



## CARPD NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

By: Russell W. Noack, Public Policy Advocates, LLC

June 4, 2019

The California Legislature has burst into hyper-active form since the last Newsletter. Various policy committees have begun the process of sorting the 100+ bills of interest to recreation and park districts. Additionally, the Budget Subcommittees have concluded their review of Governor Newsom's initial State Budget/May Revise and the Joint Legislative Budget Conference Committee is currently putting the final touches on it before taking it to vote next week.

The State Budget continues to reflect strong funding for parks and natural resources primarily owing to the successful passage of Proposition 68 in 2018. As outlined by Sedrick Mitchell, the Deputy Director of the Community Engagement Division for State Parks, many of the categories with funds available have application deadlines within the next 60 days.

Governor Newsom has established wildfire preparedness and disaster relief to be a top priority of his new Administration. The Governor tasked the Legislature with coming up with recommendations during the first half of the year and the Commission on Catastrophic Wildfire Cost and Recovery, established by passage of [SB 901 \(Dodd\)](#) [Chapter 626, Statutes of 2018] last Session, released its [findings](#) last week. The Commission has made strong recommendations to modify liability for utilities, promote vegetation management, defensible space and hardening for homeowners and providing for a disaster fund to be funded, at least in part, by the utilities. We shall see how the Legislature responds to these ideas over the next several weeks.

Housing affordability and corresponding infrastructure improvements remains a major focus of the Legislature in 2019. Bills have been pushed to streamline the permit process for in-fill housing development and to limit developer fees on these projects as well as on accessory dwelling unit expansion. Moreover, various measures have been passed to re-establish Redevelopment Agencies (RDAs) to promote funding for affordable housing. To date, none of the 20 RDA bills appear to have sufficient support to send to the Governor's desk, although a very recent Budget Trailer Bill has been introduced to redirect existing post-2010 RDA funds to housing instead of to pay down debt. The Trailer Bill, which has still not been released, is supported by the League of California

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Cities and strenuously opposed by the California Special Districts Association and the County Supervisors Association of California.

There are a host legislative bills moving this Session that potentially would provide funding opportunities for recreation and park districts. These include:

[Assembly Bill 209](#) by Monique Limón and [Assembly Bill 556](#) by Wendy Carrillo are both designed to provide grant opportunities to fund outdoor educational activities for disadvantaged youths and students and both have passed the Assembly and will be heard soon in the Senate.

[Assembly Bill 1111](#) by Laura Friedman would create an Office of Sustainable Recreation within the Natural Resources Agency to provide an enhanced focus on the importance of outdoor recreation and parks, highlighting the contribution to personal health and the State's economic wellbeing. The Office will encourage the financial assistance of various private industries that have a large stake in promoting outdoor activity in California.

[Assembly Constitutional Amendment No. 1](#) by Cecilia Aguiar-Curry is a high priority measure that would place on the ballot in 2020 a measure to reduce the vote threshold on local government General Obligation Bonds and special taxes for affordable housing and infrastructure improvements from a 2/3rds requirement to a 55% vote. ACA 1 has moved on to the Assembly Floor and may be taken up at any time.

Finally, [Senate Bill 45](#) by Ben Allen is this year's version of seeking to place a bond measure on the ballot. SB 45 is not a traditional park bond but rather is designed to allocate funds for wildfire, drought and flood protection. The bill has been held up for now to allow negotiations to take place about fleshing out the provisions of the bill. We will stay close to these discussions to look for an opportunity to expand the bond act to provide for per capita funding for recreation and park districts.