



California
LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

AB-1922 Greenway Development and Sustainment Act. (2013-2014)

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 20, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2013–2014 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1922

Introduced by Assembly Member Gomez

February 19, 2014

An act ~~relating to hazardous materials~~ to amend Section 815.3 of the Civil Code, to amend Section 65560 of the Government Code, and to add Chapter 10.5 (commencing with Section 5845) to Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, relating to open-space lands.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1922, as amended, Gomez. ~~Hazardous materials: Los Angeles River: revitalization. Greenway Development and Sustainment Act.~~

Existing law establishes various plans and programs intended to preserve, protect, and rehabilitate lands adjacent to rivers in the state.

This bill would enact the Greenway Development and Sustainment Act, which is intended to promote the development of greenways along rivers in the state, including the development of a greenway along the Los Angeles River. The bill would define the term "greenway" for purposes of the bill, and would authorize a city, county, city and county, or other local government entity to designate lands along a river in its jurisdiction, upon approval of its legislative body by ordinance or resolution, or by incorporating such a designation into an adopted general plan element or adopted river master plan, and to apply for public or private funding available for the development of a greenway in its jurisdiction, to be used in a manner consistent with applicable state laws.

Existing law authorizes certain entities and organizations to acquire and hold conservation easements, including tax exempt nonprofit organizations qualified to do business in this state that has as its primary purpose the preservation, protection, or enhancement of land in its natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, forested, open-space or use.

This bill would also authorize such a tax exempt nonprofit organization to acquire and hold a conservation easement if the organization has as its primary purpose the development of a greenway.

~~Existing law authorizes a local agency, pursuant to specified procedures, to take any action that the local agency determines is necessary, consistent with other state and federal laws, to investigate and clean up a release of hazardous materials in a blighted area within the boundaries of the local agency.~~

~~This bill would declare the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would encourage the clean-up of the Los Angeles River for purposes of redevelopment, restoration, and revitalization.~~

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: ~~no~~yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. (a) *The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of the following:*

(1) *Open-space land is necessary not only for the maintenance of the economy of the state, but for, among other purposes, the enjoyment of scenic beauty, recreation, and the use and preservation of natural resources. Moreover, the growing population of the state makes it important that existing open-space resources be preserved and well maintained, and that access to those resources be ensured for the health benefits and well-being of the state's population. The preservation of open-space land is especially critical in urban areas where the amount of usable open-space land is limited.*

(2) *Open-space land provides relief from the effects of urban congestion and opportunities for relaxation, exercise, community interaction, and the observation and appreciation of wildlife, which helps to combat both physical and psychological stress. Trees located on open-space land also provide shade and help reduce ambient temperatures and restore oxygen to the atmosphere.*

(3) *Greenways are public infrastructure located along natural landscape features such as urban watercourses, which, because of their linear structure, help to physically and psychologically connect various neighborhoods with one another while providing a means of habitat connectivity.*

(4) *Greenways can directly improve the quality of life in communities by providing important recreational, open-space land, wildlife, flood management, water quality, air quality, transportation, emergency response, and urban waterfront revitalization benefits to those communities.*

(5) *Greenways can foster livable communities by utilizing public lands for multiple, complementary purposes, such as placemaking, connecting diverse communities, reducing dependence on automobiles, expanding nonmotorized transportation networks with safer routes to jobs, homes, and schools, encouraging more transit-oriented development, and facilitating healthier behaviors by providing opportunities for exercise and the maintenance of a healthy, active lifestyle.*

(6) *Greenways can be complemented and enhanced by installing public amenities and public-serving retail and services that provide additional access to historically underserved urban communities. Greenways also attract residents and visitors, and increase public safety by fostering improved civic vigilance. Other public-private partnerships in greenways in cities throughout the world have demonstrated the effectiveness and benefits of sustainable and successful public-private partnerships.*

(7) *Greenways encourage healthier residential communities by facilitating development that allows people to live closer to job centers and use public transportation alternatives.*

