
THIRD READING

Bill No: SB 832
Author: Allen (D)
Amended: 1/5/26
Vote: 21

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 6-0, 1/13/26
AYES: Becker, Seyarto, Allen, Cabaldon, Laird, Stern
NO VOTE RECORDED: Grove

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

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

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This adds 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, and requires the working group to meet once a year.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group.
(Public Resources Code (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) Requires, under the Budget Act of 2022, the working group to meet at least twice a year to evaluate and report progress of revitalization plan implementation and to propose amendments.

This bill:

- 1) Increases the number of members on the working group to up to 24.
- 2) Requires that one member of the working group represent the Los Angeles City Council district with the greatest number of Upper Los Angeles River miles.
- 3) Requires 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) Requires 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.

Background

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; 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 per 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.

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 this 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, and 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 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 this 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 be “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/Prior 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.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 1/20/26)

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
Nithya Raman, 4th District, Los Angeles City Council

OPPOSITION: (Verified 1/20/26)

None received

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.”

Prepared by: Edith Hannigan / N.R. & W. / (916) 651-4116
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