

**DATE:** September 28, 2020  
**TO:** Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Governing Board  
**FROM:** RMC Staff  
**THROUGH:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer  
**SUBJECT:** Item 8A: Legislative Report

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## Legislative Update

For full text and history of bills and initiatives, visit these web sites:

Federal Bills: <https://www.congress.gov>

State Bills: <http://www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

### Current as of 08/20/2020

The following is the status of legislative bills that have been introduced in the current session by Senate and Assembly potentially of interest to the RMC and its respective Joint Powers Authorities. Bills can be tracked on the legislative website: <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

## PARKS AND WATER

### **AB 209 (Limón D) Parks: Outdoor Environmental Education: Grant Program**

**Introduced:** 1/14/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 8/13/2019, **Status:** Chaptered

**Summary:** This bill is a reintroduction of last year's AB 2534. As a reminder, this bill would require the Director of Parks and Recreation to establish the Outdoor Equity Grants Program to increase the ability of underserved and at-risk populations to participate in outdoor environmental educational experiences at state parks and other public lands where outdoor environmental education programs take place. The bill would require the director to, among other things, give priority for funding to outdoor environmental education programs that primarily provide outreach to and serve pupils who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, foster youth, or pupils of limited English proficiency. To the extent that the skill sets of persons retained through the River Rangers Program include interpretative/naturalist aptitudes, the program envisioned in this bill may underwrite these positions.

The Governor's January Budget proposed \$20 million to underwrite the development and implementation of the provisions captured in this bill. However, given the state of economic affairs in California, this appropriation was struck in the May Revise.

### **AB 2103 (O'Donnell D) San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy: Territory: Dominguez Channel Watershed and Santa Catalina Island**

**Introduced:** 2/6/2020, **Status:** Failed Deadline

**Summary:** Current law establishes the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy in the Natural Resources Agency and prescribes the functions and duties of the

conservancy with regard to the protection, preservation, and enhancement of specified areas of the Counties of Los Angeles and Orange located along the San Gabriel River and the lower Los Angeles River and tributaries along those rivers. Current law, for purposes of those provisions, defines “territory” to mean the territory of the conservancy that consists of those portions of the Counties of Los Angeles and Orange located within the San Gabriel River and its tributaries, the lower Los Angeles River and its tributaries, and the San Gabriel Mountains, as described. This bill would additionally include the Dominguez Channel watershed and Santa Catalina Island, as described, within that definition of territory, and would make various related changes to the boundaries of that territory. This bill represents a repeat attempt at expanding the boundaries of the RMC. Last year’s AB 1694 stalled in the Senate Appropriations Committee and the author has made a concerted effort to partner with legislative colleagues in the joint authoring of this measure. Given the shift in focus and priority of the Legislature in light of recent events, authors were encourage to downsize bill portfolios. This bill was among the many casualties subject to leadership directives.

**AB 2519 (Wood D) Conservation Projects: Grants: Advance Payments**

**Introduced:** 2/19/2020, **Last Amended Date:** 06/04/2020, **Status:** Failed Deadline

**Summary:** Current law requires the Natural Resources Agency, the State Coastal Conservancy, the Department of Water Resources, and the State Water Resources Control Board to administer various grant programs relating to natural resources. This bill would require, to the extent not in conflict with any other law, the Natural Resources Agency, the conservancy, the department, and the board, when awarding grants for conservation projects, as defined, to provide an advance payment of up to 25% of the total grant award if requested by a grant recipient.

**SB 474 (Stern D) Very high fire hazard severity zone: state responsibility area: development prohibition**

**Introduced:** 2/21/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 6/19/2020, **Status:** Failed Deadline

**Summary:** Formerly titled the California Wildfire Protection Act of 1990: Habitat Conservation Fund, this bill would establish the Wildlife Protection Subaccount in the Habitat Conservation Fund and would require the Controller, if an appropriation is made for this purpose in any fiscal year, to transfer \$30,000,000 from the General Fund to the subaccount, less any amount transferred from specified accounts and funds, to be expended by the board for the acquisition, enhancement, or restoration of wildlife habitat.

**SB 886 (Archuleta D) Lower San Gabriel River Recreation and Park District: Establishment: Board of Directors**

**Introduced:** 1/23/2020, **Last Amended Date:** 5/18/2020, **Status:** Failed Deadline

**Summary:** Current law authorizes the establishment of the Lower San Gabriel River Recreation and Park District by petition or resolution submitted to the Los Angeles County Local Agency Formation Commission before January 1, 2020. Current law authorizes specified city councils, including the city council of the City of Montebello, and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to appoint members to serve on the initial board of directors of the district. Under existing law, a violation of any rule, regulation, or ordinance adopted by the board of directors of a recreation and park district is a crime. This bill would extend the deadline to submit the petition or resolution establishing the district from January 1, 2020, to January 1, 2023.

**SJR 14 (Archuleta D) Whittier Narrows Dam: Flood Protection Improvements: Federal Funding**

**Introduced:** 2/26/2020, **Status:** Failed Deadline

**Summary:** This measure would urge the United States Congress to include and approve in its 2021 budget an appropriation of approximately \$385,000,000 to the United States of Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works program to perform the critically needed construction and repair work on Whittier Narrows Dam to protect the citizens of southeastern Los Angeles County from catastrophic flooding.