(8) *Greenways reduce the amount of parking necessary for small businesses because of reduced automobile traffic, encourage the development of affordable housing in urban areas, and promote walking and cycling and increased community interaction.*

(9) *Greenways encourage economic investment and community revitalization by connecting people in new ways.*

(b) *The Legislature finds and declares the following with regard to the development of a greenway along the Los Angeles River:*

(1) *The Los Angeles River is a site that is particularly suited for the development of a greenway. A Los Angeles River greenway that focuses on public-private partnerships aimed at establishing a continuous pedestrian bikeway along the Los Angeles River and its key tributaries would foster job creation, economic development, and community revitalization.*

(2) *A Los Angeles River greenway that establishes a continuous pedestrian bikeway along the Los Angeles River and its key tributaries would encourage community revitalization by investing in an efficient cycling and walking recreational transit route following the 51-mile Los Angeles River corridor. The greenway would also connect existing communities along the Los Angeles River to a network of parks and multiuse public trails.*

(3) A Los Angeles River greenway would build upon a long history of support for a multiuse greenway network along the most significant river in the nation's second largest city. Since the 1980s, residents of the Los Angeles area have been advocating for the development of a trail network along the Los Angeles River. The County of Los Angeles' Los Angeles River Master Plan in 1996, the City of Los Angeles' Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan in 2007, the City of Los Angeles Bicycle Plan in 2010, the County of Los Angeles Bicycle Plan in 2012, and President Obama's prioritization of the Los Angeles River trail system in the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative in 2012 all promote the development of a river trail system along the Los Angeles River.

(4) A Los Angeles River greenway would build upon a long history of investment by the state in the development of parks and trails along the Los Angeles River, including Rio de Los Angeles State Park and Los Angeles State Historic Park. Moreover, a Los Angeles River greenway would complement the work of key state entities, including the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and various other state rivers and mountains conservancies.

(5) Because of its ability to leverage private investments to match commitments of public funds, the development of a Los Angeles River greenway by the City of Los Angeles would allow the state to concentrate and streamline investments it has already made in communities adjacent to the Los Angeles River, and would provide a funding model for types of investments funding greenways that may be replicated in other priority urban waterways in the future.

(6) Because a greenway is a transportation corridor that promotes sustainability, it is eligible for alternative fuels funding, transportation funding, and other nontraditional river funding.

(7) Given the current fiscal constraints facing public agencies, it is time for the state to acknowledge and take advantage of the ability of private sector investments to sustain public infrastructure at all levels. Efforts to promote investment in the Los Angeles River trail system should be encouraged to prevent partial, disjointed, and inefficient development of the trail system.

(8) A Los Angeles River greenway would provide a social and natural resource amenity that would be complete and accessible to the public in the next seven years, and would be a resource that could be utilized and enjoyed by children in the Los Angeles area during their childhood years.

(9) A Los Angeles River greenway would improve the conditions of daily life in Los Angeles' urban communities and would increase the value of the state's investments while providing critically needed, tangible urban waterway revitalization in the Los Angeles area.

(10) A greenway should be established in the area encompassing the Los Angeles River from its headwaters in the Community of Canoga Park to a point of discharge into the Pacific Ocean at San Pedro Bay in the City of Long Beach, with a width of one-quarter to one mile on both banks and at least one mile upstream along both banks of its tributaries, as feasible. Within the City of Los Angeles, the greenway could be coterminous with the area included in the Los Angeles River Improvement Overlay district.

(11) The County of Los Angeles' Los Angeles River Master Plan and the City of Los Angeles' Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan call for the development of a greenway along the Los Angeles River.

(c) It is therefore the intent of the Legislature in enacting Chapter 10.5 (commencing with Section 5845) of Division 5 of the Public Resources Code to promote the development of greenways along rivers in the state through public and private partnership, including the development of a greenway along the Los Angeles River.

