

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1603

Introduced by Assembly Member Stone

February 5, 2014

An act to add Part 6 (commencing with Section 71450) to Division 34 of, and to repeal Section 71455 of, the Public Resources Code, relating to parks and recreation.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1603, as introduced, Stone. Outdoor Environmental Education and Recreation Program.

Existing law establishes the Office of Education and the Environment in the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery for the purpose of implementing a statewide environmental education program.

This bill would establish the Outdoor Environmental Education and Recreation Program in the Department of Parks and Recreation, for purposes of increasing the ability of underserved and at-risk populations to participate in outdoor recreation and educational experiences by awarding grants to education programs that are available to the public and are operated by public entities or nonprofit organizations. The bill would create the Outdoor Environmental Education and Recreation Fund in the State Treasury and provide that, upon appropriation by the Legislature, moneys in the fund shall be used for awarding grants pursuant to the program. The bill would authorize the Director of Parks and Recreation to accept, and require the director to deposit into the fund, voluntary private donations made for support of the program. The bill would express the Legislature's intent that the fund be capitalized with moneys from the General Fund and donations.

This bill would require the director to develop program components, including, but not limited to, criteria for awarding grants, and staffing and budget needs. The bill would require the California Environmental Education Interagency Network to serve as an advisor to the director in developing the program components. The bill would require the director to give priority for funding, where feasible, to outdoor environmental education programs with specified attributes. The bill would require the director, by January 1, 2016, to submit to the Legislature a report on the criteria for the awarding of grants and the availability of grant funding.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

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

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) The California Environmental Education Interagency
- 4 Network (CEEIN) was established in 1993 as a consortium of
- 5 environmental educators representing departments, boards, and
- 6 commissions of the State Department of Education, the California
- 7 Environmental Protection Agency, the Natural Resources Agency,
- 8 and the Department of Food and Agriculture. The primary goals
- 9 of CEEIN are to develop a unified response to the environmental
- 10 education needs of California’s educators and local governments,
- 11 and to assist with statewide educational reform movements.
- 12 (b) The Legislature enacted Chapter 663 of the Statutes of 2003,
- 13 which established the Outdoor Environmental Education Program
- 14 and required a study on the benefits of outdoor environmental
- 15 education for at-risk youth and underserved demographic groups.
- 16 The study found that the science test scores of children who
- 17 participated in the program were raised by 27 percent, and these
- 18 children also had improved conflict resolution and problem solving
- 19 skills, self-esteem, and motivation to learn. This program ended
- 20 on January 1, 2006.
- 21 (c) The Legislature enacted Resolution Chapter 101 of the
- 22 Statutes of 2006, which recognized the importance of local
- 23 recreation and park agencies in the effort to reverse negative trends
- 24 in inactivity, obesity, diabetes, and other health problems among

1 Californians and encouraged the state to use, and partner with,
2 local recreation and park providers to create a healthier state.

3 SEC. 2. Part 6 (commencing with Section 71450) is added to
4 Division 34 of the Public Resources Code, to read:

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6 PART 6. OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND
7 RECREATION

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9 71450. As used in this part, the following terms have the
10 following meanings:

11 (a) "Director" means the Director of Parks and Recreation.

12 (b) "Fund" means the Outdoor Environmental Education and
13 Recreation Fund established pursuant to Section 71452.

14 (c) "Nonprofit organization" means a private, nonprofit
15 organization that qualifies for exempt status under Section
16 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

17 (d) "Program" means the Outdoor Environmental Education
18 and Recreation Program established pursuant to Section 71451.

19 71451. There is hereby established the Outdoor Environmental
20 Education and Recreation Program in the Department of Parks
21 and Recreation for purposes of increasing the ability of underserved
22 and at-risk populations to participate in outdoor recreation and
23 educational experiences by awarding grants to education programs
24 that are available to the public and are operated by public entities
25 or nonprofit organizations.

26 71452. (a) The Outdoor Environmental Education and
27 Recreation Fund is hereby established in the State Treasury.
28 Moneys in the fund shall, upon appropriation by the Legislature,
29 be used for awarding grants to qualified outdoor environmental
30 education programs pursuant to this part.

31 (b) It is intended that the fund be capitalized with moneys from
32 the General Fund and from donations accepted by the director
33 pursuant to Section 71456.

34 (c) The Controller shall transfer from the General Fund to the
35 fund the amount appropriated from the General Fund by the
36 Legislature for each fiscal year for the implementation of the
37 program.

38 71453. The director shall do both of the following:

39 (a) Administer the program to ensure that priority is given to
40 underserved populations, including both urban and rural areas and

1 low-income communities where participation in an outdoor
2 environmental education program has been limited.

3 (b) Develop the components of the program and fund, including,
4 but not limited to, criteria for awarding grants, and staffing and
5 budget needs.

6 71454. (a) The California Environmental Education
7 Interagency Network shall serve as advisor to the director in
8 developing the program components.

9 (b) In developing eligibility criteria for awarding grants, the
10 director shall consider the long-term financial sustainability of the
11 program.

12 (c) In developing the criteria for awarding grants, the director
13 shall give priority for funding, where feasible, to outdoor
14 environmental education programs that have the following
15 attributes:

16 (1) Serves primarily at-risk youth and underserved demographic
17 groups.

18 (2) Is a partnership between public and private entities.

19 (3) Contributes to healthy lifestyles, including sound nutrition
20 and outdoor exercise and recreation.

21 (4) Maximizes the number of participants that can be served.

22 (5) Commits in-kind resources to the outdoor environmental
23 education program.

24 (6) Has a curriculum that is aligned to the science content
25 standards for California public schools adopted by the State Board
26 of Education, fosters stewardship of the environment, and includes,
27 when available, curriculum established pursuant to Part 4
28 (commencing with Section 71300).

29 (7) Has a curriculum that is aligned to the adopted common
30 core academic content standards and integrates instruction in
31 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

32 (8) Includes service learning and community outreach
33 components for purposes of building partnerships between
34 participants and local communities.

35 71455. (a) In compliance with Section 9795 of the Government
36 Code, the director shall submit a report to the Legislature on the
37 criteria developed for the awarding of grants pursuant to this part
38 and the availability of grant funding. The director may also suggest
39 in the report further legislative action to improve the

1 implementation of this program. The report shall be submitted to
2 the Legislature on or before January 1, 2016.

3 (b) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2019,
4 and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that
5 is enacted before January 1, 2019, deletes or extends that date.

6 71456. The director may accept, and shall deposit into the fund,
7 voluntary private donations made for the support of the program.

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