



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

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May 24, 2022

Assemblymember Chris Holden, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SUPPORT AB 2975 - Department of Parks and Recreation: Community Access
Agreements: Interpretive Services and Visitor Services**

Dear Chair Holden, and Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors to express our support for AB 2975. This bill will provide the Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) with the authority to enter into "community access agreements" with qualified nonprofit organizations that provide interpretive and visitor services for underrepresented communities at state parks.

Community-based nonprofit organizations serve as trusted bridges for people that have been systematically excluded from nature, allowing them opportunities to experience the outdoors and develop meaningful connections to nature. In addition to providing free or significantly subsidized programming to participants with low incomes, these organizations are equipped with staff that are trained in risk management and provide culturally responsive programming to address the needs of participants who face barriers to accessing parks. These programs not only provide connections and meaningful engagement but promote environmental responsibility and stewardship for future generations of park users.

The existing permitting process for nonprofits at state parks and beaches requires applying for a Special Event Permit, which is an additional barrier, especially for ongoing programs that need to be scheduled throughout the year. State Parks' existing special event permitting and fee system created to regulate one-time large-scale special events imposes unnecessary administrative costs on both State Parks and community partners and limits the frequency of activities and the impact of programs.

AB 2975 provides a more equitable framework to increase access and support organizations that serve as trusted connectors to the outdoors for communities that have historically not had access to these spaces. AB 2975 provides qualified organizations, as defined, with access to state parks and beaches through community access agreements. We believe this is a sound approach that is aligned with State Parks' mission to provide high-quality outdoor recreation for all Californians.

For these reasons, we support AB 2975.

Sincerely,

Virginia Bass, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

VB:kh

cc: Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Keith Cialino, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee