

Date of Hearing: May 12, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Lorena Gonzalez, Chair

AB 826 (Bennett) – As Amended April 19, 2021

Policy Committee: Natural Resources

Vote: 9 - 2

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes, upon appropriation by the Legislature, the Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment Program (Program) within the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), to address the resource and recreational goals of the south central coast area part of the conservancy's jurisdiction.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Declares it is the obligation of the Legislature to encourage local governments to form bonds to counter sea level rise, beach erosion, and to preserve marine life.
- 2) Establishes the Program, within the SCC, to address the resource and recreational goals of the south central coast area.
- 3) Defines the "area" in the Program to mean those lands that are located within the Central California Coast from Point Conception to Point Mugu.
- 4) Authorizes the SCC to undertake projects and award grants and loans to public agencies and nonprofit organizations to help achieve all of the goals of the Program.
- 5) Requires the SCC to create an advisory group, prepare a plan, and implement the program in conformance with local general plans and zoning ordinances.
- 6) Authorizes the SCC to acquire interest in real property, exercise a right of first refusal, develop projects or site improvements, enter into contracts and joint powers agreements, accept gifts and donations, recruit volunteers, and manage lands.
- 7) Prohibits the SCC from using the power of eminent domain, levying a tax, regulating land owned by another public agency, doing anything to produce conflict with water rights or transportation.
- 8) Act to affect any water right or water-resource facility, including any publicly owned water treatment works, in the south central coast area.
- 9) Requires the SCC, to the extent feasible, utilize the services of the California Conservation Corps and Community Conservation Corps.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Cost pressures of tens of millions of dollars to fund the elements of the bill. (GF, bond or special fund).
- 2) If the Authority is funded, increases in administrative costs are expected to oversee grant programs and perform the direct duties of the SCC (GF, bond, or special fund).

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill intends to create a program within the SCC to address resource and recreational goals of the south central coast including by implementing and funding projects that increase recreational opportunities, protect public access and address sea level rise. The Program would as same name as the existing joint powers authority (JPA) that does identical work. According to the author:

Through its close coordination with its member agencies and departments, the Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment JPA (BEACON) has repeatedly shown itself to be a vital resource, and model agency, in the South Central Coast. Established in 1986, the joint powers agency (Counties of Santa Barbara and Ventura as well as the coastal cities of Santa Barbara, Goleta, Carpinteria, Ventura, Oxnard and Port Hueneme) was formed to address coastal erosion, beach nourishment and clean oceans within the Central California Coast from Point Conception to Point Mugu. Since its conception, it has conducted sea level rise, coastal erosion, mitigation, and restoration plans for the last 30 years. Most recently, BEACON shared its Ventura County Sea Level Rise Adaption plan with the Board of Supervisors to better support Ventura County residence living along the coast line. In October 2020, BEACON announced its latest project to design and engineering of a beach access stairway at Mondo's Cove beach, adjacent to the community of Faria Beach. By becoming a program within Conservancy, BEACON would have better access to grants, better communication and coordination with the conservancy, and would receive additional assistance at both the state and local level.

- 2) **Background.** The SCC is active in the area this Program would cover. Over the last 10 years the SCC has provided over \$14 million for projects in the proposed Program area including to members of the BEACON JPA.

In the past, the Legislature has created programs within the SCC in the San Francisco Bay Area and Santa Ana River watershed. However, both programs expand SCC jurisdiction inland. This bill does not specify how far inland the Program would go. SCC also operates a Climate Ready grant program, which has awarded over \$12 million for 62 climate adaptation projects, including projects proposed by the BEACON JPA.