

Date of Hearing: June 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Isaac G. Bryan, Chair

SB 1268 (Gonzalez) – As Amended April 23, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 73-0

SUBJECT: Outdoor public recreation spaces: equitable access

SUMMARY: Codifies the Outdoors for All initiative within the Natural Resources Agency (NRA).

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Equitable Outdoor Access Act, which sets forth the state’s commitment to ensuring all Californians can benefit from, and have meaningful access to, the state’s rich cultural and natural resources. (Public Resources Code (PRC) 1000)
- 2) Requires all relevant state agencies, including NRA, and each department, board, office, conservancy, and commission within the agency, and state departments, including the Department of Transportation, to consider and incorporate, as appropriate, the state policy under the Equitable Outdoor Access Act when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, or grant criteria, or making expenditures, to the extent the policies, regulations, grant criteria, or expenditures are not in conflict with an appropriation. (PRC 1002 (b))
- 3) Directs NRA to combat the biodiversity and climate crisis by, among other things, establishing the California Biodiversity Collaborative and establishing the 30x30 goal. (Executive Order No. N-82-20)
- 4) Codifies the 30x30 goal. Requires NRA, in implementing actions to achieve the 30x30 goal, to prioritize specified actions. (PRC 71451-71452)

THIS BILL:

- 1) Establishes the Outdoors for All initiative to be administered by NRA, in consultation with the Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) and other relevant state entities, to advance the objectives of the initiative.
- 2) Requires NRA to implement all of the following priorities provided in the Outdoors for All Strategy published by NRA on November 15, 2023:
 - a) Establish outdoor public recreation spaces for people and nature to thrive;
 - b) Foster belonging;
 - c) Connect people and the outdoors;
 - d) Cocreate with communities;
 - e) Build equitable career pathways and a representative workforce; and,

- f) Align funding from federal, state, regional, and private sources to achieve the initiative's goals.
- 3) Requires NRA to maintain the position of Deputy Secretary for Access to coordinate the initiative's implementation.
- 4) Requires, on or before December 31, 2028, and every five years thereafter, NRA to update the Outdoors for All Strategy to advance the specified objectives to align with relevant goals of the state, including the state's outdoor equity goals and the 30x30 goal, and to ensure conservation strategies enhance public access and benefits for disadvantaged and low-income communities.
- 5) Requires NRA to consult with diverse stakeholders, including community-based organizations, local governments, and environmental justice advocates, to ensure inclusive decisionmaking and prevent loopholes.
- 6) Requires NRA to host at least three public meetings during the update process. These meetings may be in-person, virtual, or hybrid.
- 7) Requires NRA to provide at least one 30-day public comment period on the update.
- 8) Requires NRA to post the final update on its internet website in a publicly accessible location.
- 9) Requires, on or before January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, NRA to submit a report to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature detailing the progress made to achieve the initiative's goals, including implementing and updating the Outdoors for All Strategy.

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, NRA estimates ongoing costs of \$250,000 annually (General Fund) for staff support and potential consulting costs to develop and produce strategy updates and progress reports as required by this bill.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **30x30.** In October 2020, Governor Newsom issued EO N-82-20 to establish a state goal of conserving 30% of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030 – known as 30x30. The 30x30 goal is intended to help conserve our lands and coastal waters through voluntary, collaborative action with partners across the state to meet three objectives: conserve and restore biodiversity, expand access to nature, and mitigate and build resilience to climate change. The 30x30 goal was codified by SB 337 (Min), Chapter 392, Statutes of 2023.

As of July 2025, the state has conserved 26.1% of lands and 21.9% of coastal waters for 30x30, adding approximately 1.044 million acres to lands conserved over the previous year and identifying concrete strategies to strengthen conservation in coastal waters. California has a strategy to conserve an additional four million acres of land and 283,000 acres of coastal waters.

- 2) **Outdoors for All.** 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. It improves mood and happiness, lowers stress, and strengthens people's sense of meaning. Research shows that people who visit outdoor spaces for 30 minutes or more during a week have lower rates of depression and high blood pressure. Access to outdoor spaces also facilitates exercise, which improves long-term physical health. Many healthcare professionals recognize these benefits, and in some places have started to issue medical prescriptions to spend time in nature to improve health outcomes.



Photo: <https://sfchildrennature.org/discover/explore/>

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. The practice of redlining led to neighborhoods with far fewer trees and parks that provide shade and clean the air for lower-income residents and communities of color. Instead, these neighborhoods have more paved surfaces that absorb and radiate heat. During extreme heat events some cities experience differences of up to 12 degrees between formally red- and green-lined areas.

