SENATE BILL No. 1296

Introduced by Senator Durazo
(Coauthors: Senators Hueso and Stern)

February 21, 2020

An act to add Division 23.6 (commencing with Section 33850) to the Public Resources Code, relating to natural resources.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST


Existing law establishes various environmental and economic policies and programs.

This bill, upon appropriation by the Legislature, would establish the Nature and Parks Career Pathway and Community Resiliency Act of 2020, which would require state conservancies and the Wildlife Conservation Board to establish independent grant programs to fund climate mitigation, adaptation, or resilience, natural disaster, and other climate emergency projects, as specified.

State-mandated local program: no.

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

1 SECTION 1. Division 23.6 (commencing with Section 33850) is added to the Public Resources Code, to read:
DIVISION 23.6. THE NATURE AND PARKS CAREER PATHWAY AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCY ACT OF 2020

33850. This division shall be known, and may be cited, as the Nature and Parks Career Pathway and Community Resiliency Act of 2020.

33851. As used in this division, unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions apply:


(b) “Entity” means a state conservancy or the Wildlife Conservation Board.

33852. The purpose of this act is to provide individuals who have barriers to employment with the services they need to enter, participate in, and complete broader workforce preparation, training, and education programs, and ultimately, to obtain employment in the natural, cultural, historical, and tribal resources fields. This act shall provide special emphasis in integrating individuals from target populations into career pathway programs aligned with regional labor market needs and the state’s climate mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency goals.

33853. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Unsustainable global greenhouse gas emissions levels continue to challenge the state’s residents, wildlife, and natural resources.

(b) Rising average temperatures, shrinking mountain snowpack, warmer storms, higher sea levels, and more extreme and prevalent natural disasters, including, but not limited to, floods, landslides, and wildfires increasingly threaten the safety, health, financial well-being, and housing stability of the people of the State of California.

(c) Continued investments to protect and enhance the state’s natural and built resources and infrastructure is necessary to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

(d) Meeting the state’s community and climate needs requires a commitment to integrating climate strategies in the state’s economy, infrastructure, public services, and workforce sectors.

(e) The state’s existing employment needs have been intensified because of the declared state of emergency and the certain and
upcoming recession due to the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19.

(f) Achieving the state’s climate goals requires the development of an expanded and skilled workforce and clear and meaningful opportunities for the people of the State of California to receive the education, training, and certifications necessary to enter into growing natural resources and climate careers.

(g) Parallel and intentional investments in climate projects and workforce development are effective and efficient strategies to protect the state from the impacts of climate change and offer sustainable economic relief within the job market to the people of the State of California.

33854. (a) Each entity shall establish an independent grant program according to the entity’s respective governing statutes and strategic plans or work plans adopted by the entity. The grant programs shall fund climate mitigation, adaptation, or resilience, natural disaster, and other climate emergency projects that accomplish both of the following:

1. Reduce the risks of, or mitigate, climate change impacts on vulnerable communities, fish and wildlife, or natural, cultural, historical, or tribal resources; or mitigate, prepare for, respond to, or support recovery from natural disasters or other climate emergencies.

2. Provide comprehensive workforce development opportunities, including education, training, certifications, or placement services for jobs and careers in the natural, cultural, historical, or tribal resources fields.

(b) Before awarding a grant pursuant to this section, an entity shall develop and adopt guidelines for its independent grant program according to all of the following:

1. At a minimum, the entity’s adopted guidelines shall include, as criteria to qualify for a grant, all of the following:

   A. Require climate mitigation, adaptation, or resilience projects that reduce the risks of or mitigate climate change impacts on vulnerable communities, fish and wildlife, or natural, cultural, historical, or tribal resources; or that mitigate, prepare for, respond to, or support recovery from natural disasters or other climate emergencies.

   B. Require projects that provide comprehensive workforce development opportunities that support education, training,
certifications, or career pathways that prepare individuals to enter
into the natural, cultural, historical, or tribal resources fields.

(C) Require projects that support implementation of the goals
and recommendations identified in the Natural Resources Agency’s
Safeguarding California Plan.

(D) Require projects to use crews composed of individuals from
populations specified in Section 14034 of the Unemployment
Insurance Code.

(E) Define eligible applicants to include, but not be limited to,
all of the following:

(i) Nonprofit organizations and community-based organizations.

(ii) Certification programs or workforce training organizations,
including, but not limited to, certification programs and workforce
training organizations associated with trade schools, the California
State University, the University of California, the California
Community Colleges, and other educational institutions.

(iii) State vocational rehabilitation programs.

(iv) Tribal governments and local governments, including, but
not limited to, a city, county, city and county, a department of a
city or county, a special district, a local government agency, and
a county welfare department.

(v) Joint power authorities.

(2) To the extent feasible, applicant projects shall use the
services of the California Conservation Corps or a community
conservation corps, as defined in Section 14507.5.

(3) Adopted guidelines shall prioritize projects for funding
according to the following minimum selection criteria:

(A) Projects that develop career pathway connections with
regional employers.

(B) Projects that develop specific skills through hands-on
application.

(C) Projects that generate work experience through hands-on
project implementation.

(A) Projects located in or that benefit low-income,
disadvantaged, under-resourced, frontline, vulnerable, or
marginalized communities.

(B) Projects in areas vulnerable to catastrophic wildfires, sea
level rise, or extreme heat.

(C) Projects in areas recently burned by catastrophic wildfires.

(D) Projects that leverage match funding.
(E) Projects that implement local adopted plans.

(F) Projects that support other state plans, priorities, and goals.

(c) Before adopting program guidelines, an entity shall satisfy both of the following:

(1) To the extent feasible, the entity shall seek input from, and consider the recommendations of, the California Workforce Development Board, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and local workforce development boards on the proposed program guidelines to support or ensure consistency with federal and state workforce development policies, programs, and plans, including the State Plan required by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. Sec. 3101 et seq.) and described in Division 7 (commencing with Section 14000) of the Unemployment Insurance Code.

(2) The entity shall conduct at least one public meeting to consider public comments. The entity shall provide public notice of the public meeting and publish the draft guidelines on its internet website at least 30 days before the public meeting.

(d) As funding permits, each entity shall solicit grant applications from potential applicants at least once per year.

(e) The Wildlife Conservation Board shall seek to support regions of the state not covered by a state conservancy in order to promote equitable opportunity and distribution of grants throughout the state.

(f) Grants awarded pursuant to this section may be funded, as appropriate and authorized, from Section 26230, subparagraph (F) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 80008, or future natural resource or climate resiliency funding. 33855. This division shall be implemented only upon appropriation by the Legislature for its purposes.