



## SB 1268 (Gonzalez) Outdoors for All

### SUMMARY

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Senate Bill (SB) 1268 would codify the goals and programs of the Outdoors for All initiative, including achieving equitable access to outdoor recreation for all Californians, prioritizing programs and park expansions in underserved communities, and aligning Outdoors for All efforts with the state's existing outdoor equity and conservation goals.

### EXISTING LAW

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Assembly Bill (AB) 30 (Kalra, Chapter 939, Statutes of 2022) established the Equitable Outdoor Access Act, which set forth the state's commitment to ensuring all Californians can benefit from and access the state's cultural and natural resources.

### BACKGROUND/PROBLEM

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California has 280 state park units,<sup>1</sup> in addition to thousands of regional parks, county parks, and city parks. California also has the nation's largest outdoor recreation economy, contributing \$54 billion in economic spending and 517,000 jobs.<sup>2</sup>

Research shows that people who visit outdoor spaces for 30 minutes or more during a week have lower rates of depression and high blood pressure, and higher rates of community connection.<sup>3</sup>

However, access to outdoor recreation is not equal across different geographic areas of the state, ethnicities,

income levels, and other demographic factors. A history of exclusionary zoning, discriminatory policies, and underinvestment has resulted in fewer parks and less outdoor access for many communities.<sup>4</sup> Barriers including limited facilities for people with disabilities, the cost of equipment, transportation, and fees, and racial and ethnic discrimination exacerbate these historical inequalities.

In 2021, California launched the Outdoors for All initiative with an initial investment of over \$1 billion,<sup>5</sup> designed to increase access to the outdoors and prioritize equity and underserved communities.<sup>6</sup> The Outdoors for All strategy focuses on six priorities: Establishing Spaces for People and Nature to Thrive, Fostering Belonging, Connecting People and the Outdoors, Co-Creating with Communities, Building Equitable Career Pathways and a Representative Workforce, and Aligning Funding to Achieve Outdoors for All.

This initiative spans the 27 departments at the California Natural Resources Agency and includes programs such as the California State Park Adventure Pass, which provides yearlong, free entry to fourth graders and their families at 19 state parks,<sup>7</sup> grants to local communities for parks infrastructure and programs, and more.

As the federal government repeatedly attacks public lands, deploys federal immigration agents to stage raids in public parks, and rolls back equity programs, it is more important than ever to strengthen the state's

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=91](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=91)

<sup>2</sup> <https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ORSA-California.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/srep28551>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.coastal.ca.gov/coastalvoices/resources/StanfordFreeTheBeach.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [https://resources.ca.gov/Newsroom/Page-Content/News-List/California-Outdoors-For-All-Initiative#:~:text=State%20Leaders%20Announce%20\\$548.3%20Million,%2C%E2%80%9D%20said%20Governor%20Gavin%20Newsom.](https://resources.ca.gov/Newsroom/Page-Content/News-List/California-Outdoors-For-All-Initiative#:~:text=State%20Leaders%20Announce%20$548.3%20Million,%2C%E2%80%9D%20said%20Governor%20Gavin%20Newsom.)

<sup>6</sup> [https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Access-for-all/Outdoors\\_for\\_All\\_Strategy\\_English.pdf](https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Access-for-all/Outdoors_for_All_Strategy_English.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=30641](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30641)

commitment to outdoor equity and conservation. The Outdoors for All initiative provides enormous benefits to Californians and the state’s environment but is not currently codified in state law – meaning it could be easily altered or undone by a different state administration.

## **SOLUTION**

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SB 1268 would codify the goals and programs of the Outdoors for All initiative in state law, including:

- Achieving equitable access to parks, open space, and other natural areas for all Californians regardless of income, race, ethnicity, geography, age, disability or other factors.
- Eliminating barriers to outdoor recreation and nature connection.
- Prioritizing investments, opportunities, grants, programs and park expansions in underserved communities.
- Aligning Outdoors for All efforts with the state’s existing outdoor equity and conservation goals, including the 30x30 conservation goals.

Codifying this important and successful initiative will ensure continued commitment and momentum from state agencies and departments regardless of changes in leadership at the federal and state level.

## **SUPPORT**

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## **CONTACT**

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