

Date of Hearing: March 24, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WATER, PARKS, AND WILDLIFE

Diane Papan, Chair

AB 1592 (Ramos) – As Introduced January 15, 2026

SUBJECT: California Indian Heritage Center support organization

SUMMARY: Authorizes the Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) to enter into an agreement with a California Indian Heritage Center (CIHC) support organization and places requirements on the structure of the CIHC support organization and any agreements made.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Defines a CIHC support organization as a nonprofit organization established for the purpose of creating a collaborative partnership between California Native American tribes and State Parks in support of the CIHC.
- 2) Authorizes State Parks to enter into an agreement with a CIHC support organization to achieve all of the following purposes:
 - a) To partner in the operation and programming of the CIHC to achieve the collective mission of establishing partnerships with California Native American tribes;
 - b) To recruit, hire, and retain more diversity of CIHC staff with personal experience and knowledge of California Native American culture and history;
 - c) To enter into staff-sharing agreements to use essential skills and abilities of state and nonstate employees, subject to conflict of interest provisions;
 - d) To develop and engage new sources of nonstate public and private funding for the support of the CIHC;
 - e) To apply for, receive, and expend state funds in support of the CIHC;
 - f) To support ongoing capital improvement projects managed by State Parks;
 - g) To provide financial stability and ethical integrity through oversight and accountability;
 - h) To support marketing and communications activities that promote the programs, amenities, and resources of the CIHC;
 - i) To support projects and programs that facilitate access and visitation and enhance educational opportunities, especially for young and more diverse audiences; and
 - j) To establish, improve, and support the completion of projects that establish or improve CIHC visitor amenities and facilities.
- 3) Provides that the Department of Finance shall have 60 days to review and approve or disapprove any agreement or substantial amendment to an agreement between State Parks and a CIHC support organization.

- 4) Authorizes State Parks to enter into supplemental agreements with a CIHC support organization for the purposes of securing any expertise, capacity, or financial resources that may be needed to identify, plan, develop, or implement strategic initiatives and projects for the CIHC.
- 5) Requires that a CIHC support organization must:
 - a) Be exempt from taxation pursuant to 26 United States Code (USC) § 501(c)(3);
 - b) Comply with the Supervision of Trustees and Fundraisers for Charitable Purposes Act (Government Code §§ 12580 *et seq.*);
 - c) Be overseen by a board of no more than 25 members, with at least 51% of the board's members representing California Native American tribes;
 - d) Be led by a chief executive officer who reports to the board; and
 - e) Have a charter and articles of incorporation approved by the CIHC Task Force (see Existing Law #2).
- 6) Provides that the director of State Parks, Director of Finance, and the Tribal Affairs Secretary who leads the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs, or their respective designees, may serve as nonvoting ex officio members of the board of the CIHC support organization.
- 7) Requires that the CIHC support organization and its employees must not:
 - a) Be a state agency or body;
 - b) Directly manage state capital outlay projects;
 - c) Directly pay or otherwise compensate state employees; or
 - d) Supervise or manage state employees.
- 8) Specifies that agreements between State Parks and a CIHC support organization are not subject to advertising or competitive bidding requirements applicable to public works or other public projects.
- 9) Specifies that any construction, alteration, demolition, installation, or repair work undertaken by or on behalf of the CIHC support organization for the CIHC on property owned by the state constitutes a public work for the purposes of Labor Code §§ 1720 *et seq.*
- 10) Provides this bill does not commit, obligate, or require state funds to be provided in support of the CIHC support organization.
- 11) Makes findings and declarations regarding the historical wrongs committed against California Native American tribes and the merits of a unique partnership needed to achieve the vision and purpose of the CIHC.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Provides that it is the intent of the Legislature that State Parks develop a CIHC for cultural preservation, learning and exchange, land stewardship, and a place to engage all visitors in celebrating the living cultures of California tribes [Public Resources Code (PRC) § 5097.999].
- 2) Creates the CIHC Task Force within State Parks to:
 - a) Make recommendations to State Parks regarding potential siting of the CIHC;
 - b) Advise and make recommendations to State Parks on the cultural concepts and designs of the CIHC;
 - c) Establish and maintain communication between tribes, museums, and local, state, and federal agencies;
 - d) Request and utilize the advice and services of tribes, museums, and local, state, and federal agencies;
 - e) Develop and recommend to State Parks a governing structure for the ongoing operation of the CIHC; and
 - f) Prepare and submit to the Legislature an annual report detailing the task force's activities and progress towards establishing the CIHC [PRC § 5097.998 (e)].
- 3) Specifies that the CIHC Task Force shall consist of nine members, with five representing California Indian tribes [PRC § 5097.998 (b)].
- 4) Specifies that the CIHC Task Force's responsibilities shall be complete and its duties discharged when the CIHC is completed and State Parks has adopted a governing structure for the completed CIHC [PRC § 5097.998 (f)].
- 5) Authorizes State Parks to enter into an operating agreement with a qualified nonprofit organization for the development, improvement, restoration, care, maintenance, administration, or operation of a unit or units, or portion of a unit, of the state park system, and
 - a) Defines a qualified nonprofit organization as an organization that is exempt from taxation pursuant to 26 USC § 501(c)(3), complies with the Supervision of Trustees and Fundraisers for Charitable Purposes Act (Government Code §§ 12580 *et seq.*), and has as its principal purpose and activity to provide visitor services in state parks, facilitate public access to park resources, improve park facilities, provide interpretive and educational services, or provide direct protection or stewardship of natural, cultural, or historical lands, or resources;
 - b) Requires the nonprofit organization to submit an annual report to State Parks; and
 - c) Requires the nonprofit organization and State Parks to hold a public meeting to discuss the report (PRC § 5080.42).
- 6) Authorizes State Parks to enter into a statewide agreement with a park support organization to facilitate the implementation of reforms recommended by the Parks Forward Commission

