

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER

Senator Josh Becker, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 1592 **Hearing Date:** June 23, 2026
Author: Ramos
Version: March 25, 2026 Amended
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Genevieve Wong

Subject: California Indian Heritage Center support organization

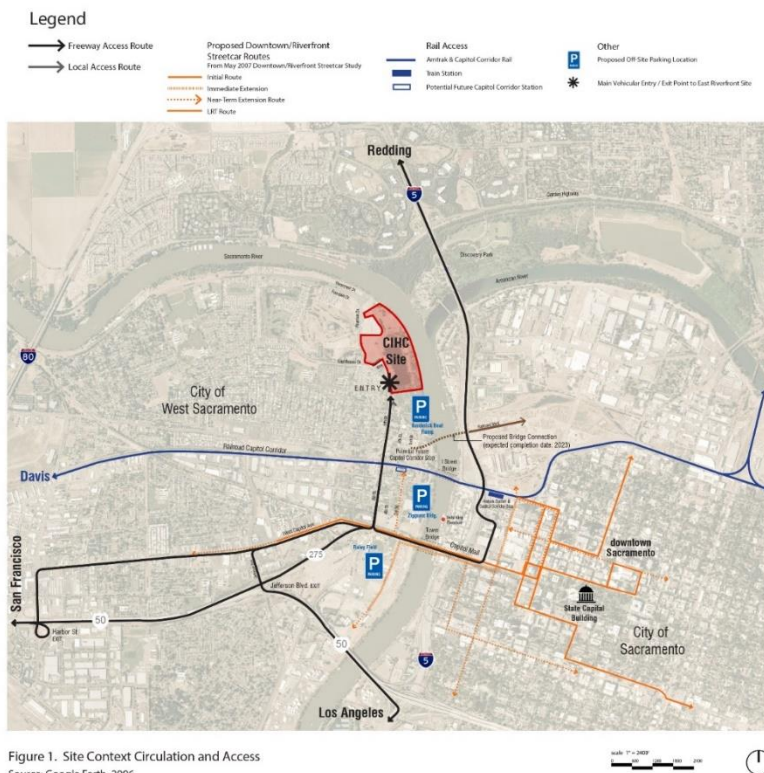
SUMMARY

This bill would authorize the Department of Parks and Recreation to enter into an agreement with the California Indian Heritage Center (CIHC) support organization and places requirements of the structure of the CIHC support organization and any agreements made.

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING LAW

California Indian Heritage Center.

In 2018, SB 854 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 51, Statutes of 2018) declared the intent of the Legislature and the Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) to develop a California Indian Heritage Center (CIHC) for cultural preservation, learning and exchange, land stewardship, and a place to engage all visitors in celebrating the living cultures of California tribes. SB 854 further appropriated \$100 million from the Natural Resources and Parks Preservation Fund for the design of the CIHC. The CIHC site is comprised of 51-acres and will be at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers in West Sacramento.



In December 2018, former Governor Edmund Brown, Jr, issued Executive Order B-60-18, directing the Tribal Advisor to establish a task force to oversee the development of the CIHC. The Tribal Advisor established the CIHC Task Force of California Native American tribal and community leaders in 2019 to oversee the development of the CIHC, including decisions about governance of the completed CIHC. (There was another CIHC Task Force created within State Parks in 2004, see *Existing law* section below.)

According to the CIHC's website, the vision of the CIHC is to partner with tribal communities, regional cultural centers, and museum to present a statewide perspective on California's diverse Indian cultural legacy; to enhance public understanding of the traditional and spiritual beliefs, practices, and contributions to promote dialogue between generations; and to provide educational opportunities to research and understand California's Indian history, cultures, and impact of contemporary issues. Its guiding principles include:

- Creating a place that represents and celebrates all California Indian Cultures, while remaining nameless, faceless, and neutral;
- Honoring and respecting local tribal protocols and traditions for welcoming other tribes;
- Building a Center on the premise of healing the land, demonstrating traditional values for land stewardship and environmental consciousness;
- Encouraging understanding of Indian values through site design, reinforcing the message of California Indian Culture as a living culture and injecting California Indian values in all aspects of site development;
- Developing the site and facilities with a natural character, using natural materials and a light footprint on the land, and embracing the river and seasons;
- Providing integrated indoor and outdoor spaces to facilitate transfer of culture, education, and preservation of traditions, and enable site flexibility, allowing different event formats;
- Providing safe and comfortable spaces for all visitors, emphasizing easy pedestrian circulation; and
- Creating a center that is a good neighbor through community engagement.