**AB 3030 (Kalra A):** Resource conservation: land and ocean conservation goals

**Introduced:** 2/13/2020, **Last Amended Date:** 8/13/2020, **Status:** Failed Deadline

**Summary:** Existing law declares it to be the policy of the state that the protection and management of natural and working lands, as defined, is an important strategy in meeting the state's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, and requires all state agencies, departments, boards, and commissions to consider this policy when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, expenditures, or grant criteria relating to the protection and management of natural and working lands.

This bill would declare it to be the goals of the state by 2030 to protect at least 30% of the state's land areas and waters; to help advance the protection of 30% of the nation's oceans; and to support regional, national, and international efforts to protect at least 30% of the world's land areas and waters and 30% of the world's ocean. The bill would declare it a further goal of the state to improve access to nature for all people in the state and to provide for recreational and educational opportunities, including wildlife-dependent recreational activities, with a specific emphasis on increasing access for communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities.

The bill would authorize the state to achieve these goals through specified activities. The bill would require the Natural Resources Agency to ensure that actions made in furtherance of these goals are conducted in a specified manner.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

**AB 293 (Garcia, Eduardo D) Greenhouse Gases: Offset Protocols**

**Introduced:** 1/28/2019, **Last Amended Date:** 4/2/2019, **Status:** Chaptered

**Summary:** Current law, until January 1, 2031, establishes the Compliance Offsets Protocol Task Force to provide guidance to the CA Air Resources Board in approving new offset protocols for a market-based compliance mechanism for the purposes of increasing offset projects with direct environmental benefits in the state while prioritizing disadvantaged communities, Native American or tribal lands, and rural and agricultural regions. This bill would require the task force to consider the development of additional offset protocols, including, but not limited to, protocols for the enhanced management or conservation of agricultural and natural lands, and for the enhancement and restoration of wetlands.

**AB 2619 (Stone D) Coastal Resources: Program for Climate Resilience, Adaptation, and Access**

**Introduced:** 2/20/2020, **Status:** Failed Deadline

**Summary:** Would establish the Program for Coastal Resilience, Adaptation, and Access for the purpose of funding specified activities intended to help the state prepare, plan, and implement actions to address and adapt to sea level rise and coastal climate change. The bill would create the Coastal Resilience, Adaptation, and Access Fund in the State Treasury, and would authorize the California Coastal Commission and specified state agencies to expend moneys in the fund, upon appropriation in the annual Budget Act, to take actions, based upon the best scientific information, that are designed to address and adapt to sea level rise and coastal climate change, as prescribed.

**AB 3256 (Garcia, Eduardo D) Economic Recovery, Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020**

**Introduced:** 2/21/2020, **Last Amended Date:** 5/18/2020, **Status:** Failed Deadline

**Summary:** Would enact the Economic Recovery, Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$6,980,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance projects for an economic recovery, wildfire prevention, safe drinking water, drought preparation, and flood protection program.

**SB 45 (Allen D) Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020**

**Introduced:** 12/3/2018, **Last Amended Date:** 1/23/2020, **Status:** Failed Deadline

**Summary:** Would enact the Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$5,510,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance projects for a wildfire prevention, safe drinking water, drought preparation, and flood protection program. Would also restore fire damaged areas, reduce wildfire risk, create healthy forest and watersheds, reduce climate impacts on urban areas and vulnerable populations, protect water supply and water quality, protect rivers, lakes, and streams, reduce flood risk, protect fish and wildlife from climate impacts, improve climate resilience of agricultural lands, and protect coastal lands and resources. There is a specific category contained in the bond that is LA River specific. This is the Senate climate/resources bond vehicle that will serve as a compliment to AB 3256. This bill would provide for the submission of these provisions to the voters at the November 3, 2020, statewide general election.

**FEDERAL**

**Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA)**

**Signed:** August 4, 2020

**Summary:** Fully and permanently funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and providing \$9.5 billion in funding to address a maintenance backlog at American national parks

There has not been a single year since the creation and enactment of the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) back in 1965 where the account was fully funded to its authorized amount of \$900 million. Funded through off-shore oil lease revenues and royalties, the LWCF is the only program at the federal level that provides for annual funding for park and conservation improvements in the US. Through the enactment of the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), the LWCF will be fully funded in perpetuity. The allocation or distribution formula associated with the LWCF is generally on a per capita basis or the percentage of a state's population compared to the rest of the nation. As the most populous state, California has always received the lion's share of available funds. The bulk of the allocated funds are typically routed through the California Department of Parks and Recreation both for state park unit improvements and for sub-allocations on a competitive basis to local agencies for park and greenspace improvements. Conservancies such as the RMC are not eligible for allocations or awards. However, in addition to cities, counties and park-specific providing special districts, Joint Power Authorities (JPA's) such as the WCA can compete for local dollars. It is difficult to predict the amount of funds that will be available on an annual basis for local grants but it is estimated that it will exceed \$25 million. Importantly, grantees must provide a 50% match or greater to compete. In addition to the full funding of the LWCF, The Great American Outdoors Act provided for more than \$9 billion in one time funding for conservation, access and user amenity improvements on federal lands such as the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. It has been sited that there is a backlog of deferred maintenance on these lands exceeding \$10 billion and this investment will go far to address this need. California is experiencing record numbers in state, local and federal land visitations due in large part to the outset of Covid-19 and the enactment of (GAOA) could not be more timely.