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**AB-452 Coastal recreation: designated state surfing reserves.** (2025-2026)

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**NO. 452**

Introduced by Assembly Member Irwin  
(Coauthors: *Assembly Members Kalra and Pellerin*)

February 06, 2025

An act to add Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 31450) to Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, relating to coastal resources.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 452, as amended, Irwin. Coastal recreation: designated state surfing reserves.

The California Coastal Act of 1976 requires oceanfront land suitable for recreational use to be protected for recreational use and development unless present and foreseeable future demand for public or commercial recreational activities that could be accommodated on the property is already adequately provided for in the area. Existing law establishes the State Coastal Conservancy with prescribed powers and responsibilities for implementing and administering various programs intended to preserve, protect, and restore the state's coastal areas. Existing law establishes surfing as the official state sport.

This bill would require, on or before July 1, 2026, the conservancy to establish criteria and an application process for purposes of designating an area of the coastline as a state surfing reserve, as defined. The bill would authorize a local government, as defined, to apply to the conservancy for purposes of designating an area of the coastline within the jurisdiction of the local government as a state surfing reserve. The bill would require the local government to include in its application, among other things, a description of the proposed surfing reserve. The bill would require the conservancy to approve the application if the area of the coastline meets the established criteria. The bill would require, once the application is approved, the conservancy to designate the area as a state surfing ~~reserve and to include this designation, where appropriate, in publications or maps that are issued by the conservancy.~~ *reserve. The bill would require the conservancy to, upon appropriation, publicize the state surfing reserve and partner with local governments to erect signs designating an approved surfing reserve, and would authorize the conservancy to accept donations for these purposes.* The bill would authorize the conservancy to revoke the designation if the surfing reserve no longer meets the established criteria. *The bill would require the conservancy to transmit notice of the approval of a designated surfing reserve to the Ocean Protection Council for consideration and inclusion in the state's 30x30 goal.*

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

~~SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to establish a process for state designated surfing reserves in order to recognize the cultural, historical, economic, and ecological importance of California's waves, surf zones, and their surrounding environments.~~

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

*(a) In October 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order No. N-82-20 to establish a state goal of conserving 30 percent of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030, known as the 30x30 goal.*

*(b) The 30x30 goal is intended to help conserve California lands and coastal waters through voluntary, collaborative action with partners across the state to meet three objectives: conserving and restoring biodiversity, expanding access to nature, and mitigating and building resilience to climate change.*

*(c) California's 30x30 commitment is part of a global effort to increase biodiversity conservation, including in the United States.*

*(d) In 2023, the Legislature enacted Senate Bill 337 (Chapter 392 of the Statutes of 2023) to codify into law the state goal to conserve 30 percent of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030.*

*(e) As of June 2024, 25.2 percent of California's lands and 16.2 percent of its coastal waters are under long-term conservation and care for the benefit of plant, animal, and human communities.*

*(f) California's coastline is rich with multiple areas long surfed by residents and tourists alike. According to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, California is home to the highest number of individuals who surf in the nation.*

*(g) In recognition of the importance and contributions of surfing to California, in 2018, the Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 1782 (Chapter 162 of the Statutes of 2018) designating surfing the official sport of California. That same year, the Legislature named September 20 as California Surfing Day.*

*(h) Designating areas of California's coast as surfing reserves will both maintain those surfing spots for future generations and can help the state advance its 30x30 goals through the conservation of those coastal waters.*

**SEC. 2.** Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 31450) is added to Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, to read:

### **CHAPTER 11.** ~~State-Designated~~ *State-Designated* Surfing Reserves

**31450.** For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Local government" means a city council or a county board of supervisors.

(b) "Surfing reserve" means an area designated pursuant to this chapter that would feature ~~protected~~ waves, surf zones, and surrounding ~~environments and would~~ *environments*, recognize the surfing area's environmental, cultural, and historical ~~significance~~; *significance, and meet the Ocean Protection Council's standard as an "other effective area-based conservation measure" as described in the "30x30 Decision-Making Framework for Coastal Waters."*

**31451.** (a) On or before July 1, 2026, the conservancy shall establish criteria and an application process for purposes of designating an area of the coastline as a state surfing reserve. The conservancy may require, as one of the criterion, a letter of recommendation for the designation of a state surfing reserve from the commission.

(b) When establishing criteria for purposes of the state surfing reserve designation, the conservancy shall consider factors, including, but not limited to, wave quality and consistency, surf culture and history, ~~and environmental characteristics~~; *environmental characteristics, and management priorities.*

**31452.** (a) After adopting a formal resolution, a local government may apply to the conservancy for purposes of designating an area of the coastline within the jurisdiction of the local government as a state surfing reserve.

(b) The local government shall include in its application ~~a~~ *all of the following:*

*(1) A description of the proposed surfing reserve, including the specific geographic location and ~~a~~ coastal access.*

*(2) A description of the cultural, historical, ecological, and economic value of the proposed surfing ~~reserve, in addition to any other eligibility criteria required by the conservancy.~~ reserve.*

*(3) Management priorities for the surfing reserve.*

*(4) Any other eligibility criteria required by the conservancy.*

(c) (1) The conservancy shall approve the application from the local government if the area of the coastline meets the criteria established pursuant to Section 31451.

(2) Once the application is approved, the conservancy shall designate the area as a state surfing ~~reserve and shall include this designation, where appropriate, in publications or maps that are issued by the conservancy.~~ *reserve.*

*(3) The conservancy shall, as appropriate, and upon appropriation by the Legislature, publicize approved surfing reserves and partner with local governments to erect signs designating approved surfing reserves.*

*(4) The conservancy may accept donations for the purposes of paragraph (3).*

(d) If, at any time, the conservancy determines that the designated state surfing reserve no longer meets the criteria established pursuant to Section 31451, the conservancy may revoke its designation as a state surfing reserve.

**31453.** *The conservancy shall transmit a notice of approval of designated state surfing reserves to the Ocean Protection Council for consideration and inclusion in the state's goal to conserve at least 30 percent of coastal waters pursuant to Senate Bill 337 (Chapter 392 of the Statutes of 2023).*