and to develop and secure expertise, services, resources, and projects that are not readily available to the state park system (PRC §§ 520–525).

- 7) Authorizes State Parks to enter into a community access agreement with an eligible entity to use property within the state park system and department personnel services to provide interpretive services and visitor services at units of the state parks system to underserved park users (PRC § 5009.5).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This bill is keyed fiscal.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose of this bill.** According to the author: “The [CIHC] will become a cultural landmark for our state, a place where visitors from all around the world can learn about the true history of California’s First People and be educated on the living cultures that continue to shape this land. It will be a space for tribal communities from across the state to connect with their past, their present, and the future of their tribes. A place where our ancestors will be honored and celebrated for years to come. This bill would help pave the way for this goal by advancing a top priority of ensuring this center is run by tribes for tribes by allowing for [State Parks] to enter into an agreement with a support organization. This collaborative partnership would advance the creation of the [CIHC].”
- 2) **Background.** The CIHC project aims to establish a center of statewide significance to celebrate the living cultures of California tribal communities. The CIHC will be located on a 51-acre site in West Sacramento at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers. The completed CIHC will be a unit of the state parks system, and the development is proceeding with engagement between State Parks and tribal communities.

Early progress towards a CIHC. In 1940, the State Indian Museum was established at Sutter’s Fort State Historic Park, and remains open today, telling the story of California’s diverse indigenous cultures across three major themes: Nature, Spirit, and Family. As early as 1960, State Parks identified a need for a new and expanded alternative to the State Indian Museum. In 1991, pursuant to the Budget Act of 1990 (Chapter 467, Statutes of 1990), State Parks submitted the “California Indian Museum Study” to the Legislature based on extensive public input with targeted outreach to members of the California Indian community. The study found a high level of interest in a new California Indian Museum as a hub of a statewide network of regional facilities and events. In 2002, SB 2063 (Brulte, Chapter 290, Statutes of 2002) established the California Indian Cultural Center and Museum Task Force [renamed the CIHC Task Force in 2004 by SB 1264 (Natural Resources and Water) Chapter 286, Statutes of 2004] to oversee the development of the CIHC.

Development of the CIHC in West Sacramento. In 2007, the CIHC Task Force recommended the West Sacramento site for the CIHC, and this recommendation was accepted by State Parks. In 2008, State Parks, the City of West Sacramento, and the City of West Sacramento Redevelopment Agency reached a master agreement for the transfer of the future CIHC property from the City of West Sacramento Redevelopment Agency to State Parks. In 2011, the State Parks and Recreation Commission approved the Final General Plan and Environmental Impact Report for the CIHC.

In 2018, the pace of progress increased, as the Budget Act (Mitchell), Chapter 29, Statutes of 2018, provided \$100 million for the development and construction of the CIHC (although much of this appropriation was later reverted), SB 854 (Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 51, Statutes of 2018, provided that it was the intent of the Legislature that State Parks develop the CIHC, and Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. issued Executive Order B-60-18 ordering the Tribal Advisor to establish the CIHC Task Force and coordinate statewide efforts to engage California Native Americans in consultations on the CIHC. Public input and design are ongoing: in 2022, a design firm was selected for the site, in 2023–2024 a statewide outreach campaign was conducted, and in 2025 public input was solicited on Phase 1 design.

