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## AB 2038: OUTDOOR EQUITY PROGRAMS

# FACT SHEET

## SUMMARY

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AB 2038 ensures that eligible community-based organizations and tribes providing non-commercial outdoor access programs will have the same access to state lands and waters as the general public, without additional restrictions, fees or permit requirements imposed on them.

## BACKGROUND

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California is known around the world for its iconic and beautiful outdoor places. From national and state parks to beaches, mountains, forests, deserts, lakes, and rivers, outdoor access is linked to countless benefits, including improved public health, recreation access, workforce development, youth development and education, natural resource stewardship, community climate adaptation, and cultural and historical connection<sup>1</sup>. The Bureau of Economic Analysis notes that in 2022, outdoor recreation is a reliably powerful economic engine for the state, contributing almost \$74 billion in economic spending annually and 567,000 direct jobs.<sup>2</sup>

Despite significant strides by Governor Gavin Newsom and the California legislature to prioritize equitable outdoor access through historic investments and initiatives<sup>3</sup>, barriers persist for many Californians preventing them from enjoying public spaces, including communities of color, disabled people, low-income youth, and other marginalized groups. These barriers, including economic obstacles like transportation costs and equipment expenses, continue to hinder enjoyment of public spaces<sup>4</sup>.

Nonprofits and tribal outdoor equity programs help further the state's goals by serving as trusted guides for groups from underserved communities to

experience the outdoors. Regrettably, they often face regulatory barriers not imposed on the general public, including high fees and limits on activities (times, dates, locations and frequency).

## SOLUTION

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AB 2038 amends the California Public Resources code to grant outdoor equity programs administered by eligible nonprofit organizations and Native American tribes equal access to natural resource areas as the general public, without additional restrictions or permits. Activities must be non-commercial, limited to thirty people per activity group. This bill does not confer extra benefits not granted to the general public, such as access to closed areas, exclusive access, and waiver of recreational restrictions (ex. off-highway vehicle use restrictions, entrance/parking fees, or visitation during off hours).

AB 2038 streamlines regulatory management of small non-commercial outdoor equity activities, increases resource efficiency, and lessens the administrative burden on state and local land managers, nonprofits and tribal community access partners. This aligns with the state's Outdoors for All Strategy and commitment to prioritizing community partnerships and to "easing the processes needed to increase access<sup>5</sup>."

## SUPPORT

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Outdoor Outreach (Sponsor)

## CONTACT

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/712/files/fact%20sheet%20parks%20150th%20anniversary%20final.pdf>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.bea.gov/sites/default/files/2023-11/orsa1123.pdf>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.gov.ca.gov/2023/12/28/california-expands-outdoor-access-across-the-state/>

<sup>4</sup>[https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Access-for-all/Outdoors\\_for\\_All\\_Strategy\\_English.pdf](https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Access-for-all/Outdoors_for_All_Strategy_English.pdf)

<sup>5</sup>[https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Access-for-all/Outdoors\\_for\\_All\\_Strategy\\_English.pdf](https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Access-for-all/Outdoors_for_All_Strategy_English.pdf)