


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

---

<b>DATE</b>	March 5, 2025
<b>TITLE</b>	Recommendation to Support State Legislation
<b>DIVISION</b>	General Manager's Office
<b>FROM</b>	Erich Pfuehler, Division Lead of Government and Legislative Affairs
<b>APPROVED</b>	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

---

**RECOMMENDATION**

The General Manager recommends the Board Legislative Committee recommend to the full Board of Directors approval to extend support on the following legislation: SB 392 – Park District sponsored legislation – and SB 55, SB 88, SB 239, SB 287, AB 259, and AB 269.

**BACKGROUND**

As part of the 2024-2025 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 which was passed on December 17, 2024 by the Board of Directors to approve the 2025-2026 Legislative Program.

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, 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 are welcomed to the 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.

### PARK DISTRICT SPONSORED LEGISLATION

**SB 392 (Grayson D-Orinda) East Bay Hills Conservation Program** aligns with the key advocacy goal of ecosystem stewardship. This bill is sponsored by the Park District and is being coauthored by several members of the East Bay legislative delegation. SB 392 would authorize the Park District to establish and administer approximately 30,000 acres of environmentally significant lands in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties through the East Bay Hills Conservation Program to address resource and recreational goals of the East Bay Hills. Within this legislation, the "East Bay Hills" is defined as the ridgeline extending from the northern edge of Wildcat Canyon Regional Park to the southern edge of Lake Chabot Regional Park. A sample map of the proposed conservation area is attached and includes all adjacent natural lands within the control of the East Bay Regional Park District, such as Sobrante Ridge Regional Preserve, Kennedy Grove Regional Recreation Area, Charles Lee Tilden Regional Park, Tilden Nature Area, Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve, Temescal Regional Recreation Area, Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve, Huckleberry Botanic Regional Preserve, Dr. Aurelia Reinhardt Redwood Regional Park, Roberts Regional Recreation Area, Leona Canyon Open Space Regional Preserve and Anthony Chabot Regional Park. The bill would authorize the Park District to collaborate with state, regional, and local partners to help achieve specified goals of the program. The bill would require a proponent or party to a certain proposed development project to convert natural lands within the East Bay Hills to provide notice to the Park District of the proposed project and would authorize the Park District to provide analysis of the environmental values and potential impacts of the proposed project. The bill would require the East Bay Hills to be acknowledged as an area of statewide significance in local planning documents developed or updated on or after January 1, 2026, affecting land use within the East Bay Hills. To the extent that this bill would impose new duties on local entities, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

SB 392 would add Article 4 to Chapter 3 of Division 5 of the Public Resources Code relating to regional park districts.

---

**SB 55 (Umberg D-Santa Ana) Gold Star Family State Parks Pass** aligns with the key advocacy goal of equitable park access. This bill would require the California Department of Parks and Recreation to provide a free day use pass to eligible Gold Star Family members, which are defined as California residents who are eligible to receive a gold star lapel button under Federal law. A gold star lapel button is typically awarded to immediate family members of service members who have died while serving in the U.S. military during specified periods of war or military operations. Under this bill, when an eligible Gold Star Family member presents appropriate proof of their status to the Department, they will be issued a pass that allows them free entry to any state park operated by the state. The Department of Parks and Recreation is also required to develop necessary regulations to implement this new pass program. This bill aims to provide a small gesture of recognition and support for families who have lost a loved one in military service by offering them access and use of state parks. The Park District operates and manages three state parks including Del Valle Regional Park, McLaughlin Eastshore State Park and Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach which are likely to be impacted by the outcome of this legislation. This bill would add a section to the Public Resources Code relating to state parks.

### **SB 88 (Caballero D-Merced) Quantifying Carbon Emissions for Wildfire Resilience**

aligns with the key advocacy goal of wildfire resilience. This bill would require the State Air Resources Board to finalize a standardized system for quantifying carbon emissions from fuel reduction activities by 2027 and develop a method for calculating avoided carbon emissions from prescribed fires by 2028. SB 88 also mandates the creation of a carbon credit protocol for biochar and other carbon-removal products resulting from wildfire prevention efforts.

