

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 988

Introduced by Assembly Members Mark Stone and Atkins

February 26, 2015

An act to add Chapter 14 (commencing with Section 5880) to Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, relating to parks, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 988, as introduced, Mark Stone. Outdoor Environmental Education and Recreation Grants Program.

Existing law authorizes the expenditure of state funds for local assistance grants to cities, counties, and districts for the acquisition and development of various park and recreational areas and facilities. Existing law, the State Urban Parks and Healthy Communities Act, requires the Director of Parks and Recreation, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to develop a competitive grant program to assist state parks, state conservancies in existence as of January 1, 2003, urbanized and heavily urbanized local agencies, and community-based organizations within those jurisdictions, to provide outdoor educational opportunities to children.

This bill would require the Department of Parks and Recreation to establish, on or before March 30, 2016, an Outdoor Environmental Education and Recreation Grants Program with the purpose of increasing the ability of underserved and at-risk populations to participate in outdoor recreation and educational experiences by awarding grants to public organizations, nonprofit organizations, or both. In developing the program, the bill would require the director to ensure that the program meets the criteria of the State Urban Parks and Healthy

Communities Act and would require the director to administer the program to ensure that priority is given to underserved populations, as specified. The bill would permit the director to develop an advisory task force to assist in the development of the program and would require the director to give priority funding to outdoor environmental education and recreation programs that have specified attributes.

This bill would authorize the director to accept private donations made for the support of the program and would authorize the director to solicit and accept private funding sources to help supplement the costs of the program. The bill would require that all moneys received for the purposes of the program be deposited into the California Youth Outdoor Education Account, which would be created by the bill and would be continuously appropriated for purposes of the program, thereby making an appropriation.

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

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

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (1) Park access, outdoor education, and outdoor recreational
- 4 experiences are important to the health and well-being of all
- 5 California citizens as well as the continuing stewardship of our
- 6 natural resources. Many California communities, however, lack
- 7 equitable access to parks and other open-space areas. This lack of
- 8 access to the outdoors contributes to higher incidences of certain
- 9 health ailments, such as diabetes, hypertension, and nature deficit
- 10 disorder, and other negative social indicators, especially in
- 11 low-income communities.
- 12 (2) According to the recent Parks Forward Commission report,
- 13 improving access to parks, outdoor experiences, and recreational
- 14 opportunities, particularly for youth and young adults in
- 15 disadvantaged communities, will lead to more healthy lifestyles,
- 16 better educational outcomes, and improvements to the overall
- 17 well-being of California citizens, communities, and our natural
- 18 environment.
- 19 (3) The Legislature enacted Chapter 663 of the Statutes of 2003,
- 20 which established the Outdoor Environmental Education Program
- 21 and required a study on the benefits of outdoor environmental

1 education for at-risk youth and underserved demographic groups.
2 The study found that the science test scores of children who
3 participated in the program were raised by 27 percent, and that
4 these children also had improved conflict resolution and problem
5 solving skills, better self-esteem, and were more motivated to learn.
6 The program ended on July 1, 2005.

7 (4) The Legislature enacted Resolution Chapter 101 of the
8 Statutes of 2006, which recognized the importance of local
9 recreational and park agencies in the effort to reverse negative
10 trends in inactivity, obesity, diabetes, and other health problems
11 among Californians and encouraged the state to use, and partner
12 with, local recreation and park providers to create a healthier state.

13 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to expand access to parks
14 and other outdoor educational and recreational opportunities in
15 underserved areas by, among other things, convening and
16 developing strategic partnerships to facilitate, promote, and
17 enhance access to parks, as well as outdoor educational and
18 recreational experiences in underserved communities.

19 SEC. 2. Chapter 14 (commencing with Section 5880) is added
20 to Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, to read:

21

22 CHAPTER 14. OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND
23 RECREATION GRANTS PROGRAM
24

25 5880. (a) On or before March 30, 2016, the department shall
26 establish an Outdoor Environmental Education and Recreation
27 Grants Program to increase the ability of underserved and at-risk
28 populations to participate in outdoor recreation and educational
29 experiences by awarding grants to public organizations, nonprofit
30 organizations, or both.

31 (b) In developing the program, the director shall do both of the
32 following:

33 (1) Ensure that the program meets the criteria specified in
34 Section 5095.4 and develop additional criteria and procedures as
35 may be necessary to implement the grant program.

36 (2) Administer the program to ensure that priority is given to
37 underserved populations, including both urban and rural areas and
38 low-income communities where participation in an outdoor
39 environmental education and recreation program has been limited.

1 (c) The director may develop an advisory task force composed
2 of public, private, nonprofit, academic, and other entities and
3 individuals to assist in the development of the program, including
4 representatives of the California Environmental Education
5 Interagency Network.

6 (d) The director shall give priority for funding, where feasible
7 and where consistent with the criteria specified in Section 5095.4,
8 to an outdoor environmental education and recreation program
9 that has at least one of the following attributes:

10 (1) Serves at-risk youth and underserved demographic groups.

11 (2) Demonstrates partnerships between public, private, and
12 nonprofit entities.

13 (3) Contributes to healthy lifestyles, sound nutritional habits,
14 and improved outdoor educational and recreational experiences.

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

16 (5) Commits in-kind resources.

17 (6) Has a curriculum that is aligned to the science content
18 standards for California public schools adopted by the State Board
19 of Education.

20 (7) Fosters stewardship of the environment and includes, when
21 available, curriculum established pursuant to Part 4 (commencing
22 with Section 71300) of Division 34.

23 (8) Integrates instruction in science, technology, engineering,
24 and mathematics.

25 (9) Includes service learning and community outreach
26 components for purposes of building partnerships between
27 participants and local communities.

28 (e) Reverted and unencumbered funds from the California Clean
29 Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection
30 Act of 2002 may be appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose
31 of this chapter, if consistent with the requirements of California
32 Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal
33 Protection Act of 2002. The director may also accept private
34 donations made for the support of the program. The director may
35 solicit and accept private funding to help supplement the costs of
36 the program. These funding sources may include, but are not
37 limited to, foundations, corporate funding, crowd funding
38 resources, donation drives, or any other funding sources that may
39 be available.

1 (f) All moneys received pursuant to subdivision (e) for the
2 purpose of this program shall be deposited in the California Youth
3 Outdoor Education Account, which is hereby created within the
4 State Park and Recreation Fund. Notwithstanding Section 13340
5 of the Government Code, moneys in the California Youth Outdoor
6 Education Account shall be continuously appropriated to the
7 department for purposes of this chapter.

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