



**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

DATE	January 14, 2025
TITLE	Informational Update on the 2025 Sacramento Advocacy Conference
DIVISION	General Manager's Office
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APPROVED	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

RECOMMENDATION

This is an informational item only.

BACKGROUND

The East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) annual State Advocacy Conference (conference) is set to occur on Tuesday, January 28, 2025. This conference in Sacramento will include meetings with the Park District's state delegation and partner agencies wherein the Park District Board of Directors will highlight specific priority issues in alignment with the 2025-2026 Legislative Program's goals and objectives. Government and Legislative Affairs staff will provide an initial overview of the 2025 State Advocacy Conference.

ANALYSIS

The Park District's 2025-2026 Legislative Program includes seven goals supported by objectives. The information below outlines the seven goals, supporting objectives at the state-level and additional background context on each item.

➤ **Climate - Friendly Transportation**

Goal: To expand accessible active and public transportation to and within East Bay parks and trails.

Proposed 2025 – 2026 Legislative Program Objectives – State Level: Collaborate with Caltrans and state legislators to secure additional funding for enhanced park transportation infrastructure, including active transportation routes and public transit connections.

➤ **Ecosystem Stewardship**

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

Proposed 2025 – 2026 Legislative Program Objectives – State Level: Advocate for state legislation to simplify the regulatory process for habitat restoration and land acquisition while maintaining environmental protection. Advance legislation to modernize Public Resources Code (PRC) 5500 for independent special park districts.

➤ **Equitable Park Access**

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

Proposed 2025 – 2026 Legislative Program Objectives – State Level: In alignment with *Outdoors for All*, seek state funding to improve park access and infrastructure in under resourced areas, support legislation which expands equitable park access, and work with California State Parks and Parks California on the Outdoor Equity Grants Program for consistent park programming funding.

➤ **Extreme Weather Preparedness**

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

Proposed 2025 – 2026 Legislative Program Objectives – State Level: Explore opportunities to advance state funding and legislative support for comprehensive climate adaptation plans which include nature-based infrastructure to address extreme weather, sea level rise and lake health.

➤ **Green Jobs**

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

Proposed 2025 – 2026 Legislative Program Objectives – State Level: Advocate stable funding for state-level programs, like California Conservation Corps, which support green job training and career pathways in parks and environmental fields.

➤ **Welcoming Visitor Use Facilities**

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

Proposed 2025 – 2026 Legislative Program Objectives – State Level: Advocate for state funding and policy support to advance the Park District's prioritized capital projects.

➤ **Wildfire Resilience**

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

Proposed 2025 – 2026 Legislative Program Objectives – State Level: Advocate for state legislation and funding for wildfire resilience projects, including grants for vegetation management to enhance safe, healthy forests and grasslands.

Background on 2025 State Priorities

The Park District will focus on three agenda items for each meeting with the East Bay Delegation:

- Support for sponsored PRC 5500 modernization legislation.
- Support for sponsored East Bay Hills area of statewide significance legislation.
- Support for early implementation of Prop. 4 grant funding opportunities for the Park District.

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 code section. These updates enhance inclusivity, efficiency and responsiveness to contemporary challenges such as climate change, 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 labor-saving 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 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 climate initiatives and has the opportunity aid expanded community access to nature.

Proposition 4 Implementation

Proposition 4, commonly referred to as the 2024 climate bond, includes significant investments in wildfire mitigation, sea level rise resilience, natural lands, inland water bodies and parks. Comprehensively, the Park District has been historically competitive for programs which comprise \$1.91 billion of the overall \$10 billion bond. As the state considers when and how much of the \$10 billion in bond authority to issue, there are three sections which the Park District would like to see prioritized.

Chapter 2, Section 91030 – \$605 million for Watershed Health

Funding to protect and restore rivers, lakes and streams, and to improve watershed resilience including the resilience of fish and wildlife within the watershed.

Specific subsections of interest:

➤ **Section 91031 – \$100 million for Regional Water Management Projects**

This funding through the Department of Water Resources will enhance climate resilience across watersheds, improving the East Bay's water supply and ecosystem health.

➤ **Section 91032(e) – \$25 million for Urban Streams Restoration Program**

This funding will support multi-benefit urban stream and river projects, focusing on stream restoration that benefits both the environment and urban communities.

Chapter 3, Section 91520 – \$1.205 billion for Wildfire Resiliency Work

Funding for local fire prevention grants to conduct wildfire resiliency work and workforce development for fire prevention.

Specific subsections of interest:

➤ **Section 91520(a) – \$185 million for the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program**

This funding through the Department of Conservation will support forest and wildfire resilience efforts, essential for protecting communities and ecosystems from the increasing threat of wildfires.

➤ **Section 91520(c) – \$175 million for the Forest Health Program**

These funds through the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) will improve forest health, reduce fire risk, and protect critical natural resources in the East Bay Hills.

➤ **Section 91520(d) – \$185 million for wildfire resiliency work**

This funding through the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) for local fire prevention grants to conduct wildfire resiliency work and workforce development for fire prevention.

Chapter 4, Section 92010 - \$415 million for State Coastal Conservancy for Coastal Resilience

Funding for coastal resilience projects and programs, including increasing the resilience of beaches, bays, coastal dunes, wetlands, coastal forests, watersheds, trails and public access facilities. Not less than \$85 million shall be made available for projects consistent with the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority or the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy.

Specific subsections of interest:

➤ **Section 92010(b) – \$85 million for the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Act or the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program**

This funding will support habitat restoration and climate resilience efforts around the Bay, contributing to environmental and community well-being.

Each office in the East Bay delegation will have a project highlighted within their District which would benefit from early implementation of these three sections of Proposition 4.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

ATTACHMENTS

PowerPoint Presentation.