

Date of Hearing: July 16, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 392 (Grayson) – As Amended June 13, 2025

Policy Committee: Local Government

Vote: 10 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes the East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) to establish and administer the East Bay Hills Conservation Program.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Authorizes the Park District to establish and administer the East Bay Hills Conservation Program to address the resource and recreational goals of the East Bay Hills.
- 2) Defines the East Bay Hills as the ridgeline of hills extending from the northern edge of Wildcat Canyon to the southern edge of Lake Chabot and includes all adjacent natural lands within the control of the Park District, as specified.
- 3) Authorizes the Park District to collaborate with California tribes, and state, regional, and local partners to achieve the program's conservation, wildlife habitat, climate resilience and recreational goals.
- 4) Specifies the Park District has all necessary rights and powers to achieve the goals of the program that are consistent with the Park District's existing authority.
- 5) Requires local land use policy documents, such as general or specific plans, developed or updated on or after January 1, 2026, to acknowledge the East Bay Hills as an area of statewide significance affecting land use within the East Bay Hills.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

No state costs. Because this bill authorizes, but does not require the Park District to establish the program, costs to the Park District are not reimbursable by the state. In addition, although Legislative Counsel does not include the local fee disclaimer language, any local costs to update land use policy documents are not state-reimbursable because local agencies have the authority to charge fees to recover these costs.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by the Park District. According to the author:

The East Bay Hills span across 30,000 acres in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, and help provide essential wildlife habitat, recreational

opportunities, and ecological benefits. The areas encompassed by the East Bay Hills are managed by the Park District, who seeks to protect the natural and cultural resources of the area, while providing recreational and educational opportunities to the public. Due to development, wildfire threats, and other challenges, these areas face increased fragmentation, which threaten protection of resources and habitats. To help manage these challenges, a more coordinated conservation strategy is needed. [This bill] would help achieve this goal by establishing the East Bay Hills Conservation Program.

- 2) **Background.** Existing law establishes the Park District as an independent special district in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties with specified powers and duties. The Park District manages 73 parks across 126,809 acres and includes protected natural landscapes consisting of various ecosystem types, including wetlands, redwood forests, mixed evergreen forests, annual and perennial grasslands, and freshwater habitats. This ecosystem supports a range of animal species and provides recreational opportunities for surrounding communities.

The Park District's activities are funded from multiple sources including property taxes, parcel taxes, assessments, and fees, including a \$12 per parcel annual tax imposed on single-family residential units in western Alameda and Contra Costa counties. In 2018, voters extended the parcel tax to 2040 (Measure FF), which provides approximately \$3.5 million annually for regional park services, including wildfire protection, public safety, public access, and the restoration of natural habitat, urban creeks, and shorelines.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Jennifer Swenson / APPR. / (916) 319-2081