

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 1, 2015

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 29, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 988

Introduced by Assembly Members Mark Stone and Atkins
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Lopez)

February 26, 2015

An act to amend Section 5095.4 of, and 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 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. The bill would require the director to 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 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
30

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:

39 (1) Develop criteria and procedures as may be necessary to
40 implement the grant program.

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

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

(d) The director shall give priority for funding to an outdoor environmental education and recreation program that *has primarily serves students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, foster youth, or pupils of limited English proficiency, as defined in Section 42238.01 of the Education Code, and has* at least one of the following attributes:

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

~~(2)~~

(1) Demonstrates partnerships between public, private, and nonprofit entities.

~~(3)~~

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

~~(4)~~

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

~~(5)~~

(4) Commits in-kind resources.

~~(6)~~

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

~~(7)~~

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

~~(8)~~

(7) Integrates instruction in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

~~(9)~~

1 (8) Includes service learning and community outreach
2 components for purposes of building partnerships between
3 participants and local communities.

4 (e) Reverted and unencumbered funds from the California Clean
5 Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection
6 Act of 2002 may be appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose
7 of this chapter, if consistent with the requirements of the California
8 Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal
9 Protection Act of 2002. To the extent that grants may be awarded
10 from those funds, they shall be awarded only to programs that
11 meet all of the criteria specified in Section 5095.4.

12 (f) The director may also accept private donations made for the
13 support of the program. The director may solicit and accept private
14 funding to help supplement the costs of the program. These funding
15 sources may include, but are not limited to, foundations, corporate
16 funding, ~~crowd-funding~~ *crowdfunding* resources, donation drives,
17 or any other funding sources that may be available.

18 (g) All moneys received pursuant to subdivisions (e) and (f) for
19 the purpose of this program shall be deposited in the California
20 Youth Outdoor Education Account, which is hereby created within
21 the State Park and Recreation Fund. Notwithstanding Section
22 13340 of the Government Code, moneys in the California Youth
23 Outdoor Education Account shall be continuously appropriated to
24 the department for *the* purposes of this chapter.

25 SEC. 3. Section 5095.4 of the Public Resources Code is
26 amended to read:

27 5095.4. (a) The director, in consultation with the State
28 Department of Education, shall develop a competitive grant
29 program to assist state parks, state conservancies in existence as
30 of January 1, 2003, urbanized and heavily urbanized local agencies,
31 and community-based organizations within those jurisdictions,
32 working in collaboration, to provide outdoor educational
33 opportunities to children.

34 (1) Applicant entities shall provide a 25-percent matching
35 contribution in community resources. The matching contributions
36 may be in the form of money, including funds from other state or
37 local assistance programs, gifts of real property, equipment, and
38 consumable supplies, volunteer services, free or reduced-cost use
39 of land, facilities, or equipment, and bequests and income from
40 wills, estates, and trusts. The department may establish findings

1 for hardships to waive the matching requirement when an applicant
2 cannot meet the requirement.

3 (2) The department may give additional consideration to
4 applicant entities collaborating with other entities, including, but
5 not limited to, school districts, faith-based groups, and others
6 providing outreach programs to identify and attract urbanized
7 youth most in need of organized, constructive recreational
8 activities.

9 (b) The department shall make one-third of any funds
10 appropriated for the purposes of this chapter available to give
11 special priority to providing increased access for elementary
12 schoolage children in grades 2 to 8, inclusive, to conservancy or
13 state, community, and regional park properties, including public
14 properties within the coastal zone, and, in addition, shall give
15 priority, in awarding a grant pursuant to this section, to all of the
16 following:

17 (1) Programs that use curriculum tied to the science content
18 standards and science framework adopted by the State Board of
19 Education.

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

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

26 (4) Applicants that have developed working collaboratives to
27 develop environmental education partnerships.

28 (5) Applicants working in collaboration with local educational
29 agencies to identify those children lacking adequate opportunities
30 to access outdoor environmental education curriculum or
31 innovative or alternative recreation programming.

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

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

37 (2) Staff training or development directly associated with the
38 programming.

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

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

6 (5) Operational costs, such as the rental equipment, food, and
7 supplies.

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

11 (d) The department may gather information from the applicants
12 as to the effectiveness of these programs in meeting program
13 objectives. The department shall summarize this information and
14 report to the appropriate budget and fiscal committees of both
15 houses of the Legislature as to the number of children served, the
16 educational objectives met, and the level of demand.

17 (e) Applicant agencies may enter into contracts with other public
18 agencies or entities to provide unique interpretive skills or to
19 present authentic, curriculum-based programs in units of
20 conservancy properties or state, community, or regional park
21 systems for services not otherwise provided. The purpose of this
22 subdivision is to authorize the applicants to provide programming
23 services, equipment, and materials that assist in the curriculum
24 program or provide educational activities that assist in the
25 presentation of cultural traditions.