

SENATE THIRD READING  
SB 1268 (Gonzalez)  
As Amended August 13, 2026  
Majority vote

## SUMMARY

Codifies the Outdoors for All initiative, administered by the Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and coordinated by a Deputy Secretary for Access, and provides for updates to the Outdoors for All Strategy.

### Major Provisions

- 1) Establishes the Outdoors for All initiative, administered by CNRA in consultation with the Department of Parks and Recreation and other relevant state entities.
- 2) Requires CNRA, as part of the initiative, to implement the priorities identified in the Outdoors for All Strategy published on November 15, 2023, including:
  - a) Establish outdoor public recreation spaces for people and nature to thrive;
  - b) Foster belonging;
  - c) Connect people and the outdoors;
  - d) Co-create 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 CNRA to maintain the position of Deputy Secretary for Access within the agency to coordinate the initiative's implementation.
- 4) Requires CNRA to update the Outdoors for All Strategy on or before December 31, 2031, and every eight years thereafter to:
  - a) Advance the objectives of the Equitable Outdoor Access Act (Division 1.5 of the Public Resources Code);
  - b) Align with relevant goals of the state, including the state's outdoor equity goals and the 30x30 conservation goal; and
  - c) Ensure conservation strategies enhance public access and benefits for disadvantaged and low-income communities.
- 5) Provides that when CNRA updates the Outdoors for All Strategy, CNRA must:
  - a) Consult with diverse stakeholders, including community-based organizations, local governments, and environmental justice advocates, to ensure inclusive decision-making and prevent loopholes;

- b) Host at least three public meetings, which may be in-person, virtual, or hybrid;
  - c) Provide at least one 30-day public comment period; and
  - d) Post the final update on its website in a publicly accessible location.
- 6) Requires CNRA to submit a report to the Legislature on the implementation of the initiative on or before January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter.
  - 7) Defines "outdoor public recreation spaces" for the purposes of this bill as parks, open spaces, trails, beaches, forests, and other natural areas.
  - 8) Makes various findings and declarations about the value of outdoor public recreation spaces to Californians and the importance of expanding access to outdoor public recreation spaces.

## COMMENTS

Spending time in nature benefits mental and physical health, but outdoor access is not equitably distributed across 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 and more paved surfaces for lower-income residents and communities of color. The Outdoors for All initiative is intended to expand access to parks and nature for communities with little outdoor space.

In the Equitable Outdoor Access Act, the Legislature stated its intent to provide for the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins, and to solicit, account for, and respond to the voices, needs, and priorities of communities of color, indigenous communities, and economically disadvantaged communities. The Outdoors for All initiative has supported these commitments, developing the Outdoors for All Strategy through workshops, meetings, listening sessions, and consultations with thousands of community advocates, tribes, and federal and regional partners. One of the six priorities of the Outdoors for All initiative is to co-create with communities, recognizing that parks and other outdoor places are a public good that should serve the diverse needs of all Californians.

However, 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. This bill would require CNRA to implement the Outdoors for All initiative and to align the Outdoors for All Strategy with the state's outdoor equity and 30x30 goals.

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. Having a single leader accountable for Outdoors for All across CNRA has supported the development of outdoor access by providing a consistent guiding

vision and a unified point of contact for diverse stakeholders across the state. This bill would codify the role of the CNRA Deputy Secretary for Access.

**According to the Author**

"California is one of the world's premier destinations for outdoor recreation, home to hundreds of national and state parks along with countless regional, county and city parks, and open spaces. Outdoor recreation has clear benefits not only for California's economy, but also for public health – 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, and higher rates of community connection. However, 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. [This bill] 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."

**Arguments in Support**

GreenLatinos, a co-sponsor of this bill, writes, "California is home to 280 state park units, in addition to thousands of regional, county, and city parks. Yet access to outdoor recreation remains highly unequal across geographic regions, racial and ethnic groups, income levels, and other demographic factors. Decades of exclusionary zoning, discriminatory policies, and chronic underinvestment have left many communities with fewer parks and limited opportunities to access nature. These inequities are further compounded by barriers such as inadequate facilities for people with disabilities, transportation challenges, equipment and entry costs, and experiences of racial and ethnic discrimination. . . . [This bill] would ensure that the Outdoors for All initiative is permanently embedded in state law, helping to sustain the momentum, accountability, and cross-agency coordination necessary to advance outdoor equity regardless of changes in federal or state leadership."

**Arguments in Opposition**

None on file.

**FISCAL COMMENTS**

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, this bill has the following fiscal impact:

- 1) Ongoing costs of an unknown amount, likely in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars (General Fund or special fund) for CNRA 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).

## VOTES

### SENATE FLOOR: 37-0-3

**YES:** Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Ochoa Bogh, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Jones, Niello, Padilla

### ASM WATER, PARKS, AND WILDLIFE: 11-0-1

**YES:** Papan, Jeff Gonzalez, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bennett, Boerner, Caloza, Hart, Celeste Rodriguez, Rogers

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Bains

### ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 12-0-2

**YES:** Bryan, Alanis, Connolly, Garcia, Haney, Hoover, Kalra, Macedo, Pellerin, Schultz, Wicks, Zbur

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Ellis, Muratsuchi

### ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

**YES:** Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Hoover, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

## UPDATED

VERSION: August 13, 2026

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