

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETINGS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

7. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

ab Board Legislative Committee (3.15.2019) (Waespi)

Present

Board: Dennis Waespi, Colin Coffey, Ellen Corbett

Staff: Erich Pfuehler, Nika Hoffman, Tiffany Margulici, Debra Auker, Jeff Rasmussen, Rachel Sater

Consultants: Doug Houston

Public: Eric Holmes

This meeting was called to order at 12:44 pm.

I. STATE LEGISLATION / OTHER MATTERS

A. NEW LEGISLATION

1. AB 209 (Limon D – Santa Barbara) Outdoor Equity Grants Program

Advocate Doug Houston stated this legislation is a reintroduction of a bill from 2018, AB 2534. This legislation seeks to establish an equity grant program within the Department of Parks and Recreation. The grants would underwrite outdoor education activities within units of the State Parks system. They would prioritize students within underserved populations. If enacted, there is potential to leverage Regional Park Foundation monies with this program for the benefit of the East Bay public. Director Colin Coffey clarified if this program would be programmatic or if it could be available for facilities. Houston confirmed it is intended for programs but will report back if he finds out differently. Director Ellen Corbett questioned if this grant program would be available to East Bay Parks. Houston confirmed this legislation includes public agencies. Government Affairs Manager Erich Pfuehler confirmed this program is for the benefit of the participants, not park specific.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

2. AB 352 (Garcia D – Coachella) Transformative Climate Communities Program

Houston stated AB 352 is an expansion of a previously introduced bill focusing on using Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds (GGRF) for projects with co-benefits, such as public access to open space. This legislation further expands the eligibility criteria by creating tiers outlining air quality, population size and income. It also seeks to increase transparency and awareness about the impacts of climate change on communities.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

3. AB 556 (Carrillo D – Los Angeles) Community Access Grant Program

Houston shared this bill is would provide grants for access and transportation to the outdoors for youth from under resourced areas. Director Corbett commented the District is consistently seeking transportation for youth to parks in the East Bay and requested confirmation it would be eligible. Houston confirmed.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

4. AB 835 (Quirk D – Hayward) Safe Recreational Water Use

Pfuehler provided clarity Assembly Member Bill Quirk has introduced two pieces of legislation regarding harmful algal blooms. AB 834 seeks to create a state-wide program to notify when and where harmful algal blooms are occurring with potential funding for emergency response. AB 835 would create safety standards across the state. At this time, staff recommends the Board consider supporting both bills. Director Dennis Waespi asked if the Assembly Member requested support from the District. Pfuehler shared Chief of Stewardship Matt Graul will be testifying about the topic in Sacramento in March. Director Coffey wondered how the legislation related to the District. Houston responded this bill is establishing a standard. Director Waespi agreed a standard would be beneficial for the safety of park users.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

5. AB 968 (Garcia D – Los Angeles) Naturalist Pathway Pilot Program

Houston stated this bill would create a Naturalist Pathway Pilot Program in conjunction with community colleges and the Community Nature Connection. This program would provide a workforce pathway for the training of naturalists. Director Coffey shared he is aware about the demand for such a program. Director Corbett agreed and mentioned Las Positas and Laney Colleges could be possibilities.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

6. AB 1475 (Bauer-Kahan D – Orinda) Iron Horse Trail Bollinger Canyon Overcrossing

Houston shared this bill authorizes the Contra Costa Transportation Authority to have design build authority to constrict a bridge for the Iron Horse Trail over Bollinger Canyon.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

7. AB 1111 (Friedman D – Glendale) Office of Sustainable Outdoor Recreation

Houston stated this bill would create the Office of Sustainable Outdoor Recreation in the state government. This bill is agnostic as to where the office would be housed within the state government. Should this bill pass, it will make California the twelfth state with such an office.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

