

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) State Parks estimates ongoing annual General Fund costs of approximately \$590,000 for three staff (and two vehicles) to create guidelines, conduct greenhouse gas emissions modeling in fire-adapted, forest, floodplain, and coastal ecosystems, manage data inputs and reporting, draft contracts, track expenditures, and other related implementation tasks.
- 2) Ongoing cost pressures of an unknown but potentially significant amount, possibly in the millions of dollars annually, to support the Wildfire Safety and Climate Stewardship Fund and fund climate stewardship activities and multi-benefit programs and projects in the state park system, subject to appropriation by the Legislature (General Fund, special fund such as the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, or bond funds).

COMMENTS:

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

[This bill] affirms state policy to integrate climate considerations into all aspects of park planning, development, and operations. Specifically, [this bill] directs State Parks to implement science-based, climate-informed stewardship practices, such as reforestation projects, prescribed burns, and fuel reduction, and road decommissioning. This bill also establishes the [Fund] to support climate-informed stewardship practices.

- 2) **Background.** According to State Parks, with 280 state park units, over 340 miles of coastline, 970 miles of lake and river frontage, 15,000 campsites, 5,200 miles of trails, 3,195 historic buildings, and more than 11,000 known prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, the department contains the largest and most diverse recreational, natural, and cultural heritage holdings of any state agency in the nation. More than 68 million people annually visit California's state park system.

The department's Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS) develops grant programs to provide funding for local, state, and nonprofit projects. Since 1964, OGALS funding has helped create or improve more than 7,700 community parks throughout California, and since 2000, the program has administered approximately \$4.7 billion in grant funding throughout the state.

As described by State Parks, more extreme wildfires, drought, sea level rise, and other effects of climate change are impacting state parks. These complex challenges call for interdisciplinary and creative approaches to build sustainable and resilient solutions. State Parks asserts that it has been "strategically and creatively working to help manage California's natural and cultural resources and update facilities to adapt to the impacts of climate change." Examples of efforts within the department to protect against climate change include the State Parks Wildfire and Forest Resilience Program, the Sea Level Rise Adaptation Strategy, and various ecosystem restoration projects.

A coalition of organizations in support of this bill argues this bill ensures State Parks is prepared to steward both current and future parklands under changing climate conditions. The coalition argues that existing funding and capacity constraints currently limit the

department's ability to implement forward-looking strategies and, "at the same time, while neighboring lands are increasingly managed with climate resilience in mind, state parks lack clear authority or direction to implement comparable approaches." The coalition contends this results in an "inconsistency across landscapes, where parklands risk falling behind broader regional stewardship efforts, despite their central role in supporting regional health," and that by codifying climate stewardship into statute, this bill establishes "clear, durable direction for [State Parks] to manage parklands in alignment with projected climate impacts."

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