one of the seven advocacy goals of the Park District and in support of the overarching principles of advocacy approved by Resolution NO.: 2024 – 12 – 288. To engage on the identified bills, the proposed resolution will direct staff on specific actions related to Park District supported legislation, including writing letters of support, participating in committee or bill hearings in Sacramento, and engaging with the author/sponsor and relevant elected official's offices directly. A support position for legislation would be extended to a related or companion bill introduced in the opposing chamber.

SB 601 (Allen D-Santa Monica) Right to Clean Water Act aligns with the key advocacy goal of Extreme Weather Preparedness. This legislation is sponsored by Defenders of Wildlife and California Coastkeeper Alliance. This bill seeks to restore safeguards for Federal clean water regulations and protections on many streams and wetlands which had been in place for decades, but were rolled back by a recent United States Supreme Court ruling. SB 601 would comprehensively modify California's water quality regulations, focusing on expanding water protection and enforcement mechanisms by requiring permits for pollution discharges from construction projects and businesses. The state standard would meet or exceed the regulations previously in place at the Federal level. The bill also requires cities and counties to verify that businesses and construction projects have appropriate water discharge permits, with potential penalties for non-compliance. This legislation would impact marshes and creeks within the Park District's boundaries.

AB 902 (Schultz D-Burbank) Connected Communities Act aligns with the key advocacy goal of Ecosystem Stewardship. This legislation is sponsored by the Center for Biological Diversity and by the Wildlands Network. AB 902 would require regional planning and transportation agencies, such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, to prioritize road safety and wildlife connectivity when creating and adopting a regional transportation plan.

Specifically, this bill would require agencies to consult with the state Department of Fish and Wildlife to minimize wildlife barriers in transportation planning. The proposed changes would include, but are not limited to, identifying and analyzing connectivity areas, permeability and natural landscape areas which are partially or fully within the region of the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) or transportation planning agency, and consider the impacts of development caused by transportation infrastructure. MPOs will be required to incorporate wildlife-friendly standards like specialized fencing, lighting and development practices, and must consult with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Native American tribes and conservation districts. Agencies will be required to remediate any identified barriers and publish a list of projects requiring such remediation on their websites. If enacted, this legislation could result in a number of improvements in infrastructure-dense areas within the East Bay.

AB 1426 (Bauer-Kahan D – San Ramon) Diablo Range Conservation Program aligns with the key advocacy goal of Ecosystem Stewardship. This bill is sponsored by Save Mount Diablo and establishes the Diablo Range Conservation Program, which will be administered by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) through the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The program aims to protect, preserve and restore the Diablo Range, a unique landscape spanning approximately 3.5 million acres between the San Francisco Bay Area, Salinas Valley and San Joaquin Valley.

Key objectives include protecting biological diversity, enhancing climate resilience, improving air and water resources, and expanding public access to lands. The bill creates a Diablo Range Conservation Fund in the State Treasury and authorizes the WCB to provide grants to local public agencies, nonprofit organizations and tribes for projects such as habitat restoration, public access improvements, invasive species control and educational facilities.

WCB may also establish an ad hoc advisory committee composed of county and city representatives, state agency representatives and public members with expertise in the region. Importantly, WCB cannot own or acquire land, manage land without owner consent or levy taxes. The bill also allows WCB to accept donations and grants, which will be deposited in a dedicated Donation Account within the fund. Park District Board Members would qualify to serve on the advisory committee of the Diablo Range Conservation Program.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. State Legislation for Support – Presentation – Board Legislative Committee May 7, 2025.