

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AJR 9 (Wallis)

As Amended August 6, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Urges the President and Congress to immediately restore full and consistent funding and staffing for the National Park Service (NPS) and makes findings regarding the iconic nature of the state's national parks, the popularity of these parks, and the impact of reducing the NPS workforce on the local economy, NPS employees, and park visitors.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Add additional clauses regarding the proposal of the federal administration and of Congress to transfer public lands out of federal ownership and the protections provided by the Public Lands in Public Hands Act and the Public Lands Workforce Stability Act.
- 2) Urge the California delegation in the Congress of the United States to cosponsor the Public Lands in Public Hands Act and the Public Lands Workforce Stability Act.

COMMENTS

"National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst."

– Wallace Stegner, novelist, environmentalist, historian

California is home to more national parks and more park units (e.g., National Monuments, National Historic Sites, National Recreation Areas, National Preserves) than any other state, and includes some of the nation's most iconic national parks: Channel Islands, Death Valley, Joshua Tree, Kings Canyon, Lassen Volcanic, Pinnacles, Redwood, Sequoia, and Yosemite. Yosemite and Joshua Tree are consistently some of the most visited national parks nationwide. Although not a national park, Golden Gate National Recreation Area is one of the most visited NPS properties; in 2024, it received 17,187,508 visitors—more than any other NPS property in the nation. Because of the bounty of natural beauty, national parks in California also generate more economic output, across all categories (i.e., visitor spending, jobs, labor income, and value added) than any other state, according to the 2023 NPS Visitor Spending Effects Report.

On January 20, 2025, President Trump ordered a freeze on hiring federal employees (which has recently been extended through July 15, 2025). Although this hiring freeze later exempted 5,000 seasonal employees (which was later extended by memo to 7,700 employees), 1,000 NPS employees were fired. Although federal judges in California and Maryland ordered the administration to reinstate more than 16,000 probationary employees across six agencies, including the Interior, the U.S. Supreme Court swiftly blocked the ruling.

Despite this uncertainty, the Secretary of the Interior, Doug Burgum, ordered on April 3, 2025, that all national parks and national historic sites to remain open "for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people and to ensure that [NPS] will provide the best customer service experience for all visitors" unless a closure or reduction in hours is approved by the NPS director and assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. On April 4, 2025 (one day after the order to

remain open), employees across the Department of the Interior were offered buyouts or early retirement. In addition, the Trump Administration has reportedly asked the NPS, among other agencies, to develop a plan for a 30% reduction in payroll.

All of this is expected to leave national parks understaffed. The National Park Conservation Association notes that, "In just over three months, the Trump administration has pushed out nearly 13% of the National Park Service's workforce, triggering a full-blown staffing crisis." National parks across the country have already altered available programming and reduced park unit accessibility in response to this hiring whiplash. Additionally, there are concerns that the lack of NPS staffing will result in degraded natural resources. National park units have already implemented many staff-saving measures, including: the delay of Yosemite's entrance reservation system, the discontinuation of all ranger tours at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and the cancellation of guided cave tours at Carlsbad Caverns.

On May 2, 2025, the Trump Administration released its budget plan for 2026, which recommends reducing the NPS budget by over \$1 billion, including reducing the operations budget by \$900 million and the construction budget by \$73 million.

According to the Author

"[This resolution] calls for the urgent restoration of full and consistent funding for [NPS] by the federal government. California's national parks are more than scenic landscapes; they are vital economic engines, historical treasures, and environmental sanctuaries that enrich the lives of millions. From Joshua Tree National Park to Yosemite, these parks contribute billions to our economy, support thousands of jobs, and promote conservation, recreation, and education.

Yet, recent federal funding cuts, staffing reductions, and hiring freezes have severely undermined park operations, limiting access, endangering visitor safety, and delaying critical maintenance. These challenges threaten not only the integrity of our parks but also the communities that rely on them for economic stability.

By urging federal action, [this resolution] reaffirms California's commitment to safeguarding these cherished natural spaces. It calls upon Congress and the President to make national park funding a priority, ensuring that these public lands remain accessible, well-maintained, and properly staffed. Protecting our parks is an investment in our future—one that upholds environmental stewardship, supports local economies, and preserves the legacy of America's great outdoors for generations to come."

Arguments in Support

None on file.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill is keyed non-fiscal and has no fiscal impact.

VOTES:

ASM WATER, PARKS, AND WILDLIFE: 10-0-3

YES: Papan, Jeff Gonzalez, Bains, Bennett, Boerner, Caloza, Hart, Celeste Rodriguez, Rogers, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Macedo

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0-3

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ellis, Ortega, Quirk-Silva

SENATE FLOOR: 36-0-4

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Alvarado-Gil, Becker, Pérez, Weber Pierson

UPDATED

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