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AB-2278 Natural resources: biodiversity and conservation report. (2021-2022)

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Assembly Bill No. 2278

CHAPTER 349

An act to add Part 7 (commencing with Section 71450) to Division 34 of the Public Resources Code, relating to natural resources.

[Approved by Governor September 16, 2022. Filed with Secretary of State September 16, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2278, Kalra. Natural resources: biodiversity and conservation report.

By Executive Order No. N-82-20, Governor Gavin Newsom directed the Natural Resources Agency to combat the biodiversity and climate crises by, among other things, establishing the California Biodiversity Collaborative and conserving at least 30% of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030.

This bill would require the Natural Resources Agency, in implementing actions to achieve the goal to conserve at least 30% of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030 established by the executive order, to prioritize specified actions. The bill would require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to prepare and submit, beginning on or before March 31, 2024, an annual report to the Legislature on the progress made during the prior calendar year toward achieving that goal, as provided. The bill would also make related findings and declarations.

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

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) California faces biodiversity and climate crises, with nature on a steep decline and greenhouse gas emission reductions failing to occur at the rate scientists say is needed in the United States and worldwide.

(b) According to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, approximately 1,000,000 plant and animal species are at risk of extinction over the coming decades and more than 500,000 terrestrial species have insufficient habitat for long-term survival without proactive habitat restoration.

(c) In April 2019, 19 leading scientists authored "A Global Deal for Nature: Guiding principles, milestones, and targets," a time-bound, science-driven plan to save the diversity and abundance of life on Earth, which highlights the need, in part, for a target to formally protect at least 30 percent of the planet by 2030 (30x30) to prevent extinction.

(d) Nature, like the climate, is nearing a tipping point. The continued loss and degradation of the natural environment will push many ecosystems and wildlife species past the point of no return. This threatens the health and economic prosperity of California

and the United States and increases the costs of natural disasters.

(e) On October 7, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order No. N-82-20, which established the statewide goal of conserving 30 percent of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030 as part of the global effort to combat the biodiversity and climate crises.

(f) To help achieve 30x30 in California, on April 22, 2022, the Natural Resources Agency issued the report "Pathways to 30x30 California: Accelerating Conservation of California's Nature," which proposes 10 pathways and outlines specific actions designed to help prioritize and achieve the goal of conserving 30 percent of California's land and coastal waters by 2030. The report also stated that the "nature we all cherish is inaccessible or off-limits for underserved populations, including California Native American Tribes, people of color, and low-income communities. Historical seizures of land from people of color have had, and continue to have, long-standing, oppressive impacts that extend beyond the loss of the land itself. These impacts include the loss of natural resources of value, lack of access to affordable and reliable governmental services, and forced relocation to areas with fewer or lower quality natural resources."

SEC. 2. Part 7 (commencing with Section 71450) is added to Division 34 of the Public Resources Code, to read:

PART 7. BIODIVERSITY

71450. For the purposes of this part, the following definitions apply:

(a) "30x30 goal" means the goal to conserve 30 percent of state lands and coastal waters by 2030 established by Executive Order No. N-82-20.

(b) "Pathways to 30x30 Report" means the report entitled "Pathways to 30x30 California: Accelerating Conservation of California's Nature" that was issued by the Natural Resources Agency on April 22, 2022.

71451. In implementing the 10 pathways and specific near-term priority actions described in the Pathways to 30x30 Report to achieve the 30x30 goal, the Natural Resources Agency shall prioritize the following actions:

(a) Creating and facilitating the 30x30 Partnership, which includes the Ocean Protection Council, 30x30 Coordinating Committee, California Biodiversity Council, and California Biodiversity Network.

(b) Conducting public outreach to engage historically marginalized communities in the planning and implementation of the 30x30 goal.

(c) Identifying and promoting regional 30x30 goal efforts, including efforts that enhance equitable public access to nature.

(d) Supporting tribal engagement and leadership in implementing the 30x30 goal.

(e) Enhancing coordination between state, local, and federal agencies and departments to ensure that relevant state programs and actions are complementary to, and assist achieving, the 30x30 goal.

(f) Partnering with federal agencies to leverage strategic funding and resources in achieving the 30x30 goal.

71452. (a) Notwithstanding Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency shall prepare and submit, on or before March 31, 2024, and annually thereafter, a report to the Legislature on the progress made in the prior calendar year toward achieving the 30x30 goal. The report shall include, but is not limited to, all of the following information:

(1) The number of acres conserved in the prior calendar year and the number of acres remaining that need to be conserved to meet the 30x30 goal, including information on how that goal is conserving California's imperiled biodiversity.

(2) A summary of the progress made in the prior calendar year to advance toward the 30x30 goal and the near-term priority actions identified in the Pathways to 30x30 Report.

(3) How and where state funding that was expended in the prior calendar year was used in furtherance of the 30x30 goal, including the amount of funding expended for land and water conservation, science and research, public outreach and engagement, and managing, monitoring, and restoring conserved lands and water.

(4) The progress made by the 30x30 Partnership in the prior calendar year, including by the 30x30 Coordinating Committee, California Biodiversity Council, and California Biodiversity Network.

(5) The status of, and progress made by, CA Nature, which is the suite of interactive mapping and visualization tools developed pursuant to the 30x30 goal, and other scientific research or tools developed in the prior calendar year to support the 30x30 goal.

(6) The coordination between local, state, and federal agencies in support of the 30x30 goal.

(7) The progress made in the prior calendar year to address equity as part of the 30x30 goal, including state funding invested in community engagement, planning, acquisition and restoration, and expenditures for efforts by tribes or community-based groups.

(8) Identified barriers to implementing the 30x30 goal and recommended actions taken or needed to address those barriers.

(9) Interim benchmarks for the next calendar year to help meet the 30x30 goal and specific actions to implement the 30x30 goal.

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