

# Bill Text: CA AB518 | 2025-2026 | Regular Session | Introduced California Assembly Bill 518

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**NOTE:** There are more recent revisions of this legislation. [Read Latest Draft](#)

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**Bill Title:** Low-impact camping areas.

**Spectrum:** Partisan Bill (Democrat 4-0)

**Status:** (Engrossed) 2025-05-21 - Referred to Com. on HOUSING. [AB518 Detail]

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## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

### ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 518

Introduced by Assembly Member Ward

February 10, 2025

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An act to amend Section 18862.43 of, and to add Part 2.3.5 (commencing with Section 18890) of Division 13 of, the Health and Safety Code, relating to land use.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 518, as introduced, Ward. Low-impact camping areas.

Existing law, the Special Occupancy Parks Act, establishes requirements for the construction, maintenance, occupancy, use, and design of special occupancy parks. Existing law defines "special occupancy park" to mean a recreational vehicle park, temporary recreational vehicle park, incidental camping area, or tent camp.

This bill would specify that, for purposes of that act, a special occupancy park does not include a low-impact camping area, as specified, that is located in a county that has enacted an ordinance, as specified, authorizing low-impact camping. The bill would define a "low-impact camping area" to mean any area of private property that provides for the transient occupancy rental of a temporary sleeping accommodation, as defined, for recreational purposes that is not a commercial lodging facility and meets specified requirements. The bill would require the county in which the low-impact camping area is located to enforce some of those requirements, relating to waste disposal and quiet hours, as specified. The bill would require that a county that has authorized low-impact camping to take specified actions, including, among others, to establish a registry of low-impact camping areas, as specified.

### Digest Key

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

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### Bill Text

## THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** Section 18862.43 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:



**18862.43.** "Special occupancy park" means a recreational vehicle park, temporary recreational vehicle park, incidental camping area, or tent camp. "Special occupancy park" does not include a low-impact camping area, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 18890 if the low-impact camping area meets all of the requirements of subdivision (b) of section 18890 and is located in a county that has enacted an ordinance, subject to the requirements of existing law, authorizing low-impact camping.

**SEC. 2.** Part 2.3.5 (commencing with Section 18890) is added to Division 13 of the Health and Safety Code, to read:

#### **PART 2.3.5. LOW-IMPACT CAMPING**

**18890.** (a) "Low-impact camping area" means any area of private property that provides for the transient occupancy rental of a temporary sleeping accommodation for recreational purposes that is not a commercial lodging facility.

(b) A low-impact camping area is not a special occupancy park, as defined in Section 18862.43, if it is located in a county that has enacted an ordinance, subject to the requirements of existing law, authorizing low-impact camping and meets all of the following requirements:

- (1) Provides for the transient occupancy rental of a temporary sleeping accommodation, not exceeding 14 consecutive nights per camper and not exceeding 28 nights per calendar year per camper.
  - (2) Includes no more than nine temporary sleeping accommodations.
  - (3) Does not include a temporary sleeping accommodation that is rented out for permanent human occupancy.
  - (4) Does not allow for onstreet parking.
  - (5) Complies with applicable state and local fire safety requirements.
  - (6) Complies with applicable state and local tax requirements, including, but not limited to, the payment of local transient occupancy taxes.
  - (7) Complies with applicable local requirements for disposal of human waste, or in the absence of applicable local requirements, maintains sanitation facilities that are fully self-contained or connected to a permitted sewage disposal system serving the property.
  - (8) Complies with applicable local requirements for disposal of trash, or in the absence of applicable local requirements, requires all solid waste to be removed from the premises after each occupancy and onsite trash receptacles to abide by applicable animal-protection trash best practices or requirements.
  - (9) Complies with applicable local requirements for quiet hours, or in the absence of applicable local requirements, enforces quiet hours from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
  - (10) Complies with applicable local requirements relating to low-impact campsites, low-incident camping, or incidental camping, including, but not limited to, local zoning, permit, lot size, and setback requirements.
  - (11) Designates an operator or property manager who is available by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
  - (12) Includes no more than one temporary sleeping accommodation per acre and is located on a parcel of two acres or more.
  - (13) Requires all temporary sleeping accommodations to be located no less than 200 feet from any offsite residence and no less than 30 feet from any adjoining property or road.
  - (14) Is not located on a site that meets both of the following:
    - (A) A site that is a legal parcel or parcels located in a city if, and only if, the city boundaries include some portion of either an urbanized area or urban cluster, as designated by the United States Census Bureau, or, for unincorporated areas, a legal parcel or parcels wholly within the boundaries of an urbanized area or urban cluster, as designated by the United States Census Bureau.
    - (B) A site in which at least 75 percent of the perimeter of the site adjoins parcels that are developed with urban uses. For purposes of this paragraph, parcels that are separated only by a street or highway shall be considered to be adjoined.
  - (15) Has not been used as a special occupancy park for the last five years unless both of the following are true:
    - (A) The area was a special occupancy park before January 1, 2024.
    - (B) The area met the requirements of this subdivision on January 1, 2023.
- (c) A county that has authorized low-impact camping shall do the following:
- (1) Establish a registry of low-impact camping areas which may include, but not be limited to, the number or operators authorized in the county, a site address of such areas, the number of lots and types of temporary sleeping accommodations, the facility owner and operator names, the date a low-impact camping area is established, summaries of all code enforcement investigations associated with low-impact camping areas, amendments to this information, and any other relevant information deemed appropriate by the county.
  - (2) Establish a complaint program to support code enforcement related to low-impact camping areas.

(3) Require all low-impact camping owners or operators to post, in a conspicuous location, contact information for the county for complaints or information related to low-impact camping areas.

(d) A county that has authorized low-impact camping shall have administrative and enforcement authority over this section.

(e) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Commercial lodging facility" has the same meaning as the term "hotel" is defined in subdivision (a) of Section 1865 of the Civil Code.

(2) "Recreational vehicle" has the same meaning as that term is defined in Section 18010.

(3) "Temporary sleeping accommodation" includes, but is not limited to, a tent, yurt, or recreational vehicle.

(f) This section does not authorize an individual to access private property without the permission of the landowner.

(g) This section does not require a county to authorize low-impact camping. This section establishes minimum requirements for a county that, by ordinance, elects to authorize low-impact camping.