


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

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<b>DATE</b>	January 13, 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 Sabrina Landreth, General Manager
<b>APPROVED</b>	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

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**RECOMMENDATION**

The General Manager recommends the Board Legislative Committee recommend to the full Board of Directors approval to extend support on the following legislation.

**BACKGROUND**

On December 17, 2024 the Board of Directors approved the 2025-2026 Legislative Program (Resolution No. 2024 – 12 – 288). Included in the Advocacy Goals is the objective of advancing legislation to clarify the role of a Public Resources Code (PRC) 5500 independent special district. Upon review of PRC 5500, it is clear modernization of the Park District's enabling legislation is the next step. Government and Legislative Affairs staff worked with Legal Counsel and partners at Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to develop modernization proposals to be introduced in the legislature. Analysis of this proposal follows below.

Additionally, the 2025-2026 Legislative Program includes the objective of legislation supporting comprehensive climate adaptation plans to address extreme weather and lake health. In reviewing Proposition 4, the 2024 Climate Bond, Government and Legislative Affairs staff learned specific areas of statewide significance were able to receive direct allocations from the bond. These areas were designated by prior legislation. For 2025, the Park District plans to pursue state legislation to designate the East Bay Hills an area of statewide significance so future bonds could allocate direct funding to this important region. Analysis of the proposal follows below.

**ANALYSIS**

**Public Resources Code 5500 Modernization Legislation**

The proposed amendments to the Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5500 modernize governance, compensation, operational frameworks and land management practices for regional park districts under this enabling legislation. These updates enhance inclusivity, efficiency and responsiveness to contemporary challenges such as impacts from the changing climate, extreme weather, equity and sustainable management of open space. Key changes include adopting gender-inclusive language, removing outdated Park District specific provisions, revising board member compensation to a flat monthly rate with annual adjustments and administrative purchasing efficiencies. The legislation aims to modernize administrative roles and responsibilities to improve productivity and save costs.

The proposal includes updates to land management provisions aimed at extending property lease terms from 25 to 50 years (and up to 99 years for certain leases) and expand acreage limits for land exchanges, with monetary compensation as an alternative under strict appraisal protocols. Outdated provisions, including special tax levies and project-specific authorizations, are proposed to be removed, while climate resilience and social equity considerations are incorporated into leasing and project priorities. As an example, the amendments seek to explicitly support the construction of nature-based solutions for flood and stormwater protection. Furthermore, administrative and procurement processes are modernized by increasing purchase thresholds for general managers and enabling web-based bidding notices. Together, these revisions aim to improve governance, address evolving environmental and social needs, and support the long-term sustainability of regional park and open space district resources.

### **East Bay Hills Conservation Program Legislative Proposal**

The proposed legislation establishes the East Bay Hills Conservation Program under the East Bay Regional Park District to protect and enhance the natural and recreational resources of the East Bay Hills, an over 30,000-acre area spanning Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The program aims to support the Park District's commitment to restore ecosystems, enhance watersheds, improve wildlife habitats, promote climate and wildfire resilience, manage erosion and maintain public trails, while recognizing the region's cultural significance as ancestral lands of Ohlone and Bay Miwok. It authorizes the Park District to collaborate with state, regional and local partners, provide technical assistance, and proactively engage on development projects impacting natural lands. Should this legislation be codified, starting January 1, 2026, the East Bay Hills would be recognized in local planning documents as an area of statewide significance and have opportunity to receive direct funding aimed at supporting the goals of the conservation area. Importantly, the program aligns with broader conservation and stewardship initiatives and has the opportunity aid expanded community access to nature.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None.