

Date of Hearing: January 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 946 (Bryan) – As Amended January 5, 2026

Policy Committee: Natural Resources
Water, Parks and Wildlife

Vote: 13 - 0
11 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill encourages the Governor's office, state agencies, and the Legislature to recognize the coequal goals of the state's 30x30 target and Outdoors for All initiative when distributing resources, and, to the extent practical, maximize investment in urban communities consistent with those initiatives.

Specifically, this bill, among other things:

- 1) Finds and declares that the November 2023 report of the Outdoors for All initiative, "Outdoors for All: Providing Equitable Access to Parks and Nature," proposes specified priorities to achieve the goal of outdoors for all.
- 2) Requires the Governor's office, state agencies, and the Legislature, when distributing resources, to aspire to recognize the coequal goals of the state's 30x30 goal and Outdoors for All initiative and, to the extent practical, maximize investment in urban communities consistent with those initiatives.
- 3) Encourages decisionmakers, when distributing resources to achieve the goals and benefits of the 30x30 goal and Outdoors for All initiative, to consider factors that are unique to urban settings, as specified.
- 4) Encourages regulatory agencies, such as the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), to work with local communities to restore degraded lands that could contribute to a more equitable strategy for meeting the state's environmental, conservation, and public access goals.
- 5) Requires state funding agencies, including specified state conservancies and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), to allow for urban nature-based projects on degraded lands that are consistent with the state's goals to be eligible and competitive for state funds.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Cost pressure of an unknown but potentially significant amount, possibly in the tens of millions of dollars (General Fund, special fund such as the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, or bond funds), for state agencies to maximize investments in urban communities consistent with 30x30 and Outdoors for All, consider factors unique to urban settings when making funding decisions, work with local communities to restore degraded lands to help meet the state's environmental, conservation, and public access goals, and increase funding for urban

nature-based projects on degraded lands. As discussed below, many of the state's existing grant programs fund the types of projects described by this bill; however, to the extent administering agencies view this bill as prioritizing urban nature-based projects over other types of projects, there may be less funding available for other projects outside of urban areas. For example, the Department of Fish and Wildlife estimates unknown but potentially significant ongoing cost pressures on WCB's fund sources. To the extent this bill requires WCB to prioritize urban nature-based projects over other wildlife projects, WCB contends less funding may be available for wildlife and habitat projects outside of urban areas.

- 2) Potentially significant costs to certain state agencies that are unable to absorb new workload created by this bill (various funds). For example, the San Diego River Conservancy (SDRC) is one of the smallest agencies in the state, employing only three staff members. If SDRC were to newly consider as part of its grantmaking process factors that are unique to urban settings, as encouraged by this bill, it contends it would need to solicit input from stakeholders and local urban areas and revise and modify its program guidelines, thereby creating the need for additional resources, which SDRC estimates to have an ongoing annual cost of approximately \$214,000 for one new position (General Fund or bond funds).
- 3) While implementation of the administration's Outdoors for All initiative is already underway, referencing the initiative's priorities in statute creates potential cost pressures on state agencies to effectuate the priorities of the initiative. For example, the California Conservation Corps (CCC) estimates ongoing costs of about \$425,000 annually (General Fund or special fund) to support its Career Pathways unit in bridging corps internships and career development programs to careers. In addition, CCC anticipates ongoing cost pressures ranging from \$62,000 to \$1.2 million annually to facilitate up to 20 corpsmember internships per year to fulfill the intent of the bill.

COMMENTS:

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

California has made a strong commitment to protecting and preserving its natural lands, but it is just as important to make sure that densely populated and underserved communities are not overlooked in this work. By urging the state to focus on greening and restoring land in heavily urbanized areas, [this bill] will ensure we take a comprehensive approach to environmental protection that supports vulnerable communities and expands access to nature throughout California.

- 2) **Background.** A history of discriminatory policies and exclusionary zoning in the state have led to long-term disinvestment, fewer parks and outdoor spaces, and less coastal access for many communities. The administration's Outdoors for All initiative seeks to expand park and nature access in communities with little outdoor space. In October 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-82-20, which establishes a state goal of conserving 30% of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030. The 30x30 goal was codified by SB 337 (Min), Chapter 392, Statutes of 2023. As of November 2025, the state has conserved 26.1% of its lands (26.5 million acres) and 21.9% of its coastal waters (737.61 acres), which

includes a network of 124 marine protected areas. The Outdoors for All initiative is complementary and a companion strategy to 30x30.

The state funds a number of programs and initiatives to further its 30x30 goal and increase green space and outdoor access in urban areas, including the urban forestry program and green schoolyards program administered by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; the urban greening program administered by CNRA; the statewide park development and community revitalization grant program, outdoor equity grants program, land and water conservation fund, habitat conservation fund, recreational trails program, various free or discounted park pass programs, and other programs administered by the Department of Parks and Recreation; and loans and grants offered by DTSC for environmental cleanup.

According to CNRA's 2025 "Pathways to 30x30 Annual Progress Report," the state has invested approximately \$1.24 billion in over 500 different projects to further nature-based solutions, including 30x30. In addition to previous bond funds and General Fund investments, the Proposition 4 climate bond allocates billions of dollars for outdoor access, coastal resilience, biodiversity and nature-based solutions, and other related priorities. The fiscal year (FY) 2025-26 budget appropriated \$3.3 billion from the climate bond. The Governor's January budget proposal for FY 2026-27 proposes an additional \$2.1 billion to continue funding critical projects and programs.

- 3) **Prior Legislation.** AB 2285 (Rendon), of the 2023-2024 legislative session, was substantially similar to this bill and was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee's suspense file.

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