

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WATER, PARKS, AND WILDLIFE

Diane Papan, Chair

AB 2787 (Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife) – As Introduced March 12, 2026

SUBJECT: Water, parks, and wildlife: omnibus bill

SUMMARY: Makes various changes to statutes related to water, parks, and wildlife. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Provides that contracts and agreements with nonprofit conservation groups or resource conservation districts for the management and operation of lands managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) shall be governed by specified requirements of Fish and Game Code (FGC) § 1501.5.
- 2) Provides that contracts and agreements entered into under the Nesting Bird Habitat Incentive Program shall be governed by specified requirements of FGC § 1501.5.
- 3) Provides that a person who operates a Nevada-registered vessel on the waters of Lake Tahoe or Topaz Lake shall not be cited for operation of a vessel without a valid state-issued invasive mussel infestation prevention sticker, provided that Nevada has a program in effect for the management of aquatic invasive species.
- 4) Requires that any time the Department of Water Resources (DWR) updates groundwater basin boundaries, DWR shall reassess the prioritization of groundwater basins for which changes to the boundaries have been made.
- 5) Requires that DWR review and determine whether a reprioritization of all groundwater basins is warranted on or before January 31, 2035 and not less than every ten years thereafter.
- 6) Makes various technical and conforming changes.
- 7) Finds and declares that a special statute is necessary owing to the interstate location of Lake Tahoe and Topaz Lake and to reciprocate how the State of Nevada treats California boaters.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Defines “department-managed lands” as lands, or lands and water, acquired for public shooting grounds, state marine (estuarine) recreational management areas, ecological reserves, and wildlife management areas.
 - a) Requires that department-managed lands be operated on a nonprofit basis by CDFW;
 - b) Authorizes CDFW to enter into contracts or other agreements for the management and operation of department-managed lands with nonprofit conservation groups or resource conservation districts;
 - c) Provides that these contracts or other agreements are not subject to Public Contract Code § 10100 *et seq.* or Military and Veterans Code § 999 *et seq.*; and

- d) Requires these contracts or other agreements to adhere to the goals and objectives included in an approved management plan and be consistent with the purpose for which the lands were acquired (FGC § 1745).
- 2) Establishes the Nesting Bird Habitat Incentive Program, which may include direct payments or other incentives to encourage landowners to voluntarily cultivate or retain upland cover crops, cereal grains, grasses, forbs, pollinator plants, or a combination thereof to provide waterfowl and other game bird nesting habitat cover.
- a) Authorizes CDFW to enter into grants or contracts with landowners, public and private entities (including nonprofit organizations), and California Native American tribes to help CDFW implement the program; and
 - b) Provides that contracts entered into under the Nesting Bird Habitat Incentive Program are not subject to Public Contract Code § 10100 *et seq.* or Military and Veterans Code § 999 *et seq.* (FGC § 3480).
- 3) Authorizes CDFW to enter into contracts for fish and wildlife habitat preservation, restoration and enhancement with public and private entities and provides that those contracts are contracts for services for the purposes of Public Contract Code § 10335 *et seq.* and that no work under those contracts is a public work or public improvement for the purposes of Labor Code § 1720 *et seq.* (FGC § 1501.5).
- 4) Establishes an invasive mussel infestation prevention fee set by the Division of Boating and Waterways of the Department of Parks and Recreation.
- a) Provides that the fee shall be deposited into the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund and shall be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for administration of the fee and for implementation of invasive mussel infestation prevention plans.
 - b) Limits the fee to not more than \$10 in even-numbered years and not more than \$20 in odd-numbered years before 2026.
 - c) Limits the fee to between \$15 and \$21 in even-numbered years and between \$30 and \$42 in odd-numbered years beginning in 2026, with adjustments for inflation in odd-numbered years.
 - d) Requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to issue an invasive mussel infestation prevention sticker upon payment of the fee.
 - e) Provides that failure to pay the fee shall not prohibit DMV from issuing registration of a vessel.
 - f) Provides that a vessel operator may be issued a citation for operating a recreational vessel in nonmarine waters without a valid state-issued invasive mussel infestation prevention sticker (Harbors and Navigation Code §§ 675–676).
- 5) Requires that, in addition to the fee for the original registration or registration renewal of a vessel, DMV shall collect from resident and nonresident vessel owners an invasive mussel infestation prevention fee.