8. AB 1191 (Bonta D – Alameda) Howard Terminal Oakland Sports Stadium

Houston shared this legislation encourages the State Lands Commission to approve the mixed-use project at Howard Terminal if certain conditions are met. Pfuehler expanded the Oakland A's wish to ensure their project will address all environmental justice concerns as it moves forward. They are working with the author on this legislation to do so. Director Coffey questioned why the Park District is interested in this legislation. Pfuehler responded the Oakland A's are interested in working with the District to connect the San Francisco Bay Trail and their future stadium.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

9. AB 1718 (Levine D – Greenbrae) Smoking Ban at State Parks and Coastal Beaches

Houston acknowledged Senator Glazer has introduced a similar bill multiple times prior with no success. This bill continues the effort to ban smoking at state parks and beaches. Pfuehler added the District has supported in the past and this effort is consistent with Ordinance 38. Corbett asked if it included vaping. Houston said he'd have to check.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

10. SB 45 (Allen D – Santa Monica) Wildfire, Drought and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020

Pfuehler recognized the Committee has discussed the framework of SB 45, but not yet taken a formal position. Houston stated the bill outlines multiple categories for climate adaptation. This bond is looking to harden California's nature-based infrastructure by investing in forests, watersheds and shorelines to protect and alleviate future disasters. Pfuehler added Park District Fire Chief Aileen Theile will be testifying about this legislation in late March. She will speak to the relationship between wildfire and the changing climate.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

11. SB 127 (Wiener D – San Francisco) Active Transportation Funding

Houston stated this legislation seeks to prioritize Active Transportation in California by establishing a new division. Pfuehler shared this would solidify the Active Transportation Program within the Department of Transportation. Director Corbett asked if this bill includes funding. Houston said the bill does not, but that the state does have funding for such a program.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

12. SB 367 (Hueso D – San Diego) State Coastal Conservancy Educational Grant Program

Houston communicated this legislation seeks to establish environmental education grant programs through the Coastal Conservancy. The District would be eligible for such programs and facilities. Pfuehler expanded this bill includes programs for adults as well as for students in kindergarten to grade 12.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

13. SB 719 (Hueso D- San Diego) Veterans Fee Exception for State Park Facilities

Houston announced this bill would exempt honorably discharged veterans from any requirement to pay a reservation fee for state park facilities. Director Corbett asked if National Parks has a similar program. Pfuehler shared National Parks provides a discount, but not a complete fee waiver.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

14. SB 767 (Glazer D- Orinda) Tesla Expansion

Houston stated Senator Glazer's bill would authorize the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to dispose of the "Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area" to permanently preserve the land for conservation purposes. The current version of the bill would require the land only be sold to a local agency or nonprofit organization for use as a park or other open-space purpose. Houston added funds for the sale of the land would go toward the Off-Highway Vehicle Trust Fund. The legislation would create a pathway for the District or County to support park development at the site. Director Coffey mentioned this is a significant issue which would need to have a lot of questions answered before the District got too involved in park development.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

15. Other Matters

None were discussed.

B. OTHER STATE MATTERS

I. ACA I

Houston stated this legislation would create a pathway for the State's Constitution to be amended to lower the voter threshold to 55% for local infrastructure funding. Parks currently would qualify, but Special Districts are not listed as eligible. Houston added he believe the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) is working to amend the legislation. Pfuehler added CSDA is actively working on amendments, but they have not yet been put into print. They are optimistic. Staff will bring the Amendment back to the committee for support once Special Districts are eligible.

2. Other Matters

Pfuehler provided a brief update about the CAL FIRE grant to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

II. FEDERAL LEGISLATION / OTHER MATTERS

A. NEW LEGISLATION

I. S. 500 and H.R. 1225 (Portman R – OH and Bishop R-UT) Restore our Parks Act

Pfuehler stated this is bipartisan legislation to address the National Parks Service's (NPS) maintenance backlog. Funding for the "legacy restoration fund" would come from offshore drilling leases, but not compete with the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It is broadly supported in Congress, but Pfuehler added the current Administration is not pushing for it.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

2. H.R. 1132 (Speier D – CA) San Francisco Bay Restoration Act

Pfuehler stated this bill is legislation the District has supported in the past. Senator Dianne Feinstein and Representative Jackie Speier have introduced this legislation many times, but this time around they have increased the funding level to \$25 million a year for five years. It would memorialize funding the Environmental Protection Agency already commits to the Bay and increase the funding level.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

3. H.R. 1334 (Barragan D-CA) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grant Program Act

Pfuehler stated this bill creates a grant fund for state and local agencies. It directs the Department of Interior to establish the grant program. Grants can be used for acquisition and facilities improvements. The District and Advocate Peter Umhofer were able to add language to the bill that ensures Special Districts qualify for the grants. While politically challenging in the current climate, it is a great precedent.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

4. H.R. 1276 (Lowenthal D-CA) America’s Public Land Act of 2019

Pfuehler stated this legislation is in response to the Administration’s discussion about disposing of Federal lands. The legislation would prevent disposal unless authorized by an Act of Congress. It also recognizes the economic benefits public lands play throughout the nation.

The Board Legislative Committee voted unanimously to SUPPORT.

5. H.R. 1184 (DeGette D-CO) Every Kid Outdoors Act

Pfuehler added this legislation codifies the Obama Administration’s policy to offer every fourth grader and their families free entrance to all federally managed public lands. This proposal was added to the broader public lands package which will be discussed later. It is very much consistent with the District’s own Kids Healthy Outdoors Challenge and Regional Parks Foundation efforts.

6. S. 316 (Feinstein D-CA) and H.R. 357 (Garamendi D-CA) Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Establishment Act

Pfuehler began by stating this is legislation the District has supported since Ted Radke was chair of the Legislative Committee. In its first iteration, he directed staff to ensure the Carquinez Strait was included in the heritage area, which it now is. While there is not a ton of money association with Heritage designation, there is national significance and promotional opportunities. Back East, for instance, communities along the Ohio and Erie Canal National Heritage Area promote the designation for tourism. Again, this legislation was added to the public lands package to be discussed later.

7. Other Matters

None were discussed.

B. OTHER FEDERAL MATTERS

a. Update on S. 47 John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act

Pfuehler highlighted this legislation passed the Senate overwhelmingly, 92-8, when the Board and Staff were in D.C. It subsequently passed the House overwhelming 363-62. Because of these veto proof margins, the President signed the package into law earlier this week. This highlight of this public lands package was the permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, so energy interests need to begin paying into the Fund again. The package also included some key provisions for the District including the Contra Costa Canal and Contra Loma transfer from the Bureau of Reclamation to the Contra Costa Water District. The District worked hard to ensure its' recreational rights were included in this particular provision. As mentioned before, it also included the Delta Heritage Area and Every Kids Outdoors policy. It was a historic effort. Director Coffey added it was neat to be in the Senate gallery watching all the Senators come in for their vote during the debate.

b. Other Matters

None were discussed.

III. PAVED TRAIL MAINTENANCE FUNDING

Trails Development Program Manager Sean Dougan provided an overview about trails maintenance needs and funding sources, including Measure J in Contra Costa County. Pfuehler added the District has been advocating with Alameda County for maintenance projects to be funded by Measure BB. Grants Manager Tiffany Margulici indicated the one application the District submitted was not successful. The District is working on a strategy to submit a broader joint application with other communities in Alameda County. This idea came from a meeting with the City of Dublin staff. Director Coffey added he was pleased to hear about the strategy and knows Director Beverly Lane will be interested in hearing the outcome. Director Corbett mentioned a strategy could also be meeting with ACTC Commissioners.

IV. ARTICLES

V. OPEN FORUM PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. BOARD COMMENTS

Director Coffey commented this was a great series of bills for the District and should provide great grant opportunities for access, facilities and youth.

Director Corbett mentioned it was heartening to see the environment receive focus in Sacramento.

Director Waespi asked for a future discussion about the 14 mile fuel break for Orinda, and would there be opportunities for Castro Valley.

This meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Lisa Baldinger
Legislative Assistant