In an April 14, 2026, press release, Governor Newsom announced the groundbreaking for Phase One of the center, which will create an outdoor welcome area with cultural and educational information, amphitheater-style seating, restrooms, and parking to welcome tribal and non-tribal communities. Phase One is expected to be completed this fall.

Existing law:

- 1) Provides that it is the intent of the Legislature that State Parks develop a CIHC for cultural preservation, learning and exchange, land stewardship, and a place to engage all visitors in celebrating the living cultures of California tribes (Public Resources Code (PRC) §5097.999).

- 2) Creates the CIHC Task Force within State Parks to:
 - a) Make recommendations to State Parks regarding potential siting of the CIHC;
 - b) Advise and make recommendations to State Parks on the cultural concepts and designs of the CIHC;
 - c) Establish and maintain communication between tribes, museums, and local, state, and federal agencies;
 - d) Request and utilize the advice and services of tribes, museums, and local, state, and federal agencies;
 - e) Develop and recommend to State Parks a governing structure for the ongoing operation of the CIHC; and
 - f) Prepare and submit to the Legislature an annual report detailing the task force's activities and progress towards establishing the CIHC (PRC §5097.998 (e)).
- 3) Specifies that the CIHC Task Force shall consist of nine members, with five representing California Indian tribes (PRC § 5097.998 (b)).
- 4) Specifies that the CIHC Task Force's responsibilities shall be complete and its duties discharged when the CIHC is completed and State Parks has adopted a governing structure for the completed CIHC (PRC § 5097.998 (f)).

PROPOSED LAW

This bill would:

- 1) Define a CIHC support organization as a nonprofit organization established for the purpose of creating a collaborative partnership between California Native American tribes and State Parks in support of the CIHC.
- 2) Require a CIHC support organization to meet all of the following:
 - a) Be exempt from taxation pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
 - b) Comply with the Supervision of Trustees and Fundraisers for Charitable Purposes Act.
 - c) Not be a state agency or body.
 - d) Not directly manage state capital outlay projects.

- 3) Authorize State Parks to enter into an agreement with a CIHC support organization to achieve the following:
 - a) To partner in the operation and programming of the CIHC to achieve the collective mission of establishing partnerships with California Native American tribes.
 - b) To recruit, hire, and retain more diversity of CIHC staff with personal experience and knowledge of California Native American culture and history.
 - c) To enter into staff-sharing agreements to use essential skills and abilities of state and nonstate employees, subject to the following:
 - i) State employees shall not be paid or otherwise compensated directly by the CIHC support organization.
 - ii) State employees shall not be directly supervised or managed by employees of the CIHC support organization.
 - iii) All staff-sharing agreements shall include conflict-of-interest provisions for state employees that clearly outlines roles and responsibilities to support ethical conduct, trust, and transparency.
 - d) To develop and engage new sources of nonstate public and private funding for the support of the CIHC.
 - e) To apply for, receive, and expend state funds in support of the CIHC.
 - f) To support ongoing capital improvement projects managed by State Parks.
 - g) To provide financial stability and ethical integrity through oversight and accountability.
 - h) To support marketing and communications activities that promote the programs, amenities, and resources of the CIHC.
 - i) To support projects and programs that facilitate access and visitation and enhance educational opportunities, especially for young and more diverse audiences.
 - j) To establish, improve, and support the completion of projects that establish or improve CIHC visitor amenities and facilities.
- 4) Require the CIHC support organization to be led by a chief executive officer and require the chief executive officer to report to the board, which would be established by the bill.

- 5) Require the CIHC support organization to be overseen by a board, which shall consist of no more than 25 members with at least 51 percent of the board's members representing California Native American tribes.
 - a) In addition to the above-appointed members, allows the following to serve as ex officio, nonvoting members to assist in proving effective communication and coordination efforts between State Parks and the CIHC support organization:
 - i) Director of State Parks, or their designee.
 - ii) Director of the Department of Finance, or their designee.
 - iii) The Tribal Affairs Secretary who leads the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs, or their designee.
- 6) Require the CIHC support organization's charter and articles of incorporation, as approved by the CIHC task force, to set forth all other organizational terms of the CIHC support organization and the board not provided in this article.
- 7) Authorize the board to subsequently amend the CIHC's support organization's charter and articles of incorporation by majority vote.
- 8) Require the agreement between State Parks and the CIHC support organization to include, at a minimum:
 - a) Clear goals and objectives.
 - b) Any commitments of oversight, staffing, and coordination that may be needed to accomplish the goals and objectives.
 - c) A requirement that State Parks and the CIHC support organization annually hold a joint public meeting regarding the operation of the CIHC and the activities of the CIHC support organization.
- 9) Authorize State Parks to develop and enter into supplementary agreements with the CIHC support organization for the purpose of securing any expertise, capacity, or financial resources that may be needed to identify, plan, develop, or implement strategic initiatives and projects for the CIHC.
- 10) Require any agreements entered into by State Parks pursuant to the above-described supplementary agreements to be under the control of State Parks and not be subject to any advertising or competitive bidding requirements applicable to public works projects or other public projects.
- 11) Require any construction, alteration, demolition, installation, or repair work undertaken by or on behalf of the CIHC support organization for the CIHC on property owned by the state to constitute a public work.

