

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

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

Policy Committee:	Water, Parks and Wildlife	Vote:	11 - 0
	Natural Resources		12 - 0

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

SUMMARY:

This bill codifies the Outdoors for All initiative within the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and requires CNRA to maintain a Deputy Secretary for Access position.

Specifically, this bill, among other things:

- 1) Establishes the Outdoors for All initiative to be administered by CNRA, 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 CNRA to implement the following priorities provided in the Outdoors for All Strategy published by CNRA on November 15, 2023: establish outdoor public recreation spaces for people and nature to thrive; foster belonging; connect people and the outdoors; co-create with communities; build equitable career pathways and a representative workforce; and align funding from federal, state, regional, and private sources to achieve the initiative's goals.
- 3) Requires CNRA 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, CNRA to update the Outdoors for All Strategy to advance 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 CNRA to consult with diverse stakeholders, including community-based organizations, local governments, and environmental justice advocates, to ensure inclusive decisionmaking and prevent loopholes.
- 6) Requires CNRA to host at least three in-person, virtual, or hybrid public meetings during the update process; provide at least one 30-day public comment period on the update; and post the final update on its website in a publicly accessible location.
- 7) Requires, on or before January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, CNRA 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:

- 1) CNRA estimates ongoing annual costs of approximately \$530,000 (General Fund or special fund) to implement this bill. CNRA asserts this bill formalizes and expands the agency's role in the Outdoors for All initiative, requiring it to administer, consult, plan, and update the strategy, conduct public engagement, and report annually to the Legislature. Most of the bill's requirements largely align with existing CNRA efforts and staffing and are likely absorbable within existing resources. However, codifying the Deputy Secretary for Access position (which, according to CNRA, does not currently have dedicated baseline funding) and requiring recurring progress reports and strategy updates (with prescribed public processes) will create ongoing workload and costs for the agency.
- 2) While implementation of Outdoors for All is already underway, codifying the initiative in statute creates potential cost pressures on state agencies to effectuate the priorities of the initiative (General Fund, special fund such as the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, bond funds such as Proposition 4, and other funds). For more details on outdoor access funding, see background.

COMMENTS:

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

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.

- 2) **Background.** 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. This bill codifies Outdoors for All.

In 2021, Governor Newsom appointed the first CNRA Deputy Secretary for Access, to spearhead the Outdoors for All initiative across all CNRA departments, commissions, and conservancies, as well as through an interagency working group and partnerships with federal, tribal, and local governments. This bill codifies the position of the Deputy Secretary for Access. As described in the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee's analysis of this bill:

Without these priorities and activities codified in statute, changes in the Executive Branch can result in major changes in the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of communities. As an example, under President Trump, the federal government has used parks for immigration enforcement, sanitized interpretive information at national parks, and charged park entrance fees based on citizenship status. This represents a substantial departure from federal policy under President Biden, illustrating the potential lack of continuity with uncoded initiatives.

According to a 2024 CNRA report to the Legislature, as of the publication of the report, “the Newsom Administration has invested over \$1 billion to advance equitable outdoor access.” Numerous programs, initiatives, and grants across multiple state agencies fall under the Outdoors for All umbrella, some of which have dedicated ongoing funding and others of which are funded on an ad hoc basis. For example, one of the state’s largest programs that creates new parks or renovates existing ones is State Parks’ Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Grant Program. Since 2008, this local assistance program has awarded nearly \$1.2 billion in grants – funding the creation of 182 new parks and the expansion and renovation of 125 existing parks. Similarly, other grant programs administered by State Parks, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Coastal Commission, the State Coastal Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and each of the state’s regional conservancies provide funding to increase outdoor access. Similarly, State Parks administers numerous discounted park pass programs under the purview of Outdoors of All. For example, the 2026 Budget Act includes \$6.75 million ongoing General Fund for the State Parks Library Pass Program.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 946 (Bryan) of the current legislative session 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. AB 946 is pending on the Senate Appropriations Committee’s suspense file.

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