SEC. 2. Section 815.3 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

815.3. Only the following entities or organizations may acquire and hold conservation easements:

(a) A tax-exempt nonprofit organization qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and qualified to do business in this state ~~which~~ *that* has as its primary purpose the preservation, protection, or enhancement of land in its natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, forested, ~~or~~ open-space condition or use, *or the development of a greenway, as defined in Section 5846 of the Public Resources Code.*

(b) The state or any city, county, city and county, district, or other state or local governmental entity, if otherwise authorized to acquire and hold title to real property and if the conservation easement is voluntarily conveyed. No local governmental entity may condition the issuance of an entitlement for use on the applicant's

granting of a conservation easement pursuant to this chapter.

(c) A federally recognized California Native American tribe or a nonfederally recognized California Native American tribe that is on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission to protect a California Native American prehistoric, archaeological, cultural, spiritual, or ceremonial place, if the conservation easement is voluntarily conveyed.

SEC. 3. Section 65560 of the Government Code is amended to read:

65560. (a) "Local open-space plan" is the open-space element of a county or city general plan adopted by the board or council, either as the local open-space plan or as the interim local open-space plan adopted pursuant to Section 65563.

(b) "Open-space land" is any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use as defined in this section, and that is designated on a local, regional or state open-space plan as any of the following:

(1) Open space for the preservation of natural resources including, but not limited to, areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes; rivers, streams, bays and estuaries; and coastal beaches, lakeshores, banks of rivers and streams, *greenways*, and watershed lands.

(2) Open space used for the managed production of resources, including but not limited to, forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; areas required for recharge of groundwater basins; bays, estuaries, marshes, rivers and streams which are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits, including those in short supply.

(3) Open space for outdoor recreation, including but not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas ~~which~~ *that* serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, *greenways*, and scenic highway corridors.

(4) Open space for public health and safety, including, but not limited to, areas ~~which~~ *that* require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs, and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality.

(5) Open space in support of the mission of military installations that comprises areas adjacent to military installations, military training routes, and underlying restricted airspace that can provide additional buffer zones to military activities and complement the resource values of the military lands.

(6) Open space for the protection of places, features, and objects described in Sections 5097.9 and 5097.993 of the Public Resources Code.

SEC. 4. Chapter 10.5 (commencing with Section 5845) is added to Division 5 of the Public Resources Code, to read:

CHAPTER 10.5. Greenway Development and Sustainment Act

5845. This chapter shall be known, and may be cited, as the Greenway Development and Sustainment Act.

5846. For purposes of this chapter, "greenway" means a pedestrian and bicycle, nonmotorized vehicle transportation, and recreational travel corridor that meets the following requirements:

(a) Is separated and protected from shared roadways, parallels an urban waterway, and incorporates both ease of access to adjacent communities and an array of amenities and services for the users of the corridor and nearby communities.

(b) Is publicly accessible and located on a combination of public and private lands, if public access to those lands is provided by lands owned in fee simple, leases, or easements.

(c) Reflects design standards with appropriate widths, clearances, setbacks from obstructions, and centerlines protecting directional travel, where appropriate.

(d) Incorporates appropriate landscaping, lighting, public amenities, and art.

5847. (a) A city, county, city and county, or other local government entity may designate lands along a river in its jurisdiction as a greenway, upon approval of its legislative body by ordinance or resolution, or by incorporating such a designation into an adopted general plan element or an adopted river master plan.

(b) A city, county, city and county, or other local government entity may adopt ordinances or resolutions that regulate public health and safety or traffic within a designated greenway in its jurisdiction.

5848. A city, county, city and county, or other local government entity may apply for public or private funding available for the development of a greenway in its jurisdiction, and any funds secured for that purpose shall be used in a manner consistent with applicable state laws. Funding that may be secured for the purposes of this chapter is not limited to parkway, riverway, or other water-related funds. A city, county, or city and county may also seek transportation, alternative fuel, greenhouse gas reduction, or other land use funds for the purposes of this chapter.

5849. A city, county, city and county, or other local government entity that obtains federal lands access program funding under Section 204(a)(1) of Title 23 of the United States Code shall be given priority with regard to the provision of state funding for greenway development under this chapter.

~~SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would encourage the clean-up of the Los Angeles River for purposes of redevelopment, restoration, and revitalization.~~