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) will be required to ensure that state-funded forest health projects include a scientifically-based approach to biomass disposal. Additionally, the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission must highlight the potential of biomass in producing low-carbon fuels like hydrogen in its reports.

SB 88 would add a section to the Health and Safety Code relating to air resources. The Park District's carbonizer program has the potential to serve as a key example of what's possible in support of this legislation's goals.

**SB 239 (Arreguín D-Berkeley) Advisory Committee Teleconferencing** aligns with the overarching advocacy principle of equitable service delivery. This bill would apply to advisory legislative bodies (such as the Park Advisory Committee). It would allow these bodies to use teleconferencing with specific requirements, such as: conducting meetings which protect public and participant rights, ensuring members participate through audio and visual technology, providing public access methods like two-way audiovisual platforms or telephonic services, designating a primary physical meeting location, posting agendas, and allowing real-time public comment. Members must visibly appear on camera during open meetings, with exceptions for technological challenges, and must disclose if other individuals are present at their remote location.

The legislative body which establishes the subsidiary body must approve teleconferencing by a two-thirds vote, as well as make findings about how teleconferencing would enhance public access and promote member diversity. The bill does not apply to subsidiary bodies dealing with police oversight, elections or budgets. Elected officials participating must still comply with existing teleconferencing regulations. Importantly, any final recommendations must be presented at a regular meeting of the establishing legislative body, ensuring transparency and accountability in these advisory group proceedings.

**SB 287 (Arreguín D-Berkeley) California Trails Conservancy** aligns with the key advocacy goal of equitable access. This legislation would establish the California Trails Conservancy Program within the California Natural Resources Agency. Specifically, this program would establish specific goals and objectives to promote, enhance and expand environmentally sound greenways and trail networks within the State of California. This program would align with and compliment the Park District's trail program and goals.

**AB 259 (Rubio D-Baldwin Park) Local Agency Teleconferencing** aligns with the overarching advocacy principle of equitable service delivery. This legislation would eliminate the sunset associated with Assembly Bill 2449 (Rubio, 2022), thereby allowing for the indefinite use of its provisions. Though the terms of AB 2449 have been amended since their passage, the sunset date associated with its terms has not been changed. The alternative Brown Act meeting procedures established by the bill are set to expire at the end of 2025. AB 2449 provided local agencies the option to invoke alternative Brown Act meeting procedures in the event of a board member's absence in connection with a "just cause" or "emergency circumstance." AB 259 is sponsored by the California Special Districts Association. The Park District has previously supported the original legislation (Resolution NO.: 2022-5-116).

**AB 269 (Bennett D-Ventura) Dam Safety and Climate Resilience Local Assistance Program** aligns with the key advocacy goal of ecosystem stewardship. AB 269 would include removal of dams as an eligible type of project that can receive state funding. The program, administered by the Department of Water Resources, provides state funding for safety and enhancement projects at existing state jurisdictional dams that were in service before 2023. Previously, the program supported various dam-related improvements such as repairs, seismic retrofits, spillway repairs, and sediment removal, but this bill would explicitly includes facility removal as an eligible project type.

Grant recipients must provide at least a 50% cost share, though the Department can waive or reduce this requirement if the dam poses a significant public safety risk and the full cost share would cause extreme financial hardship. The bill maintains the program's core priorities of protecting public safety, restoring water storage, reducing flood risks, enhancing water supply reliability, and protecting habitat and water quality, while continuing to prohibit dam height increases or expanded water impoundment.

AB 269 would amend Section 6700 of the Water Code relating to dams.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. State Legislation Presentation – March 5, 2025 Legislative Committee
- B. East Bay Hills Conservation Program Proposed State Conservation Area – March 5, 2025 Legislative Committee