

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 20, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 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.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

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

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

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

19 (3) *Greenways are public infrastructure located along natural*
20 *landscape features such as urban watercourses, which, because*
21 *of their linear structure, help to physically and psychologically*

1 connect various neighborhoods with one another while providing
2 a means of habitat connectivity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

39 (7) Given the current fiscal constraints facing public agencies,
40 it is time for the state to acknowledge and take advantage of the

1 ability of private sector investments to sustain public infrastructure
2 at all levels. Efforts to promote investment in the Los Angeles River
3 trail system should be encouraged to prevent partial, disjointed,
4 and inefficient development of the trail system.

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

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

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

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

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

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

34 815.3. Only the following entities or organizations may acquire
35 and hold conservation easements:

36 (a) A tax-exempt nonprofit organization qualified under Section
37 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and qualified to do business
38 in this state ~~which~~ that has as its primary purpose the preservation,
39 protection, or enhancement of land in its natural, scenic, historical,
40 agricultural, forested, ~~or~~ open-space condition or use, or the

1 *development of a greenway, as defined in Section 5846 of the*
2 *Public Resources Code.*

3 (b) The state or any city, county, city and county, district, or
4 other state or local governmental entity, if otherwise authorized
5 to acquire and hold title to real property and if the conservation
6 easement is voluntarily conveyed. No local governmental entity
7 may condition the issuance of an entitlement for use on the
8 applicant's granting of a conservation easement pursuant to this
9 chapter.

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

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

18 65560. (a) "Local open-space plan" is the open-space element
19 of a county or city general plan adopted by the board or council,
20 either as the local open-space plan or as the interim local
21 open-space plan adopted pursuant to Section 65563.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25
 26 *CHAPTER 10.5. GREENWAY DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINMENT*
 27 *ACT*
 28

29 *5845. This chapter shall be known, and may be cited, as the*
 30 *Greenway Development and Sustainment Act.*

31 *5846. For purposes of this chapter, “greenway” means a*
 32 *pedestrian and bicycle, nonmotorized vehicle transportation, and*
 33 *recreational travel corridor that meets the following requirements:*

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

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

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

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

6 5847. (a) A city, county, city and county, or other local
7 government entity may designate lands along a river in its
8 jurisdiction as a greenway, upon approval of its legislative body
9 by ordinance or resolution, or by incorporating such a designation
10 into an adopted general plan element or an adopted river master
11 plan.

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

16 5848. A city, county, city and county, or other local government
17 entity may apply for public or private funding available for the
18 development of a greenway in its jurisdiction, and any funds
19 secured for that purpose shall be used in a manner consistent with
20 applicable state laws. Funding that may be secured for the
21 purposes of this chapter is not limited to parkway, riverway, or
22 other water-related funds. A city, county, or city and county may
23 also seek transportation, alternative fuel, greenhouse gas
24 reduction, or other land use funds for the purposes of this chapter.

25 5849. A city, county, city and county, or other local government
26 entity that obtains federal lands access program funding under
27 Section 204(a)(1) of Title 23 of the United States Code shall be
28 given priority with regard to the provision of state funding for
29 greenway development under this chapter.

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



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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May 7, 2014

Assemblymember Mike Gatto
California State Assembly
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
California State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814
FAX: 916-319-2181

RE: AB 1922 (Gomez) - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Gatto,

On behalf of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), I am writing to express my support for Assembly Bill 1922, The Greenway Development and Sustainment Act, by Assemblymember Gomez. This bill would take a needed step forward in the development of greenways throughout the state, and most importantly along the Los Angeles River.

The MRCA is committed to the revitalization of the Los Angeles River for both environmental and recreational purposes, and the development of an interconnected greenway along the Los Angeles River and its tributaries would achieve both of these outcomes. For years, the MRCA has undertaken projects to bring the residents of Los Angeles to the River to recreate and take respite in a natural setting that improves the public access and natural resource values of the River bike path and trails that others are developing. The combined efforts of MRCA and other agencies are going a long way to develop a world-class active transportation corridor along many miles of the River and its tributaries. AB 1922 will assist our local efforts by prioritizing greenway policy at the state level.

The MRCA strongly believes in the need to establish greenways along the waterways of California, as they facilitate active transportation and help link communities situated along the riverway. A true greenway along the Los Angeles River and its tributaries would serve the dozens of communities sited along its banks, providing both environmental and economic benefits to these communities. Greenways directly improve the quality of life for Californians, as they foster outdoor activity, connect people with nature and bring

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communities together. Further, bringing residents to the rivers and tributaries, educate Californians on the need to be good stewards of our environment.

For these reasons, the MRCA supports AB 1922 and its goal to establish greenways as a priority for investment. We thank Assemblymember Gomez for his leadership on this issue and respectfully urge your support when this bill is heard before your committee.

Sincerely,

George Lange
Chair

c.c. Members, Committee on Appropriations
c.c. Assemblymember Gomez