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ACR-49 California Native Plant Month. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 49

CHAPTER 46

Relative to California Native Plant Month.

[Filed with Secretary of State May 03, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 49, Berman. California Native Plant Month.

This measure would proclaim the month of April, each year, as California Native Plant Month and would encourage community groups, schools, and citizens to undertake appropriate activities to promote the conservation, restoration, and appreciation of California's native plants.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, California's native plants provide unparalleled and unique iconic, economic, artistic, historical, and environmental values to the state; and

WHEREAS, California's over 6,000 native plant species, subspecies, and varieties, of which over 2,150 exist only in California, make California home to more diverse plant life than all other states; and

WHEREAS, California's native plants include some of the oldest, tallest, and most massive living things on Earth; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Fish and Wildlife recognizes nearly one-third of California's native plants as "special plants" that warrant additional protections; and

WHEREAS, California currently contends with over 1,000 nonnative plants, some of which compete with native plant species, degrade soil, facilitate erosion and catastrophic wildfire, and alter the state's natural landscapes; and

WHEREAS, Many native California plants have played a vital role in the history of our state and our nation, compelling Congress, the Legislature, and many communities to protect the beauty, power, and grandeur of California's natural landscapes; and

WHEREAS, California's first Native American nations have lived and thrived by their knowledge of native California plants, which has provided them with food, clothing, shelter, dyes, tools, medicines, and fuel for centuries; and

WHEREAS, California's citizens have consistently supported efforts to protect our natural landscapes, including numerous areas within the Coast Redwoods, the Sierra Nevada, and the Mojave Desert, spurring a conservation and environmental awareness that helps define California today; and

WHEREAS, California's native plants have played a vital role in inspiring the creation and management of our National Park Service, including President Lincoln's 1864 signing of the Yosemite and Mariposa Big Tree Grove Grant to California, designating

a park "to be held for public use, resort, and recreation ... inalienable for all time," and the adoption of the Sequoia cone as an insignia of the National Park Service; and

WHEREAS, In 1899, 1903, and 1904, members of the 9th Cavalry and 24th Infantry Buffalo Soldier regiments were dispatched to Sequoia and Yosemite national parks, where they protected giant sequoias from illegal logging, built trails and fences to enhance visitors' experiences among the giant trees while protecting park resources, and developed the first museum in a national park, a California native plant arboretum in Yosemite Valley; and

WHEREAS, An interest in protecting California's native plants has played a vital role in the creation of many California state and regional parks, including California's oldest state park, Big Basin, created in 1902 to protect old growth Coast Redwood forests; and

WHEREAS, The impact of California's landscape has influenced literary and artistic works, including the works of Octavia E. Butler, Gary Snyder, Frank Day, Mary Hunter Austin, Ansel Adams, and many other internationally known figures, furthering California's legacy; and

WHEREAS, California's native plants have provided and continue to provide foods, medicines, and other products, from the origins of California's strawberry industry to Taxol for cancer treatment; and

WHEREAS, California native plant horticulture is a thriving, vital, and growing industry employing thousands of Californians, and the benefits to water conservation and natural area restoration help provide economic stability within the state; and

WHEREAS, California's native plants provide essential watershed protections by helping to recharge natural aquifers, filtering water flowing through mountains, hills, and valleys, lessening erosion and flooding, and enabling efforts to beautify and renew our state; and

WHEREAS, Gardens and landscapes comprised of California native plants, being perfectly suited to California's climate and soil, require far fewer fertilizers, soil amendments, or pesticides, and use less water than conventional landscapes, exemplified by a City of Santa Monica experiment, in which a native plant garden using appropriate watering methods was shown to use nearly 220,000 fewer gallons of water than a similarly sized conventional garden, a 77 percent decrease in water use; and

WHEREAS, Restoring California native plants provides natural links to wild land areas, while introducing people to their beauty and instilling a greater understanding and appreciation for California's natural heritage; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes the essential value and importance of California native plants to our history, economy, landscape, and environment; and be it further

Resolved, That the California Legislature encourages community groups, schools, and citizens to undertake appropriate activities to promote native plant conservation and restoration, and to inform their neighbors and communities of the value of native plants in nature and in horticultural settings; and be it further

Resolved, That the California Legislature hereby declares the month of April, each year, as California Native Plant Month; and be it further

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