Establishing welcoming places where all people feel safe and have a sense of belonging is essential to building an Outdoors for All. AB 30 (Kalra), Chapter 939, Statutes of 2022, codified the state's commitment to ensuring all Californians can benefit from, and have meaningful access to, the state's rich cultural and natural resources as the Equitable Outdoor Access Act.

Outdoors for All also furthers two other NRA priorities, Nature Based Solutions and 30x30, by investing in California's public lands and natural resources. Tying it all together, the Pathways to 30x30 Annual Progress Report (May 2023) notes,

By increasing both the variety and accessibility of outdoor recreation, California's 30x30 initiative is working to enable everyone in California to enjoy and connect with nature. Seizing opportunities to expand conservation that also increase access has been a priority over the past year and will remain so going forward. The Outdoors for All strategy will guide this facet of its 30x30 work.

- 3) **Equitable Outdoor Access Act.** The Equitable Outdoor Access Act sets the requirement for California to prioritize outdoor equity, expand access to public lands, and promote opportunities for underserved communities, and the Outdoors for All Initiative is the policy vehicle to make those established goals a reality.

This bill codifies the Outdoors for All initiative and the Deputy Secretary for Access within NRA. By doing so, this preserves the goals of the initiative, the stakeholder engagement, and

the periodic updates to the initiative, which all help the state achieve the priorities laid out in the Equitable Outdoor Access Act.

4) **Author's statement:**

Despite California's nation-leading outdoor recreation industry, many Californians lack access to the benefits of outdoor spaces. A history of exclusionary zoning, discriminatory policies, and underinvestment has resulted in fewer parks and less outdoor access for urban communities, communities of color, and lower-income communities. Barriers including limited facilities for people with disabilities, the cost of equipment, transportation, and fees, and racial and ethnic discrimination exacerbate these historical inequalities.

As the federal government repeatedly attacks public lands, deploys federal immigration agents to stage raids in public parks, and rolls back equity programs, it is more important than ever to strengthen the state's commitment to outdoor equity and conservation. The Outdoors for All initiative provides enormous benefits to Californians and the state's environment but is not currently codified in state law – meaning it could be easily altered or undone by a different state administration. SB 1268 will codify this important, successful initiative and ensure that the state will maintain momentum on our outdoor equity goals regardless of actions at the federal level or changes in state leadership.

5) **Double referral.** This bill was heard in the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee on June 16 and approved 11-0.

6) **Related legislation:**

AB 946 (Bryan) 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. This bill is referred to the Senate Natural Resources & Water Committee.

AB 2285 (Rendon, 2024) Encourages the Governor's office, state agencies, and the Legislature, when distributing resources towards conservation and restoration goals during future budgetary deliberations, to ensure parity in allocations toward urban nature-based investments and requires state funding agencies to amend guidelines as necessary to meet the 30x30 goal to allow for urban nature-based projects on degraded lands to be eligible and competitive for state funds. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Active San Gabriel Valley
All About Owls
Allensworth Progressive Association
Alta Peak Chapter, California Native Plant Society

Amigos De Los Rios
Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement
Audubon California
Azul
Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

Cactustocloud Institute	Latino Outdoors
California Academy of Sciences	League of California Cities
California Association of Local Conservation Corps	Los Angeles County
California Association of Recreation & Park Districts	Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust
California Environmental Voters	Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation
California Native Plant Society	Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust
California Outdoors Recreation Partnership (CORP)	Los Padres Forestwatch
California Park & Recreation Society	Midpeninsula Open Space Trust
California State Parks Foundation	Mono Lake Committee
Californians for Western Wilderness	Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center
Calwild	Nature for All
Center for Biological Diversity	Outdoor Outreach
Center for Progressive Reform	Outward Bound Adventures
Central Valley Partnership	Pogo Park
Children & Nature Network	Prevention Institute
City of Huron	Resource Renewal Institute
Clockshop	River Partners
Cofem	Salted Roots
Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Save Mount Diablo
Conservation Lands Foundation	Save the Redwoods League
Day One	Sea and Sage Audubon Society
East Bay Regional Park District	Sempervirens Fund
Endangered Habitats League	Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Environmental Protection Information Center	Sierra Business Council
Fish on	Sierra Club
Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks	Sierra Nevada Alliance
Friends of the Dunes	Siskiyou Crest Coalition
Friends of the Lost Coast	Sonoma Ecology Center
Greenlatinos	South Yuba River Citizens League
Habitat 2020	Surfrider Foundation
Hispanic Access Foundation	The Leap Institute
Justice Outside	Trout Unlimited
Kaboom!	Trust for Public Land; the Wildlands Network
	Yes Nature to Neighborhoods

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Paige Brokaw / NAT. RES. /