

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING
AB 946 (Bryan)
As Amended January 5, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Governor's office, state agencies, and the Legislature, when distributing resources, to aspire to recognize the coequal goals and benefits of the 30x30 goal and the Outdoors for All initiative, and, to the extent practical, maximize investment in historically underserved urban communities consistent with those initiatives.

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires the Governor's office, state agencies and state departments, and the Legislature, to advance and promote environmental, conservation, and public access policies and budget actions, when distributing resources, to aspire to recognize the coequal goals and benefits of the 30x30 goal, the Outdoors for All initiative, and, to the extent practical, maximize investment in historically underserved urban communities consistent with those initiatives.
- 2) Encourages decisionmakers to consider factors that are unique to urban settings, including, but not limited to, higher land value acquisition and development costs per acre, the use and rehabilitation of degraded lands for conservation projects, the proximity to populations lacking park and greenspace access, the acute health needs of a local population due to historic lack of greenspace access and development externalities, local park needs assessment plans, current or impending loss of parks or greenspace as a result of state or federal infrastructure projects, and the availability of mobility options near a proposed land conservation site.
- 3) Encourages regulatory agencies 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.
- 4) Requires state funding agencies to allow, to the extent consistent with the funding source, the funding program's authorizing statutes, and the state's goals, for urban nature-based projects on degraded lands to be eligible and competitive for state funds.

COMMENTS

In October 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order (EO) N-82-20 which establishes a state goal of conserving 30% of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030 – known as 30x30. As of November 2025, the state has conserved 26.1% of its lands (26.5 million acres) and 21.9% of coastal waters (737.61 acres), which includes a network of 124 marine protected areas, toward 30x30 goals.

The Outdoors for All initiative is intended to expand parks and nature access in communities with little outdoor space, supporting programs to connect people who lack access. Spending time outdoors directly benefits mental and physical health, but outdoor access is not equitably distributed to all communities. A history of discriminatory policies and exclusionary zoning have led to long-term disinvestment, fewer parks and outdoor spaces, and less coastal access for many communities. Outdoors for All also furthers two other California Natural Resources Agency

(NRA) priorities, Nature Based Solutions and 30x30, by investing in California's public lands and natural resources.

In Los Angeles (LA) County, communities with the fewest parks often have the highest environmental burdens, i.e., pollutants and other stressors that directly impact public health and well-being. The LA County *Parks Needs Assessment Plus* identifies priority areas for environmental conservation and restoration to form the basis of a local 30x30 strategy. This assessment reimagines conservation to include both traditional efforts to acquire and protect natural lands as well as the restoration of degraded areas, such as brownfields, landfills, and oil fields. There is a special focus on lower-income communities of color, in which vulnerable populations and environmental burdens are concentrated.

In November 2024, California voters enacted the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act, approving \$10 billion for climate, water, and fire resilience projects. NRA is charged with implementing the bond, which allocates at least 40% of funds to benefit disadvantaged, severely disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities.

AB 946 requires state funding agencies to allow for urban nature-based projects on degraded lands to be eligible and competitive for state funds. While nothing in current law or the Governor's EO prohibits these investments, this bill would expressly prioritize them.

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, AB 946 will ensure we take a comprehensive approach to environmental protection that supports vulnerable communities and expands access to nature throughout California.

Arguments in Support

The California Park and Recreation Society writes that by encouraging California to prioritize greening and restoration of lands in heavily urbanized areas concurrent with conservation efforts to protect natural and rural working lands, the state is committing to taking a comprehensive approach to environmental protection that will protect vulnerable communities and provide greater access to nature across California.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill would result in:

- 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.

- 2) Potentially significant costs to certain state agencies that are unable to absorb new workload created by this bill (various 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.

VOTES

ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 13-0-1

YES: Bryan, Alanis, Connolly, Ellis, Garcia, Haney, Hoover, Kalra, Macedo, Muratsuchi, Pellerin, Schultz, Zbur

ABS, ABST OR NV: Wicks

ASM WATER, PARKS, AND WILDLIFE: 11-0-2

YES: Papan, Jeff Gonzalez, Alvarez, Bains, Bennett, Boerner, Caloza, Hart, Macedo, Schiavo, Rogers

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ávila Farías, Tangipa

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Stefani, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Bauer-Kahan, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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CONSULTANT: Paige Brokaw / NAT. RES. /

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