

**DATE:** July 25, 2016

**TO:** RMC Governing Board

**FROM:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

**SUBJECT:** **Item 12:** Consideration of a resolution supporting Assembly Bill 2444 (Garcia) California Parks, Water, Climate, and Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2016

---

**PROGRAM AREA:** All

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the RMC approve a resolution in support of Assembly Bill 2444 (Garcia) California Parks, Water, Climate, and Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2016

**BACKGROUND:** If approved by the voters, this Assembly bill would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$3,120,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance a parks, water, climate, and coastal protection and outdoor access for all program. The bill would provide for the submission of these provisions to the voters at the November 8, 2016, statewide general election. It has been 14 years since California last approved a “true park bond.” The protracted economic downturn in 2008 has a disproportionate impact on the local, regional and state parks infrastructure in the state as the services and investments associated with this type of infrastructure were, during this period, viewed as less critical and were oftentimes subject to cuts. As a consequence, demand for capital dollars continues to be at a fever pitch as witnessed by the 8-1 ratio of available grant dollars versus grant application requests during the last and final round of competitive awards in 2010 under the Statewide Parks Program. There has been particularly high demand in both urban and rural disadvantaged communities where many still lack access to safe parks, trails, recreation areas, and access to the great outdoors.

Investments to improve and to further create parks and recreation areas, as well as to create trail networks that provide access from neighborhoods to parks and recreational opportunities will help to ensure all Californians have access to safe places to exercise and enjoy recreational activities. Additionally, continued investment in the state’s parks, trails, and natural resources, and greening urban areas will mitigate the effects of climate change, providing California access to its bountiful natural resources for future generations to come.

This legislation strives to recognize the need for park-poor and disadvantaged communities throughout the state following both the current “disadvantaged communities” definition and the “severely disadvantaged community” definition listed in the Health and Safety Code. The current definition of a disadvantaged community is communities with an average household income that is less than 80% of the State’s median household income (approximately \$61,489) or severely disadvantaged communities with an income less than 60% of the State’s median household income.

A key component of this Assembly bill also has specific line item for the Statewide Conservancies including the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy with an allocation of \$25 million.

**FISCAL INFORMATION:** This action will not have a fiscal impact on the Conservancy.

**ATTACHMENT:** Assembly Bill 2444.



**AB 2444 – California Water, Climate, and Coastal protection and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2016**

Updated: 02/26/16

**BACKGROUND**

According to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Plan of 2015, of the nearly 300 local/regional park directors surveyed, 55% cited rehabilitation of existing parks as the highest priority, versus 19% for new park development and 17% for new facilities in existing parks.

It has been 14 years since California last approved a “true park bond.” The protracted economic downturn in 2008 had a disproportionate impact on the local, regional and state parks infrastructure in the state as the services and investments associated with this type of infrastructure were, during this period, viewed as less critical and were oftentimes subject to cuts. As a consequence, demand for capital dollars continues to be at a fever pitch as witnessed by the 8-1 ratio of available grant dollars versus grant application requests during the last and final round of competitive awards in 2010 under the Statewide Parks Program. There has been particularly high demand in both urban and rural disadvantaged communities where many still lack access to safe parks, trails, recreation areas, and access to the great outdoors.

**Previous Bonds**

Recently, there have been three separate vehicles that have served as park bonds approved the voters since 2000:

**Proposition 12** (2000) Total \$2.1 billion including:

- A) \$780m for local, regional parks primarily through block grant awards.
- B) \$400m for state parks to address deferred maintenance and acquisition priorities

**Proposition 40**(2002) Total \$2.4 billion including:

- A) \$946m for local, regional parks through both block grants and competitive grant awards
- B) \$250m for State Parks to address deferred maintenance and acquisition priorities

**Proposition 84**(2006) Total \$5.4 billion(Primarily Water and Flood Control Bond)

- A) \$457m for park poor/disadvantaged community funding and nature center investment
- B) \$400m for state parks to address deferred maintenance and acquisition priorities

**SUMMARY**

Investments to improve and to further create parks and recreation areas, as well as to create trail networks that provide access from neighborhoods to parks and recreational opportunities, will help ensure all Californians have access to safe places to exercise and enjoy recreational activities. Additionally, continued investment in the state’s parks, trails, and natural resources, and greening urban areas will mitigate the effects of climate change, providing California access to its bountiful natural resources for future generations to come.

A priority will be made throughout the investments to recognize the need for poor-park and disadvantaged communities throughout the state following both the current “disadvantaged communities” definition and the “severely disadvantaged community” definition listed in the Health and Safety code.

The following investments will be the primary targets of the bond:

- A) Investments in the creation and expansion of safe neighborhood parks in park-poor neighborhoods in accordance with the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Act of 2008. At least 10% of funds available pursuant to this division shall be allocated to severely disadvantaged communities. Up to 10% of funds available may be allocated for technical assistance to disadvantaged communities.
- B) Investments for Local Park Rehabilitation and Improvement grants to local governments on a per capita basis. Priority will be on rehabilitating existing infrastructure and to address deficiencies in neighborhoods lacking access to the outdoors.
- C) Investments in regional park districts, counties, open-space districts, open-space authorities, and eligible nonprofit organizations to restore facilities, including trails, that facilitate new or enhances use and enhanced user experiences.
- D) Investment in the restoration and preservation of existing state park facilities and units to preserve and increase public access to those facilities and units and to protect the natural, cultural, and historic resources of those facilities and units.

Priority would be made upon the department's backlog of deferred maintenance.

- E) Investments to provide non-motorized infrastructure development and enhancements that promote new or alternate access to waterways, outdoor recreational pursuits, and forested or other natural environments to encourage health-related commuting and opportunities for Californians to reconnect with nature. Percentage of funds will be made available to communities for innovative transportation programs that provide new and expanded outdoor experiences to disadvantaged youth.
- F) Investments will be made into projects providing improvements in the rehabilitation or expansion of local or regional park infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of substantial visitor and tourist oriented use patterns.
- G) Investments into the protection and expansion of wildlife corridors including projects to improve connectivity between habitat areas, for projects to improve climate adaptation and resilience of natural systems, and for projects to protect and improve existing open space corridors and trail linkages related to utility or transportation infrastructure that provide habitat connectivity and public access or trails.
- H) Investments in California River Parkways
- I) Investments in State Conservancies

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Staff Member: Mark Rossow

Email: [Mark.Rossow@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Mark.Rossow@asm.ca.gov)

Phone: 916.319.2056 Fax: 916.319.2156