

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 29, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 988**

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**Introduced by Assembly Members Mark Stone and Atkins**

February 26, 2015

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An act to *amend Section 5095.4 of, and to add Chapter 14 (commencing with Section 5880) to Division 5—of of, the Public Resources Code, relating to parks, and making an appropriation therefor.*

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 988, as amended, 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~~ *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~~ *develop criteria as may be necessary to implement the program and to administer the program to ensure that priority is given to underserved populations, as specified. The bill would *permit authorize* 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 provide that, to the extent specified, bond funds are available for grants under the program, those funds shall be awarded to programs that meet the criteria of the State Urban Parks and Healthy Communities Act.* 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,

1 better educational outcomes, and improvements to the overall  
2 well-being of California citizens, communities, and our natural  
3 environment.

4 (3) The Legislature enacted Chapter 663 of the Statutes of 2003,  
5 which established the Outdoor Environmental Education Program  
6 and required a study on the benefits of outdoor environmental  
7 education for at-risk youth and underserved demographic groups.  
8 The study found that the science test scores of children who  
9 participated in the program were raised by 27 percent, and that  
10 these children also had improved conflict resolution and problem  
11 solving skills, better self-esteem, and were more motivated to learn.  
12 The program ended on July 1, 2005.

13 (4) The Legislature enacted Resolution Chapter 101 of the  
14 Statutes of 2006, which recognized the importance of local  
15 recreational and park agencies in the effort to reverse negative  
16 trends in inactivity, obesity, diabetes, and other health problems  
17 among Californians and encouraged the state to use, and partner  
18 with, local recreation and park providers to create a healthier state.

19 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to expand access to parks  
20 and other outdoor educational and recreational opportunities in  
21 underserved areas by, among other things, convening and  
22 developing strategic partnerships to facilitate, promote, and  
23 enhance access to parks, as well as outdoor educational and  
24 recreational experiences in underserved communities.

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

27

28 CHAPTER 14. OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND  
29 RECREATION GRANTS PROGRAM  
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31 5880. (a) On or before March 30, 2016, the department shall  
32 establish an Outdoor Environmental Education and Recreation  
33 Grants Program to increase the ability of underserved and at-risk  
34 populations to participate in outdoor recreation and educational  
35 experiences by awarding grants to public organizations, nonprofit  
36 organizations, or both.

37 (b) In developing the program, the director shall do both of the  
38 following:

1 (1) ~~Ensure that the program meets the criteria specified in~~  
2 ~~Section 5095.4 and develop additional~~ *Develop* criteria and  
3 procedures as may be necessary to implement the grant program.

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

8 (c) The director may develop an advisory task force composed  
9 of public, private, nonprofit, academic, and other entities and  
10 individuals to assist in the development of the program, including  
11 representatives of the California Environmental Education  
12 Interagency Network.

13 (d) The director shall give priority for ~~funding, where feasible~~  
14 ~~and where consistent with the criteria specified in Section 5095.4;~~  
15 *funding* to an outdoor environmental education and recreation  
16 program that has at least one of the following attributes:

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

18 (2) Demonstrates partnerships between public, private, and  
19 nonprofit entities.

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

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

23 (5) Commits in-kind resources.

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.

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

30 (8) Integrates instruction in science, technology, engineering,  
31 and mathematics.

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

35 (e) Reverted and unencumbered funds from the California Clean  
36 Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection  
37 Act of 2002 may be appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose  
38 of this chapter, if consistent with the requirements of *the* California  
39 Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal  
40 Protection Act of 2002. ~~The~~ *To the extent that grants may be*

1 *awarded from those funds, they shall be awarded only to programs*  
2 *that meet all of the criteria specified in Section 5095.4.*

3 (f) *The director may also accept private donations made for the*  
4 *support of the program. The director may solicit and accept private*  
5 *funding to help supplement the costs of the program. These funding*  
6 *sources may include, but are not limited to, foundations, corporate*  
7 *funding, crowd funding resources, donation drives, or any other*  
8 *funding sources that may be available.*

9 (f)