- a) Requires DMV to issue an invasive mussel infestation prevention sticker upon payment of the fee.
 - b) Provides that failure to pay the fee shall not prohibit DMV from issuing registration of a vessel.
 - c) Provides that a vessel operator may be issued a citation for operating a recreational vessel in nonmarine waters without a valid state-issued invasive mussel infestation prevention sticker (Vehicle Code §§ 9853 and 9860).
- 6) Requires DWR to conduct an investigation of the state's groundwater basins and to identify the groundwater basins on the basis of geological and hydrological conditions and consideration of political boundary lines whenever practical.
- a) Authorizes DWR to revise the boundaries of groundwater basins based on its own investigations or information provided by others; and
 - b) Requires DWR to report its findings to the Governor and the Legislature in years ending in five (Water Code § 12924).
- 7) Requires DWR to prioritize groundwater basins and subbasins according to specified criteria (Water Code § 10933).
- 8) Requires DWR to categorize each groundwater basin as high, medium, low, or very low priority and requires that any time DWR updates groundwater basin boundaries, DWR shall reassess the prioritization (Water Code § 10722.4).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This bill is keyed fiscal.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose of this bill.** According to the author, “[This bill] is the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee’s omnibus bill, which makes a number of helpful statutory updates. [This bill] largely consists of technical revisions that clarify existing code and create efficiencies for DWR and CDFW, which are within the Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee’s jurisdiction. Additionally, [this bill] simplifies the rules for recreation on our interstate lakes by extending reciprocity to Nevada invasive species stickers on Lake Tahoe and Topaz Lake, as Nevada has done for Californians. All elements of [this bill] are believed to be non-controversial in nature.”
- 2) **Background.** This bill addresses various issues in the Committee’s jurisdiction.

CDFW contracts with nonprofit partners. CDFW contracts with nonprofit partner organizations for various habitat projects. Currently, statutory authority for these partnerships exists in three different locations in the FGC, which has led to confusion, delays, and underuse of contracting exemptions. FGC § 1501.5 provides broad general authority for CDFW to enter into contracts “whenever the department finds that the contracts will assist in meeting the department’s duty to preserve, protect, and restore fish and wildlife.” However, two other provisions in the FGC authorize CDFW to enter into contracts to support fish and wildlife. FGC § 1745 authorizes CDFW to enter into contracts with nonprofit conservation

groups and resource conservation districts for the management or operations of department-managed lands, and the Nesting Bird Habitat Incentive Program improves bird habitat by providing economic incentives to landowners to complete annual and long-term habitat enhancements. This bill makes clear that the contracting rules provided for in FGC § 1501.5 apply to these other two programs.

Reciprocity for invasive species requirements on interstate lakes. Recreational boaters in California's nonmarine waters, regardless of state of vessel registration, are required to pay an invasive mussel infestation prevention fee and display a sticker (see Existing Law #4–5). California shares two interstate lakes with Nevada, Lake Tahoe and Topaz Lake, where recreational boaters can easily cross the state border on the shared water body. While Nevada extends reciprocity to California boaters (so that California boaters do not need to purchase a Nevada aquatic invasive species decal), the same reciprocity is not currently extended to Nevada boaters in California. This bill provides that Nevada boaters may operate in California waters on Lake Tahoe and Topaz Lake without citation, as long as Nevada has an aquatic invasive species program.

Groundwater basin boundary and priority adjustments. Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (Water Code § 10720 *et seq.*), DWR draws the boundaries of groundwater basins and sets a priority for each basin. Every ten years, DWR is required to report its findings regarding groundwater basin boundaries, which it does in a publication known as Bulletin 118. Current law also requires DWR to reprioritize groundwater basins whenever it adjusts groundwater basin boundaries. The existing law could be interpreted to require DWR to redraw all 515 groundwater basins every time any basin boundary is redrawn, while not explicitly requiring regular statewide reprioritization. This bill specifies that DWR is required to review and determine if a reprioritization is necessary for all groundwater basins every ten years and in the interim is only required to reassess the prioritization of groundwater basins for which changes to the boundaries have been made.

- 3) **Related legislation.** AB 1520 (Water, Parks, and Wildlife), Chapter 401, Statutes of 2025, made various uncontroversial changes to statutes within the committee's jurisdiction.

AB 149 (Budget), Chapter 106, Statutes of 2025, increased the invasive mussel infestation prevention fee and specified that it shall be collected from resident and nonresident vessel owners.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

Opposition

None on file

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