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HR-32 (2023-2024)

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REVISED JULY 06, 2023

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2023–2024 REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE RESOLUTION

NO. 32

Introduced by Assembly Member McKinnor

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Alanis, Bains, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bryan, Calderon, Wendy Carrillo, Chen, Connolly, Megan Dahle, Davies, Essayli, Flora, Mike Fong, Vince Fong, Friedman, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Grayson, Haney, Holden, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Jones-Sawyer, Kalra, Lackey, Low, Lowenthal, Maienschein, Mathis, Stephanie Nguyen, Pacheco, Joe Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Rendon, Reyes, Luz Rivas, Robert Rivas, Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Santiago, Schiavo, Soria, Ta, Ting, Valencia, Villapudua, Waldron, Wallis, Weber, Wicks, Wilson, and Zbur)

April 26, 2023

Relative to Black Conservation Week.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

HR 32, as introduced, McKinnor.

WHEREAS, The United States of America's history on race relations is a narrative of inspiring progresses and disappointing recesses that have, overall, furthered opportunities for racial minorities while reminding us that we have yet to realize racial parity; and

WHEREAS, Centuries of discrimination, in part, explain the important linkages between race and land acquisition, and race and conservation efforts, to this day; and

WHEREAS, The inequitable distribution of land, throughout American history, by multiple acts of Congress, set a foundation for economic inequality among Black Americans that continues to impact their participation in the environmental movement; and

WHEREAS, Black land loss, primarily the loss of agricultural lands, has resulted in Black farm owners owning 4,700,000 acres of farmland in 2017, compared with 16,000,000 acres of land in 1910; and

WHEREAS, This land loss helps to explain, at least partially, the distant relationship Black Americans have with nature, as measured by national forest and national park visitation statistics and economic participation; and

WHEREAS, The peak acquisition of 16,000,000 acres of land by Black Americans still represents a substantial triumph given the vast institutional hurdles faced by Black Americans throughout American history; and

WHEREAS, Black Americans were substantially disadvantaged in their efforts to participate in land grant programs because of citizenship requirements, though European immigrants did not face the same challenges; and

WHEREAS, Nonreservation Native Americans also experienced difficulties securing land patents due to the establishment of national forests in California without regard to indigenous settlement patterns; and

WHEREAS, During the 1867–68 session of the California Legislature, members of the California Assembly and Senate offered multiple resolutions that condemned Reconstruction and the possibilities it created for expanding suffrage and empowering people of color; and

WHEREAS, On March 3, 1867, Assembly Member E. C. Tully offered the last joint resolution that rejected the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Publications have noted that Black farmers lost approximately \$326,000,000,000 worth of land in the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, The ability to grow crops, raise livestock, and manage timberland afforded Black families not just food and financial security, but also an opportunity as practicing conservationists; and

WHEREAS, Among notable Black conservationists, George Washington Carver was a proponent of soil health and nutrition and advancing the practice of crop rotation to reduce depletion of soil nutrient; and

WHEREAS, Aside from agriculture, Captain Charles Young became the first Black superintendent of a national park when he and his army unit took on the stewardship of Sequoia National Park. As a leader of the Buffalo Soldiers, his efforts reduced animal poaching, deterred illegal logging, and reduced illegal sheep grazing within the park; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln Lewis was a successful businessman who founded the Afro-American Life Insurance Company and founded and curated American Beach at a time when beaches in the State of Florida did not allow cultural mixing and were closed to Black Americans; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Allen Allensworth purchased 800 acres of land in the County of Tulare on August 3, 1908, that eventually became a prosperous Black town whose citizens collectively generated \$5,000 in monthly income in 1913, equivalent to approximately \$34,000,000 in economic output annually in 2023 United States dollars; and

WHEREAS, Savonala “Savi” Horne, established the Land Loss Prevention Project to advocate for financially distressed and limited resources through litigation, public policy, and promotion of sustainable agricultural practices; and

WHEREAS, Black-owned outdoor leisure sites throughout the State of California were the recipients of intimidation and discriminatory actions, including, but not limited to, Bruce’s Beach in the City of Manhattan Beach, Inkwell Beach in the City of Santa Monica, and leisure sites in the City of Lake Elsinore; and

WHEREAS, Conservation is an important public policy goal that furthers the protection and restoration of our natural resources and biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, Conservation is also an economic construct that facilitates payments to landowners, as a condition of protection and restoration of land, that was equal to \$6,500,000,000 in 2018; and

WHEREAS, Black Conservation Week is established to bring awareness to the importance of diverse participation in the state’s climate goals, as landowners and economic participants, and to highlight the ways in which conservation efforts can be made more inclusive and equitable for all communities; and

WHEREAS, California’s 30x30 goal represents an opportunity to accelerate carbon sequestration, protect biodiversity, conserve scenic landscapes, and empower underrepresented groups to carry out this work as a form of redress for historic racial discrimination; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, That beginning with the week starting on May 7, 2023, the first full week of May of each year is declared as Black Conservation Week, to recognize the contributions and inclusion of Black individuals to the conservation movement; and be it further

Resolved, That the Assembly is committed to facilitating deeper connections to nature among underrepresented and historically oppressed groups by democratizing access to recreational and economic opportunities in the outdoors; and be it further

Resolved, That the Assembly urges the Department of Food and Agriculture, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Natural Resources Agency, and each department, board, bureau, division, conservancy, and other units of government under their purview to prioritize the provision of technical assistance, capacity building, and award grant funding to business enterprises owned by and nonprofit organizations led by socially disadvantaged groups, as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 512 of the Food and Agricultural Code; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution and to the Department of Food and Agriculture, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the Natural Resources Agency.

REVISIONS:
Heading—Line 2.