
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER

Senator Josh Becker, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	SB 1207	Hearing Date:	April 14, 2026
Author:	Laird		
Version:	March 23, 2026 Amended		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Edith Hannigan		

Subject: California Conservation Corps

SUMMARY

This bill would revise and recast the findings and declarations related to the California Conservation Corps; add projects supporting wildfire and forest resiliency to the projects Corpsmembers may be engaged in; authorize the Corps to enter into a contract with a Corps established by California Native American Tribes; and change authorizations related to Corpsmembers' credit under the Public Employees' Retirement System.

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING LAW

California Conservation Corps. The California Conservation Corps (CCC) is established in the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA). The mission of the CCC, pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) § 14000, includes “increasing awareness of and improving our natural resources,...instilling basic skills and a healthy work ethic in California youth, building their character, self-esteem, and self-discipline, and establishing within them a strong sense of civic responsibility and understanding of the value of a day’s work for a day’s wages.”

Existing law:

- 1) Authorizes CCC programs, including the management of environmentally important lands and water, public works projects, facilitating public use of resources, assistance in emergency operations, assistance in fire prevention and suppression, energy conservation, and environmental restoration. (PRC § 14300)
- 2) Specifies that CCC projects are to be directed toward providing opportunities for the public for their education or the use of natural resources or environmentally important public lands and waters, while providing young adults with an opportunity for personal development. Projects are undertaken in both urban and rural areas. (PRC § 14304)
- 3) Authorizes the director of CCC (director) to utilize any services, materials, or property of any agency of the state and may make any agreements with any agency of the state, or take any other actions, that are reasonable and necessary. (PRC § 14308)
- 4) Specifies that Corpsmembers shall not receive state retirement benefits. (PRC § 14310)
- 5) Establishes that the CCC may enter into a contract with an individual or collective of community conservation corps to further the objectives of the CCC. (PRC § 14318)

- 6) Authorizes the CCC to develop nonresidential programs in urban communities that have a need for conservation work. (PRC § 14400)

PROPOSED LAW

This bill would:

- 1) Amend the definition of “public service,” to include serving as a corpsmember with the CCC, for the purposes of CalPERS service credit.
- 2) Specify that CCC corpsmembers may make contributions to receive credit for service in CalPERS.
- 3) Amends findings related to the CCC that the:
 - a) CCC benefits young adults by providing training opportunities.
 - b) CCC relieves individuals from unemployment.
 - c) CCC helps California meet its goal of helping young adults become productive citizens and environmental stewards.
 - d) Legislature intends that young adults who have completed at least one year of service with the CCC be recognized for their dedication and development and that all state entities look for paths to include former corpsmembers into their organization.
- 4) Specify that young adults in the CCC should be engaged in projects that relate to or support natural resource and energy conservation, preservation, and engagement.
 - a) Specify that those projects may include projects supporting wildfire and forest resiliency.
 - b) Specify that those projects may include technical, administrative, culinary, and other services to individuals and entities engaged in work aligning with natural resource and energy conservation.
- 5) Authorize the director to enroll, rather than employ, special corpsmembers regardless of their age.
- 6) Authorize the CCC to direct projects towards providing opportunities to tribal entities and corpsmembers, in addition to the public.
- 7) Repeal a provision of code authorizing the director to utilize any services, materials, or property of any agency of the state and may make any agreements with any agency of the state, or take any other actions, that are reasonable and necessary.
- 8) Specify that corpsmembers may receive certain CalPERS retirement benefits.
- 9) Authorize the CCC to enter into a contract with a corps established by a California Native American Tribe to further the objectives of the CCC.
- 10) Make various nonsubstantive conforming and technical changes.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT

According to the author, “Senate Bill 1207 honors the role that members of the California Conservation Corps (CCC) play in protecting our state and environment by

allowing them to purchase service credit through the California Public Employees' Retirement System and updating the CCC's statutes to better represent their mission. This measure is especially timely, as this year marks the CCC's 50th anniversary."

"The desire to begin saving for retirement should not preclude anyone from participating in a program like the CCC. SB 1207 will bring alignment with similar programs, including the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps, whose participants are already able to earn and purchase service credit for their time in the Corps, while also encouraging California Conservation Corpsmembers to both start and continue a career in state service."

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

None received.

COMMENTS

Double referral. This bill is double referred to this Committee and the Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee. This is the Committee of first referral. Any issues discussed in this analysis under the portfolio of the Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee are included here for completeness and context only.

Repealing redundant section of code. This bill proposes to repeal section 14308 of the PRC, which is duplicative of section 14306(k) in the PRC. This reduces confusion and provides greater clarity.

Accurate reflection of scope of projects completed by Corpsmembers. The CCC has been called in as a cost-effective, high-quality team to perform wildfire and forest resiliency, as well as added "behind the scenes" support for groups performing projects supporting natural resource and energy conservation. While this work might broadly fall into categories of work the CCC is authorized to perform, best practice is to codify that those activities are authorized by the Legislature.

Incorporating Tribal entities. The CCC is currently authorized to engage in projects that provide opportunities to educate the public or for the public to use natural resources and environmentally important public lands and waters. This bill extends that authorization to Tribal entities and corpsmembers.

The CCC is currently authorized to contract with an individual or collective of community conservation corps for a project or program. This bill extends that authorization to conservation corps established by one or more California Native American tribes, such as those recently established through the Nature-Based Solutions Tribal Corps Program.

Related Legislation

AB 1928 (McCarty, Chapter 253, Statutes of 2018) authorized the CCC to enter into contracts with an individual or collective of certified community conservation corps to further the projects and programs of the CCC.

SB 267 (Deddeh, Chapter 1276, Statutes of 1989) specified that corpsmembers are required to be engaged in projects that which preserve, maintain, and enhance the environment, as specified.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS: none

SUPPORT

California Association of Local Conservation Corps
California Conservation Corps Foundation

OPPOSITION

None Received

-- END --