

4. Federal Legislation for Support: S. 1215 and H.R. 2520, S. 1228, H.R. 2281, H.R. 1923, H.R. 1393, H.R. 1110 and H.R. 471



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

DATE	June 3, 2025
TITLE	Federal Legislation for Support: S. 1215 and H.R. 2520, S. 1228, H.R. 2281, H.R. 1923, H.R. 1393, H.R. 1110 and H.R. 471
DIVISION	External Affairs
FROM	Erich Pfuehler, Division Lead of Government and Legislative Affairs
APPROVED	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

RECOMMENDATION

The General Manager recommends that the Board of Directors adopt a resolution in support of the following Federal legislation: S. 1215 and H.R. 2520, S. 1228, H.R. 2281, H.R. 1923, H.R. 1393, H.R. 1110 and H.R. 471.

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. This legislation was considered by the Board Legislative Committee at the May 7, 2025 meeting.

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 Washington D.C., 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.

S. 1215 (Padilla D-CA) and H.R. 2520 (Ruiz D-CA) - César Chávez and the Farmworker Movement National Historic Park is aligned the overarching principle of supporting inclusive interpretation and educational opportunities. S. 1215 is cosponsored by Senator Adam Schiff. This set of companion bills would preserve the nationally significant sites associated with César E. Chávez and the farmworker movement across California and Arizona as historic park areas under the National Park Service (NPS).

Congress previously enacted bipartisan legislation from former Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and former Representative Hilda Solis (D-CA) in 2008 directing NPS to conduct a special resource study of sites significant to the life of César Chávez and the farm labor movement in the western United States. In 2013, the NPS transmitted this study to Congress recommending a National Historical Park be established.

In addition to creating a National Historical Park and including several sites in Delano, Arizona and San Jose, this legislation would also conduct a National Historic Trail Study for the "Farmworker Peregrinación National Historic Trail," the 300-mile march route taken by farm workers between Delano and Sacramento in 1966. While the march did not traverse Alameda or Contra Costa counties, supporting National Historic Trail designation is consistent with the Park District's trail advocacy work. President Obama established the César E. Chávez National Monument in Keene, California in 2012 to recognize César Chávez and the farmworker movement's achievements and contributions to the history of our nation.

History and learnings at such park units could be shared for mutual benefit. Support of this legislation would provide continued reassurance to NPS about the importance of these sites which share important regional farmworker cultural history. Previously, similar legislation passed the United States Senate in 2024 with unanimous consent, but did not progress further. The Park District Board of Directors supported S. 1097/H.R. 2446 in Resolution No. 2023-08-188. This year, over 50 conservation groups, individuals and labor organizations have supported this legislation.

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.

S. 1228 (Risch R-ID) - Public Lands Corps Match Requirement Reduction aligns with the key advocacy goal of Green Jobs. This bill amends the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to modify the cost-sharing requirements for conservation projects conducted by qualified youth or conservation corps. Specifically, the bill decreases the local match requirement for corps projects. Under the current law, the Federal government pays 75% of project costs, while the corps pays 25%. The bill

increases the Federal government's share to 90% and reduces the corps' contribution to just 10%. This change aims to make conservation projects more financially feasible for youth and conservation corps by reducing their financial burden. The modification could potentially enable more organizations to participate in conservation efforts by lowering the cost threshold for project implementation. The bill applies to conservation projects carried out under the Public Lands Corps Act, which promotes youth engagement in environmental and conservation work on public lands. This legislation could also benefit Park District partners such as the California Conservation Corps and Civicorps.

S. 1228 could be included as a provision in the next package of amendments to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (PL 113-128). The last major increase in funding occurred in 2009 with a temporary increase in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (PL 111-5) in response to the 2007-2009 recession. A support position for S. 1228 would be extended to a related or companion bill introduced in the House of Representatives.