- 12) Require the Department of Finance to review and approve or disapprove any supplemental agreement, or substantial amendment to an agreement, within 60 days.
- 13) Specify that the bill does not commit, obligate, or require state funds to be provided in support of the CIHC support organization.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT

According to the author, “[t]he California Indian Heritage Center will become a cultural landmark for our state, a place where visitors from all around the world can learn about the true history of California First People and be educated on the living cultures that continue to shape this land. It will be a space for tribal communities from across the state to connect with their past, their present, and the future of their tribes. A place where our ancestors will be honored and celebrated for years to come. This bill would help pave the way for this goal by advancing a top priority of ensuring this center is run by tribes for tribes by allowing for Department of Parks and Recreation to enter into an agreement with a support organization. This collaborative partnership would advance the creation of the California Indian Heritage Center.”

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

None received

COMMENTS

This bill. As charged by the Legislature, the role of the State Parks’ CIHC Task Force was to oversee the development of the CIHC, including decisions about governance of the completed CIHC. In 2005, the CIHC Task Force recommended that the CIHC be developed and operated through a formal collaboration between State Parks and a new nonprofit organization, and that the CIHC Task Force prepare and approve bylaws for the new organization. This bill would implement that recommendation.

Related legislation

SB 101 (Wiener, Chapter 4, Statutes of 2025), the Budget Act of 2025, among other provisions, appropriates \$6 million for working drawings and \$3 million for construction of the CIHC.

AB 107 (Gabriel, Chapter 22, Statutes of 2024), the Budget Act of 2024, among other provisions, appropriates an additional \$3,488,000 for preliminary plans of the CIHC.

AB 1150 (Water, Parks, and Wildlife, Chapter 831, Statutes of 2023) authorizes State Parks to enter into community access agreements with eligible entities.

SB 74 (Mitchell, Chapter 6, Statutes of 2020), the Budget Act of 2020, among other provisions reverts the balances of the appropriations for working drawings and construction of the CIHC, totaling \$95,310,000, leaving \$4,690,000 for preliminary plans.

SB 854 (Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 51, Statutes of 2018) states the intent of the Legislature that State Parks develop a CIHC for cultural preservation, learning and exchange, land stewardship, and a place to engage all visitors in celebrating the living cultures of California tribes.

SB 840 (Mitchell, Chapter 29, Statutes of 2018), the Budget Act of 2018, among other provisions, appropriates \$100 million for the design and construction of the CIHC.

AB 1820 (Budget, 2017) would have stated that it was the intent of the Legislature that State Parks develop a CIHC and would have appropriated \$100 million for the design and construction of the CIHC. AB 1820 was held on the Senate floor.

SB 1111 (Pavley, Chapter 540, Statutes of 2016) authorizes State Parks to enter into a statewide agreement with a park support organization.

SB 204 (Pavley, Chapter 573, Statutes of 2015) authorizes State Parks to enter into operating agreements for entire park units even if unnecessary to avoid closure of that park unit.

AB 42 (Huffman, Chapter 450, Statutes of 2011) authorizes State Parks to enter into operating agreements with qualified nonprofit organizations for the development, improvement, restoration, care, maintenance, administration, or operation of a unit or units, or a portion of a unit, of the state park system.

SB 1264 (Natural Resources and Water, Chapter 286, Statutes of 2004) renames the California Indian Cultural Center and Museum Task Force the CIHC Task Force.

SB 2063 (Brulte, Chapter 290, Statutes of 2002) establishes the California Indian Cultural Center and Museum Task Force and tasks it with making recommendations to State Parks on the siting, design, and governance of the cultural center.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS: none**SUPPORT**

Jamul Indian Village of California (sponsor)
California State Parks Foundation
California Tribal Business Alliance
Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake
Morongo Band of Mission Indians
Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians
The Trust for Public Land
Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation
Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation

OPPOSITION

None Received