



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

DATE	June 6, 2024
TITLE	Recommendation to Support Federal Legislation
DIVISION	General Manager's Office
FROM	Erich Pfuehler, Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs Dr. Ana M. Alvarez, Deputy General Manager
APPROVED	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

RECOMMENDATION

The General Manager recommends the Board Legislative Committee approves extending support of the following legislation: H.Res. 1234, H.R. 7770, H.R. 8092, and S. 4228 and H.R. 8258.

BACKGROUND

As part of the 2023-2024 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 – 01 – 003. 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.
- Community Health: To ensure equitable access to parks so all East Bay communities can enjoy the physical and psychological benefits of nature.
- Ecosystem Stewardship: To support ecosystem health through restoration, acquisition and habitat enhancement, and improved efficiencies in regulatory approvals.
- Green Jobs: To guide the development of career pathways for all in the parks, recreation, outdoor and environmental fields.
- Sea Level Rise Preparedness: To address sea level rise with nature-based infrastructure and initiate mitigation strategies regarding climate change.
- Welcoming Visitor Use Facilities: To be sure 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 vegetation management which is ecologically sound.

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 support the overarching principles of advocacy approved by Resolution NO.: 2024 – 01 – 003. 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 bill hearings in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., and engaging with the author/sponsor and relevant elected official's offices directly. Of the five legislative acts recommended for support, two address Welcoming Visitor Use Facilities, two address the overarching principle of inclusive interpretation and educational opportunities and one addresses the overarching principle of the Park District Legislative Program. This includes acknowledging the Park District's 90th anniversary, the fiscal needs of a sister agency with a visitor center in the East Bay, the need to reduce the amount of plastic waste and the legacy of former Senator Dianne Feinstein. All of these components align with the Park District's advocacy goals and overarching principles.

H.Res. 1234 (DeSaulnier D-CA) Celebrating the East Bay Regional Park District's 90th Anniversary aligns with the overarching principles of the Legislative Program. H.Res. 1234 specifically recognizes the 90 years of public service provided by the East Bay Regional Park District. The resolution highlights the District's contributions to environmental conservation, recreation and community well-being. It expresses gratitude for the District's dedication to preserving natural beauty, fostering outdoor enjoyment and creating a lasting legacy for generations to come. Representative Mark DeSaulnier was joined by Reps. Garamendi, Harder, Khanna, Lee and Swalwell in introducing the resolution. The Board of Directors was in attendance in the gallery as Rep. DeSaulnier highlighted the resolution on the House Floor on Thursday, May 16, 2024.

H.R. 7770 (Garamendi D-CA) Rosie the Riveter Commemorative Coin Act aligns with the overarching principle of inclusive interpretation and educational opportunities. This legislation would authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to mint up to 50,000 gold, 400,000 silver and 750,000 half-dollar coins to commemorate the women who contributed to the Home Front during World War II. The coins would be minted for one year beginning on January 1, 2025. The legislation recognizes the harassment, discrimination and prejudice the women endured while working at shipyards, aircraft factories and other areas of the defense industrial base. It also recognizes the racist discrimination, violence and harassment at work women of color overcame to make significant contributions to the war effort and labor market. Proceeds from the sale of the coins will benefit the Rosie the Riveter Trust to support the National Park Service in maintaining and repairing the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond. Commemorative coins are typically enacted by stand alone legislation. There have been 49 Public Laws passed since 1998 to issue commemorative coins. There were no commemorative coins authorized in 2023. Typically, only two commemorative coins are authorized per year. A support position for H.R. 7700 would be extended to a related or companion bill introduced in the Senate.

H.R. 8092 (Huffman D-CA) Protecting Communities from Plastics Act aligns with the advocacy goal of welcoming visitor use facilities. The legislation focuses on stricter rules for chemicals used in the development of plastic products. It acknowledges the environmental justice impacts of plastic production and use. It also calls for moving away from single-use plastics, particularly in the food service sector. The bill establishes a refillable and reuse packaging grant program. It specifically calls for the installation and expansion of water bottle refilling stations. Local governments would be eligible to receive a grant under the program. The Park District could apply and benefit from the availability of these funds. The legislation does not identify from where the funds would be appropriated, but the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator is called upon to develop the program. The EPA is authorized to collect fees to help defray the costs of most of the activities it undertakes under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), so presumably these

fees could fund the grant program. This legislation could be included as a provision in amendments to the TSCA of 1976. The last such bill was the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act signed into law by President Barack Obama on June 22, 2016. A support position for H.R. 8092 would be extended to a related or companion bill introduced in the Senate.

S. 4228 (Padilla D-CA) and H.R. 8258 (Ruiz D-CA) Senator Dianne Feinstein Visitor Center at Joshua Tree National Park aligns with the overarching principle of inclusive interpretation and educational opportunities. This legislation would redesignate the Cottonwood Visitor Center as the “Senator Dianne Feinstein Visitor Center.” The late Senator Dianne Feinstein provided leadership in the establishment of Joshua Tree National Park. In 1994, Senator Feinstein authored the California Desert Protection Act which created the Mojave National Preserve. The 1994 legislation also expanded and redesignated Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Monuments as national parks. The Cottonwood Visitor Center is located in the southern part of the park. It serves as the first contact station for millions of visitors entering the park from Interstate 10 each year. This legislation could be included as a provision in the next Omnibus Public Lands bill. The last such bill was the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act of 2019.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact.

ATTACHMENTS

PowerPoint presentation on Federal legislation to support.