
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER

Senator Josh Becker, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	SB 832	Hearing Date:	January 13, 2026
Author:	Allen		
Version:	January 5, 2026	Amended	
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Edith Hannigan		

Subject: Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group: membership: revitalization plan

SUMMARY

This bill would add an additional member to the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group, representing the Los Angeles City Council district with the greatest number of Upper Los Angeles River miles. This bill would also require the working group to meet once a year.

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING LAW

Revitalizing the Upper Los Angeles River. Current law establishes within the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group (working group; Public Resources Code (PRC) §33220). The Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, in consultation with the Conservancy, and, to the extent that they wish to consult, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and the City of Los Angeles, is required to consider requests from local agency representatives to participate in the working group and may appoint no more than 23 representatives to the working group. The working group may include, but is not limited to, representatives from the Conservancy; the County of Los Angeles; the Cities of Burbank, Glendale, Los Angeles, and San Fernando; elected officials of the cities riparian to the Pacoima Wash and Tujunga Wash; and nonprofit organizations serving the Upper Los Angeles River, San Fernando Valley, Pacoima Wash, Tujunga Wash, and Verdugo Wash.

The working group was required to develop, by June 30, 2020, a revitalization plan for the Upper Los Angeles River, the tributaries of the Pacoima Wash, Tujunga Wash, and Verdugo Wash, the Arroyo Seco, and the communities through which they pass. The revitalization plan was adopted at the working group's April 16, 2020, meeting.

Budget Act of 2022. The Budget Act of 2022 (SB 154, Skinner, Chapter 43, Statutes of 2022) distributed \$6.6 million to the Conservancy to fund the working group and projects that improve the climate resiliency or the protection of the Los Angeles River watershed or are part of the revitalization plan. The Budget Act also required the working group to meet at least twice a year to evaluate and report progress on implementation of the revitalization plan and proposed amendments to the plan to the Conservancy. This funding was available for encumbrance or expenditure until June 30, 2025.

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group (PRC §33220).

- a. Prohibits the membership of the working group from exceeding 23 members.
- b. Establishes that members of the working group may represent:
 - i. the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy;
 - ii. the County of Los Angeles;
 - iii. the Cities of Burbank, Glendale, La Cañada Flintridge, Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Fernando, and South Pasadena;
 - iv. elected officials of the cities riparian to the Pacoima Wash and Tujunga Wash; and
 - v. nonprofit organizations serving the Upper Los Angeles River, San Fernando Valley, Pacoima Wash, Tujunga Wash, and Verdugo Wash.
- 2) Authorizes \$6.6 million in the Budget Act of 2022 to the Conservancy to fund projects that:
 - a. improve the climate resiliency or the protection of the Los Angeles River watershed or
 - b. are a part of the revitalization plan.
- 3) The Budget Act of 2022 requires the working group to meet at least twice a year to evaluate and report progress of revitalization plan implementation and to propose amendments.

PROPOSED LAW

This bill would:

- 1) increase the number of members on the working group to up to 24;
- 2) require that one member of the working group represent the Los Angeles City Council district with the most number of Upper Los Angeles River miles.
- 3) require the working group to meet at least once a year.
 - a. The working group shall report progress on implementation of the revitalization plan and propose amendments to the revitalization plan.
- 4) require amendments to the revitalization plan be submitted to the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife and Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water.
 - a. Amendments to the revitalization plan become effective 30 days after submission.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT

According to the author, “The Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group has done commendable work developing a plan to revitalize waterway areas in Los Angeles, identify opportunities for multi-benefit projects to restore natural habitat, and increase outdoor access for nearby communities. However, current statute does not accurately reflect the ongoing nature of their work and does not allow for the addition of more members to the working group to reflect post-redistricting changes. SB 832 would update the working group’s statute and ensure appropriate representation on the working group.”

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

None received.

COMMENTS

Future-proofing membership. Every ten years, the City of Los Angeles redraws the maps that determine the geographic area of each council district. This bill would establish that the member of the city council with the greatest number of Upper Los Angeles River miles would consistently have a presence on the working group, regardless of which city council district the river is in. As the geographic boundaries of city council districts shift, it is important to maintain representation on the working group from the communities most directly adjacent to the Upper Los Angeles River.

As the bill moves through the Legislative process, the author may wish to consider amendments to re-establish an odd number of working group members and address other eligible members of the working group whose representation of the river may be affected by boundaries that change on occasion.

Creating a living document. While budget control language in the Budget Act of 2022 requires that the working group meet at least twice a year to evaluate and report progress of revitalization plan implementation and to propose amendments, codified law does not require the working group to meet regularly, perform implementation monitoring, or recommend revisions to the revitalization plan. This bill would codify the requirement that the working group meet annually to evaluate and report on the progress of plan implementation and propose amendments to the plan. The original revitalization plan was completed in 2020, however, the working group continues to serve an important function monitoring implementation of river revitalization projects and evaluating potential amendments to the plan. Codified statute is not currently reflective of these ongoing responsibilities.

Amendment approval process. This bill would require amendments to the revitalization plan, after adoption by the Conservancy, be sent to the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife, and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water. The amendments are not effective until 30 days after submission to the Legislature.

The original revitalization plan had a different approval process:

1. a master planning process that included community engagement and a prioritization of disadvantaged communities;

2. the Working Group shall submit the plan to the Conservancy for approval; upon adoption by the Conservancy, the plan shall be considered an amendment to the Watershed and Open Space Plan for the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers; and
3. the Conservancy shall submit the plan to the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors and Los Angeles City Council for inclusion in relevant Master Plans, if the Supervisors or Council members so desire.

The proposed approval process for the amendment to the revitalization plan in this bill is not aligned with the process for the original revitalization plan. It is unclear whether community engagement will occur prior to any amendment proposal to the Conservancy. Further, it is unclear the purpose for the 30-day period where the Conservancy adopted amendment is sent to the Legislature, but not yet effective. There is no mechanism in the bill for the Legislature to take action on or otherwise impact the outcome of the amendment. While the proposed language states that the approval process undertaken by “consistent” with a portion of the existing original revitalization plan process, it is unclear to what extent that applies.

As this bill moves through the Legislative process, the author may wish to clarify approval and implementation processes for amendments to the revitalization plan.

Related Legislation

AB 466 (Bocanegra, Chapter 341, Statutes of 2017) created the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group within the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

SB 1126 (Portantino, Chapter 895, Statutes of 2018) added the Arroyo Seco Tributary to the list of waterways that must be included in a revitalization plan for the Upper Los Angeles River.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS

None.

SUPPORT

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (sponsor)

OPPOSITION

None received.

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