

Assembly Bill No. 1426

CHAPTER 546

An act to add Chapter 1.57 (commencing with Section 5095.50) to Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, relating to parks.

[Approved by Governor October 12, 2007. Filed with Secretary of State October 12, 2007.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1426, Wolk. Parks and nature education facilities: Central Valley Vision.

The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, an initiative statute adopted by the voters at the November 7, 2006, statewide general election, among other things, makes \$400,000,000 in bond funds available to the Department of Parks and Recreation for development, acquisition, interpretation, restoration, and rehabilitation of the state park system and its natural, historical, and visitor serving resources.

This bill would require the Department of Parks and Recreation to develop a detailed plan of implementation for its Central Valley Vision. In developing the plan, the department would be required to identify and prioritize specific sites and projects for acquisition and development in the Central Valley with respect to the protection of natural, cultural, and historical resources and access to recreational opportunities at state parks.

The bill would require the department, by January 1, 2009, to report to the Legislature on the plan and its timeline for implementation of the plan. The bill would provide that its provisions would be implemented to the extent that funds are appropriated pursuant to those provisions of the initiative or any other source.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The Central Valley is home to several of the fastest growing counties and communities in the state. The number of residents in the Central Valley is projected to grow from 6.3 million in 2005 to close to 12 million by 2040. With this increase in population will come a corresponding increase in the need for open space and for parks and recreational resources.

(b) Providing access to parks, open space, and outdoor recreational opportunities is key to preserving the quality of life for Central Valley residents. Access to such services is fundamental to the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of children, youth, and adults.

(c) The Department of Parks and Recreation's Central Valley Vision documents the serious lack of existing park and recreational services in the Central Valley to meet the needs of the region's growing population.

(d) Park and recreation service providers in the Central Valley, compared to other areas of the state, have received significantly less park bond funding and other financial support. The Central Valley is the largest geographically identifiable region in the state with the greatest unmet need for park services.

(e) Through data collection and public input the Department of Parks and Recreation has determined that there are significant resource protection and recreation opportunities in the Central Valley through which the department could better meet the needs of Central Valley residents.

(f) The Central Valley also contains important natural, cultural, and historical resources that are at risk of being lost to increased growth and development, including, but not limited to, riparian and wetland habitats, blue oak and sycamore woodlands, Native American sites, and cultural and historical resources related to California's agriculture and the many contributions of California immigrants.

(g) The rapid increase in population growth and development in the Central Valley means that the state must act in a timely manner to acquire and protect these resources before they are lost.

(h) Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature that the Department of Parks and Recreation develop a detailed plan for implementation of the Central Valley Vision.

SEC. 2. Chapter 1.57 (commencing with Section 5095.50) is added to Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, to read:

CHAPTER 1.57. CENTRAL VALLEY VISION

5095.50. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Central Valley" means the geographic region extending from approximately the City of Redding in the north to the Tehachapi Mountains in the south, and from the valley floor up to 2,000 feet elevation along the coastal range in the west and the Sierra Nevada range in the east.

(b) "Plan" means the detailed plan of implementation developed by the department for its Central Valley Vision.

5095.51. The department shall develop a detailed plan of implementation for its Central Valley Vision. The plan shall identify and prioritize specific sites and projects for acquisition and development in the Central Valley, based on the following objectives:

(a) Expansion of resource protection and access to recreational opportunities at existing state parks and other public lands.

(b) Acquisition of lands with important natural, cultural, and recreational values, focusing on lands that link state parks with other public lands, particularly along water corridors.

(c) Preservation and interpretation of historical and cultural resources.

(d) Expansion of interpretive and recreational programs and opportunities in state park units.

5095.52. To the extent feasible, the plan shall do all of the following:

(a) Identify specific opportunities and priorities for acquisition and development of new and existing parks and recreational opportunities, with priority given to the following:

(1) Areas with significant or threatened natural resource values, as blue oak and sycamore woodlands, riparian and wetland areas, and native grasslands.

(2) Areas along river corridors and other water bodies, and in the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta.

(3) Areas that can be linked with other state park units or public lands, providing natural corridors and linkages for wildlife and trails.

(4) Areas with unique California cultural and historical values.

(5) Areas with the capacity to support recreational activities for which there is a demonstrated unmet public interest and demand.

(b) Expand opportunities and facilities for multiple and diverse recreational activities, based on identified public interest and demand.

(c) Expand educational and interpretive services and facilities, focusing on the unique cultural and historical resources of the Central Valley.

5095.53. The plan shall include a specific timeline for implementation. By January 1, 2009, the department shall report to the Legislature on the plan and timeline for implementation of the plan.

5095.54. This chapter shall be implemented to the extent that funds are appropriated pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 75063 or any other source.