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ACR-180 Special Districts Week. (2021-2022)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 180

CHAPTER 86

Relative to Special Districts Week.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 17, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 180, Bauer-Kahan. Special Districts Week.

This measure proclaims the week of May 15, 2022, to May 21, 2022, to be Special Districts Week.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Special districts are local governmental entities created by a community's residents, funded by those residents, and overseen by those residents, to provide specialized services and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Today, just over 2,000 independent special districts provide millions of Californians with essential services, including services related to water, sanitation and water recycling, fire protection, electricity, parks and recreation, health care, open space, ports and harbors, flood protection, mosquito abatement, cemeteries, resource conservation, airports, transit, road maintenance, veterans' facilities, and more; and

WHEREAS, Special districts first arose when San Joaquin Valley farmers needed a way to access their local water supply; and

WHEREAS, Under the Wright Act of 1887, the Turlock Irrigation District became California's first special district and made it possible for local farmers to intensify and diversify agriculture in California's central valley; and

WHEREAS, In the 20th century, special districts increased dramatically in both number and scope, and during the periods of prosperity and population growth that followed both world wars when the demand for all types of public services increased, and special districts met that need; and

WHEREAS, The statutory authorization for mosquito abatement districts was enacted in 1915 to combat the salt marsh mosquitoes around the San Francisco Bay and higher than average malaria cases in rural counties; and

WHEREAS, Fire protection districts can trace their origins to a 1923 state law, and in 1931 the Legislature authorized recreation districts, the forerunners of today's recreation and park districts; and

WHEREAS, Hospital districts arose in 1945 because of a statewide shortage of hospital beds. In 1994, the Legislature then expanded their breadth and renamed them health care districts in recognition of the diverse, modern needs of California's communities and the importance of proactive, affordable health care beyond the walls of a hospital building; and

WHEREAS, Although originally created to provide individual services, in 1961 the Legislature authorized special districts to address multiple needs, when it provided for multipurpose, community services districts; and

WHEREAS, Special districts vary in size and scope and serve diverse communities throughout California, from small rural neighborhoods, such as the Pine Cove Water District in the San Jacinto Mountains in the County of Riverside, to large urban regions, such as the East Bay Municipal Utility District spanning much of the Counties of Alameda and Contra Costa; and

WHEREAS, Local residents own special districts and govern them through locally elected or appointed boards. A series of sunshine laws ensure special districts remain transparent and accountable to the communities they serve, as these laws require open and public meetings, public access to records, regular audits, online posting of finances and compensation, and more; and

WHEREAS, To prevent overlapping services and ensure that local agencies are operating effectively and efficiently to meet community needs, special districts are formed, reviewed, consolidated, or dissolved through a methodical local process that includes the oversight of a local agency formation commission and the consent of local voters; and

WHEREAS, In 1969, several independent special districts formed a statewide association called the California Special Districts Association, commonly referred to as the CSDA, to promote good governance and improved essential local services through professional development, advocacy, and other services for all types of independent special districts; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature seeks to promote democratic institutions, community-based services, local control, and self-determination; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature seeks to promote and educate the public about their local public service providers, including awareness and understanding of special districts; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby proclaims the week of May 15, 2022, to May 21, 2022, inclusive, to be Special Districts Week and encourages all Californians to be involved in their communities and be civically engaged with their local government: and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.