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SCR-156 California Conservation Corps: 40th Anniversary. (2015-2016)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 156

CHAPTER 140

Relative to the California Conservation Corps.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 24, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 156, Berryhill. California Conservation Corps: 40th Anniversary.

This measure would recognize the contributions of the California Conservation Corps on the 40th anniversary of its creation.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The California Conservation Corps (CCC) was created through legislation signed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. on July 7, 1976, and has grown over 40 years from small beginnings to the oldest and largest state conservation corps program in the nation; and

WHEREAS, In the six years after its inception, the CCC opened 21 centers, coined the motto "hard work, low pay, and miserable conditions," and garnered national and international attention for its work; and

WHEREAS, With the elimination of its "sunset clause" in 1983, the CCC became a permanent state department and then consolidated various centers, added several dozen nonresidential satellite facilities, and created the California Conservation Corps Foundation; and

WHEREAS, In 1992 the focus of the corps' director was to make the CCC "bigger and better" through an entrepreneurial approach and to promote corpsmember development through education, emergency response, and conservation work; and

WHEREAS, Throughout its history, the CCC has established more than two dozen centers and sites throughout the state, in urban, rural, and suburban locations, has hired approximately 3,000 people each year from all over the state to reflect the diversity of California, and is now the only state program with year-round residential centers; and

WHEREAS, As a cost-effective labor force working for more than 250 local, state, and federal agencies, with crews tackling more than 900 projects annually, the CCC has generated more than \$26,000,000; and

WHEREAS, The CCC has contributed 69 million hours to natural resource work throughout the state by providing more than 9.6 million hours of emergency response on nearly every major California natural disaster since 1976, installing water-saving devices and water-efficient irrigation systems, removing turf in favor of drought-tolerant plants, and devoting more than 500,000 hours to fighting wildfires in 2015 alone; and

WHEREAS, Since the program began, the CCC has also planted more than 21 million trees throughout the state, built or maintained more than 10,840 miles of backcountry trails in California parks and forests, and completed more than 1.6 million hours of fish habitat improvement work and more than 11 million hours of work improving rural and urban parks and recreation areas; and

WHEREAS, In addition to natural resource work, the CCC has focused on advancing education and fostering a service ethic and has had more than 4,000 corpsmembers work to complete their high school diplomas in the last three years with several hundred young people earning scholarships to advance their education. Corpsmembers provided more than 74,000 community volunteer hours in 2015 alone; and

WHEREAS, The CCC has been honored with numerous awards, including the United Nations Environmental Programme Medal for leadership in engaging youth in environmental projects and the Times-Mirror Chevron Conservation Award for exceptional service to the cause of conservation, and has been recognized by Tom Brokaw of NBC Nightly News as the "best and longest-running program of its kind in the country"; and

WHEREAS, The CCC has significantly impacted corpsmember lives, and will continue to improve California's natural resources and recreational opportunities for many years to come; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes the contributions of the California Conservation Corps on the 40th anniversary of its creation, and all of its former and current corpsmembers, and supports the continued and steadfast efforts of current corpsmembers in the protection and restoration of California's environment and responding to disasters; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.