H.R. 2281 (Wilson D-FL) - Strengthening Job Corps Act aligns with the key advocacy goal of Green Jobs. This bill aims to reauthorize and strengthen the Job Corps program, a Federal workforce development initiative for young people. The overall goal is to improve the Job Corps program's effectiveness in helping youth develop skills and connect to employment.

Of note, eligibility will be expanded to individuals ages 16-24 and new criteria will be introduced to increase employment rates, earnings and credential attainment. The bill authorizes significant funding, starting at approximately \$1.8 billion for fiscal year 2026 and increasing annually, with \$107.8 million specifically allocated for job center construction and rehabilitation each year. The Park District benefits from the training of Civicorps, California Conservation Corps and other national service programs, which have produced qualified applicants for career jobs with the agency.

This legislation could impact and strengthen youth job training programs throughout the East Bay region. H.R. 2281 could be included as a provision in the next package of amendments to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (PL 113-128). The last major increase in funding occurred in 2009 with a temporary increase in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (PL 111-5) in response to the 2007-2009 recession. A support position for H.R. 2281 would be extended to a related or companion bill introduced in the Senate.

H.R. 1923 (Harder D-CA) - Modernizing Wildfire Safety and Prevention Act of 2025 aligns with the key advocacy goal of Wildfire Resilience. H.R. 1923 is a comprehensive legislative effort to improve wildfire management, prevention and response based on recommendations from the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. The bill covers four main areas: workforce development, wildland firefighter support, wildfire smoke and public health, and fire mitigation and technology.

Key provisions include establishing a Middle Fire Leaders Academy to train emerging wildfire leaders, creating a wildfire workforce grant program to support education and training, improving firefighter retirement and retention benefits, developing a national smoke monitoring and alert system, establishing a Joint Office of the Fire Environment Center to provide scientific and technical support for fire management, creating a Wildfire Digital Data Center to facilitate research and data sharing, and implementing faster payment processes for various wildfire-related assistance programs. The bill authorizes significant funding across multiple Federal agencies and departments, ranging from \$1 million to \$150 million annually for fiscal years 2026-2035, to support these initiatives aimed at enhancing wildfire preparedness, response and recovery efforts while prioritizing public safety and environmental resilience.

The Park District Board of Directors has frequently supported wildfire legislation both in the previous Congress and already in the current 2025-2026 Congress. Knowledge learned from the Joint Office of the Fire Environment Center and the Wildfire Digital Data Center could be beneficial to the Park District's vegetation management and wildfire response work. A faster payment process for various wildfire-related assistance programs would also be beneficial for the Park District.

The Federal Department of Education does not directly authorize or accredit local fire academies. It can, however, award grant funding to Accredited Academies as designated by the California Office of the State Fire Marshal. The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) typically receives annual appropriations by Congress. The GEPA was originally enacted as Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments of 1967 (PL 90-247). The most recent amendments were made to the act by the Education Sciences Reform Act (PL 107-279). The most recent comprehensive funding allocations were made on December 27, 2020 (PL 116-260). Funding allocations could be made through the appropriations process and this more comprehensive legislation could be included as a provision in the next revision of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Pub. L. 93-288, 88 Stat. 143 (1974), codified in 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (2007)). The Stafford Act was amended in the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2007.

A support position for H.R. 1923 would be extended to a related or companion bill introduced in the Senate.

H.R. 1393 (Stanton D-AZ) - Wildfire Response Improvement Act aligns with the key advocacy goal of Wildfire Resilience. This bill directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator to undertake several important actions to improve wildfire response and mitigation policies. The bill requires FEMA to recommend regulations within one year to make emergency stabilization and assessment efforts eligible for the Fire Management Assistance Program, regardless of the incident period of a declared fire.

A key component of the bill is a comprehensive review of criteria for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of wildfire mitigation projects, which will examine pre-calculated benefits for defensible space projects, nature-based infrastructure, vegetation management, public health impacts of wildfire smoke and effects on water infrastructure. H.R. 1393 would enhance FEMA's approach to wildfire preparedness, response and recovery by creating more comprehensive and nuanced evaluation methods.

