



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Los Angeles River Center & Gardens  
570 West Avenue Twenty-six, Suite 100  
Los Angeles, California 90065  
Phone (323) 221-9944

## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:   
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: March 4, 2020

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(b): Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant application to the State Coastal Conservancy's Explore the Coast Overnight Program for a grant of Proposition 68 funds for project planning and design of the Malibu Bluffs Campground project.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant application to the State Coastal Conservancy for Proposition 68 funds for the Malibu Bluffs Campground project in the amount of \$500,000.

Background: The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68) authorized general obligation bonds to address, among other things, the creation of parks, enhancing river parkways, protecting coastal forests and wetlands, outdoor access, lower cost coastal accommodations and climate adaptation. Proposition 68 allocated a total of \$204.8 million to the Coastal Conservancy for various purposes. In 2017, the California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 250, which directed the Conservancy to create a Lower-Cost Coastal Accommodations program, now publicly known as the Explore the Coast Overnight Program. This program aims to create more opportunities for all Californians to stay overnight at the coast through the expansion or construction of hotels, motels, hostels, campgrounds, RV campgrounds, cabins, yurts, dorm rooms, and others. The Coastal Conservancy application process includes accepting pre-proposals for planning, design, permitting, and/or construction of lower-cost coastal accommodation projects using the \$4.95 million of funding appropriated for Fiscal Year 2019/20 from Proposition 68. Pre-proposals are evaluated by Conservancy staff on a rolling basis and based on this review, applicants may be invited to submit a full proposal and provide further information on their project.

In August 2019, MRCA staff submitted a pre-proposal to the Coastal Conservancy's initial pre-proposal round and received an invitation to submit a full proposal by November 2019. Coastal Conservancy and MRCA staffs have been in close

communication about project details following the full application submission. In December 2019, Coastal Conservancy staff visited the Malibu Bluffs as part of the California Coastal Commission's site tour. Following the site visit in December, Coastal Conservancy staff confirmed that it was recommending approval of this grant by the Coastal Conservancy at its April 2020 public meeting.

The 81-acre Malibu Bluffs park is owned by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and is managed by the MRCA. The proposed project area site is the Northwest corner of the property along Pacific Coast Highway, that spans a 9-acre area outside of the mapped Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA). The proposed campground facility would include parking, restrooms, permanent storage, a multi-use structure for camp program operations and staff, water tanks and fire-fighting apparatus, on-site residence for an MRCA Ranger and for seasonal concessionaire staff, temporary shade structures, and temporary platform tent-cabins or yurts that can accommodate up to 100 campers and staff.

The Explore the Coast Overnight Program will partially fund the planning and design phase for this project that covers preparation of a conceptual and schematic design package, associated engineering design and site studies, and a final Public Works Plan and its environmental impact report; planning and project management costs; community engagement activities; and preparation of up to 90% complete construction documents and associated entitlement costs. The MRCA has committed to matching the awarded funds for a total budget of \$1,000,000 for this Pre-project/Planning Phase. The matching funds will come from the remaining in-lieu mitigation fees awarded to the MRCA from the California Coastal Commission in 2015 for the development of low-cost overnight accommodations on the coast.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): The proposed project is statutorily exempt from CEQA under 14 CCR section 15262, feasibility and planning studies, because the grant funds will be used for planning and feasibility studies, including environmental analysis, for a possible future action which has not yet been approved. The proposed project is also categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to 14 CCR section 15306, information collection, because the grant funds will be used for part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has yet to approve, adopt or fund. Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Exemption.

Consideration: The request to the Coastal Conservancy is for \$500,000 of Proposition 68 funds.

Fiscal Impact: If awarded, the grant will be added to the final budget for fiscal year 2019-20. If not awarded, the total planning phase will be funded by the remaining in-lieu mitigation fees currently held by MRCA for low-cost coastal accommodations. The intent is that the subject request will supplement the in-lieu mitigation fees, that are available also for management and operation of the project when completed.