

AB 2285 (Rendon) – Urban Nature-Based Investment Parity

SUMMARY

AB 2285 encourages the Governor and the administration, along with the Legislature, to balance their conservation efforts of natural lands with investments in the restoration of lands in heavily urbanized, densely populated areas as part of the “30x30 Goal”.

BACKGROUND

Working with legislative leadership and stakeholders, the Governor and the Natural Resources Agency forged a multi-year funding plan that has resulted in more than one billion dollars invested in 30x30 and Nature Based Solutions as part of the Outdoors for All Initiative. This initiative is spearheaded by the Governor and First Partner and seeks to expand access to parks and outdoor spaces in underserved communities. As such, Outdoors for All identified and underscored opportunities to create pathways for increased connectivity between nature and largely urban, under-resourced populations.

Concurrently, through Executive Order No. N-82-20, Governor Newsom directed the Natural Resources Agency to conserve at least 30% of the state’s lands and coastal waters by 2030. This order was later codified in SB 337 (Min of 2023), and became known as the 30x30 Goal.

PROBLEM

While investments are critically needed to address the conservation and protection goals of our vulnerable lands, it is of equal importance that the state recognize the need to invest in the restoration of lands in heavily urbanized, densely populated counties such as Los Angeles. Alternatives to conservation must be sought to promote the greening of places amongst or near populations removed from natural/native habitat spaces. Despite this need, General Fund investments in this space have not kept pace with the state’s conservation and land protection objectives.

For example, in 2022 the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department produced “Parks Needs

Assessment Plus”, a comprehensive data collection study that underscored the connection between opportunities for future county land conservation and prospects for restoration and greening of lands accessible to under-resourced populations. Large concentrations of unimproved lands are located either in rural parts of the county or are nested in the more affluent, nature-adjacent portions of Los Angeles County.

Conversely, opportunities for restoration are almost exclusively situated in disadvantaged, population-dense parts of the county that are disproportionately environmentally burdened through proximity to heavily trafficked road and freeway corridors, legacy industrial practices, and other pollution-inducing activities.

SOLUTION

AB 2285 will encourage equitable access to outdoor spaces by encouraging future policy and budgetary decisions to balance conservation with restoration. This will promote the protection of our lands while providing access to nature for those communities most in need.

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