

# News Release



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CONTACT: Roy Stearns  
(916) 654-7538  
[rstea@parks.ca.gov](mailto:rstea@parks.ca.gov)

## **Governor Signs Two Major Legislative Bills to Improve Accountability and Oversight for State Parks**

***Returns \$20 Million, Strengthens Commission, Demands Action Plan, Prevents Park Closures***

Governor Jerry Brown today signed two major legislative measures, assembly bills 1478 and 1589, which mandate a number of funding and oversight improvements to California State Parks.

“These two legislative measures set a new course and direction for our state park system,” said Janelle Beland, the acting director of California State Parks. “We are grateful to the Governor and the legislators for their work and we are now eager to join with all of our partners to put improvements in place for the future of our park system.”

Assembly Bill 1478, carried by Assemblymember Robert Blumenfield (D-Van Nuys), follows the main recommendation of Governor Brown to return the \$20.5 million in “found” funding. The funding would be used to keep parks open, address the most critical maintenance issues that could result in closure or partial closure of a park, and provide matching funds to those individuals and entities that made donations to State Parks.

In addition, AB 1478 would strengthen the State Park and Recreation Commission by establishing criteria for membership on the commission. There would still be seven members on the commission, but it would be required that each be selected on the basis of specific experience and skills in such areas as business, nonprofit management, conservation, cultural and historic resource management, park professional management and others.

Assembly Bill 1589, introduced by Assemblymembers Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael), Wesley Chesbro (D-Eureka), Roger Dickinson (D-Sacramento), Mike Gatto (D-Burbank), and Kevin Jeffries (R-Riverside), enacts the California State Park Stewardship Act of 2012. It

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would require the department to develop a prioritized action plan, including revenue generating opportunities, by July 1, 2013.

This bill would also create the State Parks Protection Fund and require the Franchise Tax Board to revise state tax return forms to provide individuals the opportunity to purchase a State Park Annual Pass or make a tax deductible donation to the department, via their tax return. This bill is an attempt to help solve the budget challenges facing the department, explore alternative revenue streams and limit the number of state park closures.

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