The CIHC Task Force recommended a governance structure. As charged by the Legislature, the role of the CIHC Task Force is to oversee the development of the CIHC, including decisions about governance of the completed CIHC. In 2005, the CIHC Task Force recommended that the CIHC be developed and operated through a formal collaboration between State Parks and a new nonprofit organization, and that the CIHC Task Force prepare and approve bylaws for the new organization.

- 3) **Proposed committee amendment.** This bill does not require public engagement or reporting on behalf of State Parks or the CIHC support organization, in contrast to the established practice for other formal agreements between State Parks and nonprofit partners, which require various degrees of public reporting and engagement. For example, when State Parks enters into an operating agreement with a nonprofit partner, the nonprofit organization is required to submit an annual report to State Parks, and State Parks and the nonprofit organization are required to jointly hold a public meeting for discussion of the report. *To keep this agreement in line with the standards of existing agreements with State Parks, the committee may wish to consider the following amendment:*

PRC § 528.6 (a). In order to advance the purposes described in subdivision (b) of Section 528.4, an agreement between the department and the CIHC support organization pursuant to Section 528.4 shall, at a minimum, include ***both all*** of the following:

- (1) Clear goals and objectives.
 - (2) Any commitments of oversight, staffing, and coordination that may be needed to accomplish the goals and objectives.
 - (3) ***A requirement that the department and the CIHC support organization annually hold a joint public meeting regarding the operation of the CIHC and the activities of the CIHC support organization.***
- 4) **Arguments in support.** The Trust for Public Land writes: “[This bill] would authorize [State Parks] to enter into an agreement with the CIHC support organization to establish a collaborative partnership between California Native American tribes and [State Parks] in support of the ongoing development of the CIHC facility.” The California Tribal Business Alliance adds: “Establishing this structure will help position [the] CIHC to cultivate partnerships, philanthropic support, and other non-state resources that may help advance the project and sustain its programming and public mission over time.”

- 5) **Related legislation.** SB 101 (Wiener), Chapter 4, Statutes of 2025, the Budget Act of 2025, among other provisions appropriates \$6 million for working drawings and \$3 million for construction of the CIHC.

AB 107 (Gabriel), Chapter 22, Statutes of 2024, the Budget Act of 2024, among other provisions appropriates an additional \$3,488,000 for preliminary plans of the CIHC.

AB 1150 (Water, Parks, and Wildlife), Chapter 831, Statutes of 2023, authorizes State Parks to enter into community access agreements with eligible entities.

SB 74 (Mitchell), Chapter 6, Statutes of 2020, the Budget Act of 2020, among other provisions reverts the balances of the appropriations for working drawings and construction of the CIHC, totaling \$95,310,000, leaving \$4,690,000 for preliminary plans.

SB 854 (Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 51, Statutes of 2018, states the intent of the Legislature that State Parks develop a CIHC for cultural preservation, learning and exchange, land stewardship, and a place to engage all visitors in celebrating the living cultures of California tribes.

SB 840 (Mitchell), Chapter 29, Statutes of 2018, the Budget Act of 2018, among other provisions appropriates \$100 million for the design and construction of the CIHC.

AB 1820 (Budget) of 2017 would have stated that it was the intent of the Legislature that State Parks develop a CIHC and would have appropriated \$100 million for the design and construction of the CIHC. AB 1820 was held on the Senate floor.

SB 1111 (Pavley), Chapter 540, Statutes of 2016, authorizes State Parks to enter into a statewide agreement with a park support organization.

SB 204 (Pavley), Chapter 573, Statutes of 2015, authorizes State Parks to enter into operating agreements for entire park units even if unnecessary to avoid closure of that park unit.

AB 42 (Huffman), Chapter 450, Statutes of 2011, authorizes State Parks to enter into operating agreements with qualified nonprofit organizations for the development, improvement, restoration, care, maintenance, administration, or operation of a unit or units, or a portion of a unit, of the state park system.

SB 1264 (Natural Resources and Water), Chapter 286, Statutes of 2004, renames the California Indian Cultural Center and Museum Task Force the CIHC Task Force.

SB 2063 (Brulte), Chapter 290, Statutes of 2002, establishes the California Indian Cultural Center and Museum Task Force and tasks it with making recommendations to State Parks on the siting, design, and governance of the cultural center.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Jamul Indian Village of California (sponsor)

California Tribal Business Alliance
Morongo Band of Mission Indians
The Trust for Public Land

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Sean Clair / W., P., & W. / (916) 319-2096