

COMMENTS:1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Climate change, coastal erosion and pollution are damaging the health and longevity of California's surfing communities. A lack of official recognition of California's surfing areas prevents the state from elevating urgently needed coastal stewardship opportunities that acknowledge the role surfing and its community play in protecting our coast. Designating surf reserves will empower local communities to implement conservation measures, improve water quality, and enhance coastal access for generations to come.

2) **Background.** The United States boasts approximately 3.3 million surfers who spend between \$1.9 billion and \$3.3 billion each year on local surf trips. The surfing industry, based almost exclusively in California, generates over \$6 billion in United States annual retail sales. In recognition of the importance and contributions of surfing to California, the Legislature enacted AB 1782 (Gray), Chapter 162, Statutes of 2018, to name surfing the official sport of California. That same year, the Legislature named September 20 as California Surfing Day. California will host the 2028 Olympics in which surfing will be a focus for a worldwide audience.

Writing in support of this bill, the Save the Waves Coalition contends that specific recognition of surf reserves "allows local communities to identify and plan for ongoing stewardship, improving efforts in enhancing water quality, equitable coastal access, and climate resilience for a safe and accessible coastline in California." Save the Waves created a program 15 years ago that identifies, designates, and preserves outstanding waves, surf zones, and their surrounding environments around the world as World Surfing Reserves. There are 13 designated sites worldwide with two in California: Santa Cruz and Malibu.

Writing in opposition to this bill, Sea of Clouds argues the bill overlooks two issues. First, they argue, the bill is "built upon a significant lack of information and therefore, a lack of understanding of its conservation impact." Second, they argue, the bill employs a sole "biodiversity-based pathway for designation. Surf breaks without proximity to an OECM (other effective conservation measure) are denied a path to designation, and importantly, protection."

3) **Related Legislation.** AB 452 (Irwin) of the current legislative session is similar to this bill and was held on this committee's suspense file.4) **Prior Legislation.** AB 2177 (Irwin), of the 2021-22 Legislative Session, was similar to this bill and was held on this committee's suspense file.

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