10 (g) *All moneys received pursuant to ~~subdivision (e)~~ subdivisions*  
11 *(e) and (f) for the purpose of this program shall be deposited in*  
12 *the California Youth Outdoor Education Account, which is hereby*  
13 *created within the State Park and Recreation Fund. Notwithstanding*  
14 *Section 13340 of the Government Code, moneys in the California*  
15 *Youth Outdoor Education Account shall be continuously*  
16 *appropriated to the department for purposes of this chapter.*

17 *SEC. 3. Section 5095.4 of the Public Resources Code is*  
18 *amended to read:*

19 5095.4. (a) *The director, in consultation with the State*  
20 *Department of Education, shall develop a competitive grant*  
21 *program to assist state parks, state conservancies in existence as*  
22 *of January 1, 2003, urbanized and heavily urbanized local agencies,*  
23 *and community-based organizations within those jurisdictions,*  
24 *working in collaboration, to provide outdoor educational*  
25 *opportunities to children.*

26 (1) *Applicant entities shall provide a 25-percent matching*  
27 *contribution in community resources. The matching contributions*  
28 *may be in the form of money, including funds from other state or*  
29 *local assistance programs, gifts of real property, equipment, and*  
30 *consumable supplies, volunteer services, free or reduced-cost use*  
31 *of land, facilities, or equipment, and bequests and income from*  
32 *wills, estates, and trusts. The department may establish findings*  
33 *for hardships to waive the matching requirement when an applicant*  
34 *cannot meet the requirement.*

35 (2) *The department may give additional consideration to*  
36 *applicant entities collaborating with other entities, including, but*  
37 *not limited to, school districts, faith-based groups and others*  
38 *providing outreach programs to identify and attract urbanized*  
39 *youth most in need of organized, constructive recreational*  
40 *activities.*

1 (b) The department shall make one-third of any funds  
2 appropriated for the purposes of this chapter available to give  
3 special priority to providing increased access for elementary  
4 schoolage children in grades 2 to 8, inclusive, to conservancy or  
5 state, community, and regional park properties, *including public*  
6 *properties within the coastal zone*, and, in addition, shall give  
7 priority, in awarding a grant pursuant to this section, to all of the  
8 following:

9 (1) Programs that use curriculum tied to the science content  
10 standards and science framework adopted by the State Board of  
11 Education.

12 (2) Applicants that serve children with family incomes below  
13 the statewide average, based on the most recent figures computed  
14 and established by the Department of Finance.

15 (3) Applicants that provide access to children who are  
16 underserved or lack access to parks or other outdoor venues suitable  
17 to conduct appropriate environmental education instruction.

18 (4) Applicants that have developed working collaboratives to  
19 develop environmental education partnerships.

20 (5) Applicants working in collaboration with local educational  
21 agencies to identify those children lacking adequate opportunities  
22 to access outdoor environmental education curriculum or  
23 innovative or alternative recreation programming.

24 (c) The amount of a grant awarded pursuant to this section may  
25 not be less than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) or more than  
26 two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000). A grant may be  
27 expended for any of the following purposes:

28 (1) Staffing that is directly associated with the programming.

29 (2) Staff training or development directly associated with the  
30 programming.

31 (3) Costs associated with transporting youth between a  
32 community or school and the proposed environmental education  
33 venue.

34 (4) Medical insurance for the participants, only if the insurance  
35 is a requirement pursuant to the activity.

36 (5) Operational costs, such as the rental equipment, food, and  
37 supplies.

38 (6) Applicants that can demonstrate that the administrative costs  
39 associated with this activity will not exceed more than 7.5 percent  
40 of the amount of the grant.

1 (d) The department may gather information from the applicants  
2 as to the effectiveness of these programs in meeting program  
3 objectives. The department shall summarize this information and  
4 report to the appropriate budget and fiscal committees of both  
5 houses of the Legislature as to the number of children served, the  
6 educational objectives met, and the level of demand.

7 (e) Applicant agencies may enter into contracts with other public  
8 agencies or entities to provide unique interpretive skills or to  
9 present authentic, curriculum-based programs in units of  
10 conservancy properties or state, community, or regional park  
11 systems for services not otherwise provided. The purpose of this  
12 subdivision is to authorize the applicants to provide programming  
13 services, equipment, and materials that assist in the curriculum  
14 program or provide educational activities that assist in the  
15 presentation of cultural traditions.

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