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AB-707 Clear Lake. (2017-2018)

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Assembly Bill No. 707

CHAPTER 842

An act to add Division 14.5 (commencing with Section 22085) to the Public Resources Code, relating to Clear Lake.

[Approved by Governor October 15, 2017. Filed with Secretary of State October 15, 2017.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 707, Aguiar-Curry. Clear Lake.

Existing law establishes in state government the Ventura-Los Angeles Mountain and Coastal Study Commission. Existing law requires the commission to make a detailed study of all factors that may significantly affect or cause irreversible modification of the present and future status of the Ventura-Los Angeles Mountain and Coastal Zone and its relationship with the region, as provided.

This bill would establish in the Natural Resources Agency, the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake. The bill would require the committee to consist of specified persons, including the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, or his or her designee. The bill would require the committee to meet quarterly for the purposes of discussion, reviewing research, planning, and providing oversight regarding the health of Clear Lake. The bill would require the committee to hold 2 meetings per year in the County of Lake. The bill would require the committee to provide an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature, as provided. The bill would authorize the committee to receive assistance and funds from public and private sources and to expend funds and award grants to conduct research upon appropriation by the Legislature.

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

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

SECTION 1. Division 14.5 (commencing with Section 22085) is added to the Public Resources Code, to read:

DIVISION 14.5. Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake

22085. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) According to California census data, Lake County, among the poorest counties in the State of California, is growing at a much slower economic rate than the majority of the state.

(b) Based on the 2016 Lake County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Clear Lake, in Lake County, is one of the top two contributors to the local economy, cited as "the cornerstone of the local visitor and recreation markets," mainly through boating and bass fishing tourism.

(c) Clear Lake is the oldest species-rich, warm water, natural lake in North America. The lake contributes to the surrounding ecosystems of native plants and animals, as well as species introduced by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Clear Lake and the surrounding environment is also a home to endangered and rare animal species.

(d) Clear Lake suffers from numerous environmental hazards that negatively affect the quality of the water and the lake's fish, including all of the following issues:

(1) The State Water Resources Control Board determined that the amount of mercury found in the lake, caused by runoff, fails to meet environmental standards and is in need of improvement.

(2) The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment concluded that the fish caught in Clear Lake, specifically the bass, are not safe for women and children to eat in abundance, or at all.

(3) The 2016 Lake County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy reports that the overgrowth of seasonal algae, cyanobacteria, and invasive weeds, such as hydrilla, cause a variety of health and habitat problems for the lake. The abundance of cyanobacteria blooms produce odor and surface scum, alter processed drinking water taste, and sometimes cause toxic conditions for pets, creating a seasonal decrease in tourism and depression in the local economy.

(e) Therefore, it is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would establish the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake. The committee will spearhead activities aimed at cleaning up the lake for environmental gains that will revitalize its regional significance so that it may once again be used for recreational purposes, thus creating jobs and inciting new economic development.

22086. There is hereby established in the Natural Resources Agency the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake.

22087. For purposes of this division, the following terms have the following meanings:

(a) "Agency" means the Natural Resources Agency.

(b) "Committee" means the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake.

22089. (a) The committee shall consist of at least nine members and shall include the following representatives:

(1) A representative from the University of California, Davis, to be appointed by the chancellor from the university.

(2) One member of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Lake or a designee appointed by the board of supervisors who is either an employee of the county or a resident of the county.

(3) Representatives from the tribes in the communities impacted by Clear Lake, to be appointed by their respective tribal councils.

(4) The secretary of the agency or his or her designee.

(5) A representative from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, to be appointed by that board.

(6) An expert from each of the following areas, to be appointed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Lake:

(A) Local economic development.

(B) Agriculture.

(C) Environment.

(D) A public water supplier that draws its drinking water supply from Clear Lake.

(b) The members of the committee shall serve at the pleasure of their respective appointing powers.

(c) The members shall serve without compensation, but each of the members shall be reimbursed for his or her actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of his or her duties.

(d) The chairperson of the committee shall be the secretary of the agency, or his or her designee.

22090. Members of the committee shall meet quarterly for the purposes of discussion, reviewing research, planning, and providing oversight regarding the health of Clear Lake. Research conducted for the committee shall go through a scientific and applied science process. Two meetings per year shall be held in the County of Lake.

22091. (a) Beginning January 1, 2019, the committee shall provide an annual report on its activities to the Governor and the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature relating to natural resources and local government.

(b) The first annual report submitted pursuant to subdivision (a) shall identify barriers to improved water quality in Clear Lake, the contributing factors causing the poor water quality, and the threats to wildlife. The report shall include recommendations on solutions to these issues, estimates of cost, and a plan for involving the local, state, and federal governments in funding for and implementation of lake restoration activities.

(c) A report submitted to the Legislature pursuant to this section shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

22092. (a) The committee may receive assistance and funds from public and private sources.

(b) Upon appropriation by the Legislature, the committee may expend funds and award grants to conduct research.