This legislation could be included as a provision in the next revision of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Pub. L. 93-288, 88 Stat. 143 (1974), codified in 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (2007)). The Stafford Act was amended in the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2007. A support position for H.R. 1393 would be extended to a related or companion bill introduced in the Senate.

H.R. 1110 (LaMalfa R-CA) - Grazing for Wildfire Risk Reduction Act aligns with the key advocacy goal of Wildfire Resilience. This legislation would require the Secretary of Agriculture, through the U.S. Forest Service, to develop a comprehensive strategy for using livestock grazing as a method to reduce wildfire risks on Federal lands. The strategy includes several key components: completing environmental reviews to allow grazing on vacant allotments during droughts or natural disasters, implementing targeted grazing techniques, increasing the use of temporary grazing permits to reduce invasive grasses and fuel loads, utilizing grazing as a post-wildfire recovery and restoration method, and leveraging all applicable legal authorities. A similar bill, S. 602 - Wildfire Resilience Through Grazing Research Act, has been introduced in the Senate by Senators Alex Padilla (D-CA), Jerry Moran (R-KS), Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and James Lankford (R-OK). The Board took a support

position on S. 602 with Resolution No. 2025-05-79.. Rep. LaMalfa's legislation focuses on Federal lands and Senator Padilla's focuses on grazing research. The two are not incompatible and could be reconciled into one legislative measure.

H.R. 1110 aims to provide more flexible grazing opportunities on Federal lands as a proactive approach to managing wildfire risks, recognizing strategic livestock grazing can help reduce vegetation which could potentially fuel wildfires. By coordinating with current permit holders and expanding grazing options, the bill seeks to create a more adaptive and preventative wildfire management approach. Learnings from this legislation could be applied to the Park District's grazing program. Ongoing deliberation of this legislation could also provide opportunities for the Park District to highlight at the national level its historic grazing practices.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has been managing wildland fire on National Forests and Grasslands for more than 100 years, beginning in 1908 with the Forest Fires Emergency Act. The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (PL 93-498) was most recently reauthorized in 2024 (PL 118-67) which extended the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA) authority through 2028. This legislation could be included as a provision in the next major reauthorization of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act. A support position for H.R. 1110 would be extended to a related or companion bill introduced in the Senate.

H.R. 471 (Westerman R-AR) - Fix Our Forests Act aligns with the key advocacy goal of Wildfire Resilience. This bipartisan legislation would amend the National Environmental Policy Act for certain vegetation management projects to combat catastrophic wildfires, restore forest ecosystems, and aims to make Federal forest management more efficient and responsive. At the time the Legislative Committee of the Board originally discussed this legislation, the Senate companion bill was still pending. It has subsequently been introduced by Senator John Curtis (R-UT) with Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) as an original cosponsor. The bill number is S. 1462.

The comprehensive bill reflects months of bipartisan negotiations to find consensus on how to best accelerate and improve forest management practices, streamline environmental reviews, and strengthen partnerships between Federal agencies, states, tribes and private stakeholders.

Fix Our Forests Act would:

- Establish new and updated programs to reduce wildfire risks across large, high-priority "firesheds," with an emphasis on cross-jurisdictional collaboration.
- Streamline and expand tools for forest health projects (e.g., stewardship contracting, Good Neighbor Agreements) and provide faster processes for certain hazardous fuels treatments.
- Create a single interagency program to help communities in the wildland-urban interface build and retrofit with wildfire-resistant measures, while simplifying and consolidating grant applications.
- Expand research and demonstration initiatives — including biochar projects and the Community Wildfire Defense Research Program — to test and deploy cutting-edge wildfire prevention, detection and mitigation technologies.
- Strengthen coordination efforts across agencies through a new Wildfire Intelligence Center which would streamline the federal response and create a whole-of-government approach to combating wildfires.
- Improve reforestation, seedling supply and nursery capacity; establish new programs for white oak restoration; and clarify policies to reduce wildfire-related litigation and expedite forest health treatments.

- Establish several key initiatives, including the creation of a Fireshed Center to assess and predict wildfire risks, designating high-priority fireshed management areas, and implementing collaborative tools to reduce wildfire threats. It introduces programs to support community wildfire defense, technology development and forest health.
- Create a Wildland Fire Management Casualty Assistance Program to support firefighters and their families.

The Senate version of the Fix Our Forests Act is endorsed by environmental groups, first responders and wildfire organizations including: The Nature Conservancy; National Wildlife Federation; Environmental Defense Fund; National Audubon Society; Citizens' Climate Lobby; Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership; Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition; The Stewardship Project; the Federation of American Scientists; CAL FIRE; the International Association of Fire Chiefs; Alliance for Wildfire Resilience; Megafire Action; the Association for Firetech Innovation; Climate & Wildfire Institute; Tall Timbers; Bipartisan Policy Center Action (BPC Action); Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting, and the Outdoors (HECHO); the American Property Casualty Insurance Association; and the Property and Environment Research Center. Research and collaboration as a result of this legislation would benefit the Park District's wildfire mitigation work.

In particular, simplification of grant applications and programs addressing the wildland-urban interface will have important benefits for the larger East Bay and Bay Area communities.

H.R. 471 passed the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year with East Bay Representatives Swalwell and Harder voting Yea. Representatives DeSaulnier, Khanna and Simon voting Nay. Representative Garamendi did not cast a vote. At the time this staff report was updated, Government and Legislative Affairs staff were continuing to reach out to the East Bay delegation aimed at better understanding the split in their votes, particularly Rep. DeSaulnier's opposition.

This legislation could also be included as a provision in the next revision of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relieve and Emergency Assistance Act (Pub. L. 93-288, 88 Stat. 143 (1974), codified in 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (2007)). The Stafford Act was amended in the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2007. A support position for H.R. 471 would be extended to S. 1462 (Curtis R-UT).

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

ATTACHMENTS

None.



**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 06 -
JUNE 3, 2025**

FEDERAL LEGISLATION FOR SUPPORT: S. 1215 AND H.R. 2520, S. 1228, H.R. 2281, H.R. 1923, H.R. 1393, H.R. 1110 AND H.R. 471

WHEREAS, the East Bay Regional Park District strives to engage on legislative actions in alignment with its identified key advocacy goals including climate-friendly transportation, ecosystem stewardship, equitable park access, extreme weather preparedness, green jobs, welcoming visitor use facilities and wildfire resilience; and

WHEREAS, across all identified focus areas, 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; and

WHEREAS, the legislation as identified in this report to support aligns with these goals and principles; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the East Bay Regional Park District hereby supports S. 1215 (Padilla D-CA) and H.R. 2520 (Ruiz D-CA) - César Chávez and the Farmworker Movement National Historic Park, S. 1228 (Risch R-ID) - Public Lands Corps Match Requirement Reduction, H.R. 2281 (Wilson D-FL) - Strengthening Job Corps Act, H.R. 1923 (Harder D-CA) - Modernizing Wildfire Safety and Prevention Act of 2025, H.R. 1393 (Stanton D-AZ) - Wildfire Response Improvement Act, H.R. 1110 (LaMalfa R-CA) - Grazing for Wildfire Risk Reduction Act and H.R. 471 (Westerman R-AR) - Fix Our Forests Act as presented to the Board on June 3, 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Manager is hereby authorized and directed, on behalf of the Park District and in its name, to execute and deliver such documents and to do such acts as may be deemed necessary or appropriate to accomplish the intentions of this resolution.

Moved by Director _____, and seconded by Director _____, and adopted June 3, 2025, by the following vote:

FOR:

AGAINST:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: