



Home	Bill Information	California Law	Publications	Other Resources	My Subscriptions	My Favorites
------	------------------	----------------	--------------	-----------------	------------------	--------------

AB-679 Department of Parks and Recreation: Big Basin Redwoods, Año Nuevo, and Butano State Parks.
(2025-2026)

SHARE THIS:  

Date Published: 10/06/2025 02:00 PM

Assembly Bill No. 679

CHAPTER 275

An act to amend Section 15853 of, and to add and repeal Section 15853.1 of, the Government Code, and to amend, repeal, and add Section 5006.1 of the Public Resources Code, relating to state parks.

[Approved by Governor October 03, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State October 03, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 679, Pellerin. Department of Parks and Recreation: Big Basin Redwoods, Año Nuevo, and Butano State Parks.

Existing law designates all parks, public campgrounds, monument sites, landmark sites, and sites of historical interest established or acquired by the state, or that are under its control, as the state park system, except as specified. Under existing law, the Department of Parks and Recreation controls the state park system, which is made up of units. Existing law authorizes the department to acquire title to or any interest in real property, including personal property incidental to the purchase of real property and options to purchase property, that the department deems necessary or proper for the extension, improvement, or development of the state park system. Existing law requires that all land and other real property to be acquired by or for any state agency be acquired by the State Public Works Board, except as specified.

This bill would additionally exempt from that requirement property acquired by the department for Big Basin Redwoods, Año Nuevo, and Butano State Parks, as specified, until January 1, 2033. The bill would require the Department of Parks and Recreation to submit a report, on or before January 1, 2028, January 1, 2030, and January 1, 2032, to the Legislature with specified content detailing the department's use of authority granted pursuant to the bill regarding the acquisition of real property interests without the State Public Works Board.

This bill would make legislative findings and declarations as to the necessity of a special statute for the Big Basin Redwoods, Año Nuevo, and Butano State Parks.

This bill would incorporate additional changes to Section 15853 of the Government Code and Section 5006.1 of the Public Resources Code proposed by SB 630 to be operative only if this bill and SB 630 are enacted and this bill is enacted last.

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) In 2020, the CZU Lightning Complex Wildfire burned the entirety of Big Basin Redwoods State Park and portions of Butano and Año Nuevo State Parks. In the wake of this catastrophic fire, the Department of Parks and Recreation initiated a planning

process to reimagine the future of Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

(b) The Department of Parks and Recreation's reimagining effort produced a vision for rebuilding Big Basin Redwoods State Park. This vision describes the need to acquire additional land to support the relocation of visitor-serving facilities previously located within some of the most ecologically sensitive areas of the park.

(c) The Department of Parks and Recreation's vision also describes the need to strengthen landscape connectivity, improve forest health, and enhance climate resiliency among and within Big Basin Redwoods, Butano, and Año Nuevo State Parks.

(d) There is often a need to move quickly to acquire lands deemed essential to a state park. Nongovernmental organizations are necessary partners in acquiring such high-priority lands in a timely manner. Yet, the lengthy process for completing the transfer of those lands to the Department of Parks and Recreation is a barrier to fulfilling the reimagined vision for the parks most impacted by the CZU Lightning Complex Wildfire.

(e) It is the public policy of this state that public agencies exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business and the proceedings of public agencies be conducted openly so that the public may remain informed. The transfer of land from private to public property is a matter of public interest and necessitates public disclosure before the closure of the transfer when appropriate.

(f) The key objectives of this act are to streamline the process of transferring high-priority lands to the Department of Parks and Recreation to fulfill the goals of enhanced visitor services, improved park operations, strengthened habitat connectivity, and enhanced climate resilience among Big Basin Redwoods, Butano, and Año Nuevo State Parks.

SEC. 2. Section 15853 of the Government Code is amended to read:

15853. (a) The board may select and acquire, in the name of and on behalf of the state, with the consent of the state agency concerned, the fee or any lesser right or interest in any real property necessary for any state purpose or function.

(b) If moneys are appropriated by the Legislature in the annual Budget Act for any fiscal year or by any other act for the acquisition of land or other real property, either (1) subject to this part or (2) for any state agency for whom property is acquired by the board, the moneys and acquisitions are subject to this part and the moneys shall be expended in accordance with this part, notwithstanding any other law.

(c) Notwithstanding any other law, all land and other real property to be acquired by or for any state agency, other than the Department of Transportation, the High-Speed Rail Authority, the Department of Water Resources, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Department of Parks and Recreation, until January 1, 2033, with respect to property acquired for Big Basin Redwoods, Año Nuevo, and Butano State Parks pursuant to Section 15853.1, the Public Employees' Retirement System, the State Teachers' Retirement System, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the State Lands Commission, except for property to be acquired for the State Lands Commission pursuant to an appropriation from the General Fund, and the State Coastal Conservancy with respect to acceptance of offers to dedicate public accessways made pursuant to the California Coastal Act of 1976 (Division 20 (commencing with Section 30000)) of, and for the purposes of Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 31411) of Division 21 of, the Public Resources Code, shall be acquired by the State Public Works Board in accordance with this part.

(d) (1) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), and except as provided in subdivision (c), the board shall acquire, on behalf of and for the Department of Parks and Recreation, in accordance with this part, any interests in real property, including options to purchase, which have been appraised, selected, and settled through purchase negotiations by the Department of Parks and Recreation pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 5006 of the Public Resources Code. Out of moneys appropriated for the acquisition of options to purchase, no more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) may be expended for the acquisition of any single option unless otherwise provided by the Legislature.

(2) Notwithstanding Section 15854, purchase negotiations for interests in real property for the state park system pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 5006 of the Public Resources Code shall be initiated within six months of the effective date of the act that appropriates funds for the acquisition. Purchase negotiations on all projects not proposed pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 5006 of the Public Resources Code shall be initiated within 12 months of the effective date of the act appropriating funds for the acquisition. Either title shall be conveyed or a written agreement to transfer title shall be executed within the appropriate authorization period unless the Department of Parks and Recreation formally abandons the acquisition before the conclusion of the appropriate authorization period. For purposes of this section, in order for the Department of Parks and Recreation to "formally abandon" an acquisition, it shall transmit written notification to the board of its intent not to proceed with the acquisition.

(3) The board, at any time during the periods specified in paragraph (2), may commence condemnation proceedings if it finds it to be appropriate. However, if during the appropriate authorization period title is not conveyed or a written agreement to transfer title is not signed, the acquisition has not been formally abandoned, or condemnation proceedings have not been commenced,

the Department of Parks and Recreation shall notify, by letter, the chair of the committee in each house of the Legislature that considers appropriations, the Chair of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, and the Members of the Legislature within whose district any part of the land or other real property is located of the status of the acquisition. For the purpose of this paragraph, condemnation proceedings shall be deemed to be commenced as of the date the board authorizes acquisition by condemnation.

(4) The board may schedule special meetings as are necessary to expedite the acquisition of options to purchase real property for the state park system.

(e) The board may acquire furnishings that the owner of the furnishings agrees to sell and that are contained within improvements acquired by the board. The cost of acquisition of furnishings shall be charged to the appropriation available for acquisition of the real property.

(f) This section does not apply to the acquisition of conservation easements made pursuant to the California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007 (Division 10.5 (commencing with Section 12200) of the Public Resources Code).

SEC. 2.5. Section 15853 of the Government Code is amended to read:

15853. (a) The board may select and acquire, in the name of and on behalf of the state, with the consent of the state agency concerned, the fee or any lesser right or interest in any real property necessary for any state purpose or function.

(b) If moneys are appropriated by the Legislature in the annual Budget Act for any fiscal year or by any other act for the acquisition of land or other real property, either (1) subject to this part or (2) for any state agency for whom property is acquired by the board, the moneys and acquisitions are subject to this part and the moneys shall be expended in accordance with this part, notwithstanding any other law.

(c) Notwithstanding any other law, all land and other real property to be acquired by or for any state agency, other than the Department of Transportation, the High-Speed Rail Authority, the Department of Water Resources, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Department of Parks and Recreation, until January 1, 2033, with respect to property acquired for Big Basin Redwoods, Año Nuevo, and Butano State Parks pursuant to Section 15853.1, and with respect to acquisitions set forth in paragraph (8) of subdivision (b) of Section 11005, the Public Employees' Retirement System, the State Teachers' Retirement System, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the State Lands Commission, except for property to be acquired for the State Lands Commission pursuant to an appropriation from the General Fund, and the State Coastal Conservancy with respect to acceptance of offers to dedicate public accessways made pursuant to the California Coastal Act of 1976 (Division 20 (commencing with Section 30000)) of, and for the purposes of Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 31411) of Division 21 of, the Public Resources Code, shall be acquired by the State Public Works Board in accordance with this part.

(d) (1) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), and except as provided in subdivision (c), the board shall acquire, on behalf of and for the Department of Parks and Recreation, in accordance with this part, any interests in real property, including options to purchase, which have been appraised, selected, and settled through purchase negotiations by the Department of Parks and Recreation pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 5006 of the Public Resources Code. Out of moneys appropriated for the acquisition of options to purchase, no more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) may be expended for the acquisition of any single option unless otherwise provided by the Legislature.

(2) Notwithstanding Section 15854, purchase negotiations for interests in real property for the state park system pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 5006 of the Public Resources Code shall be initiated within six months of the effective date of the act that appropriates funds for the acquisition. Purchase negotiations on all projects not proposed pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 5006 of the Public Resources Code shall be initiated within 12 months of the effective date of the act appropriating funds for the acquisition. Either title shall be conveyed or a written agreement to transfer title shall be executed within the appropriate authorization period unless the Department of Parks and Recreation formally abandons the acquisition before the conclusion of the appropriate authorization period. For purposes of this section, in order for the Department of Parks and Recreation to "formally abandon" an acquisition, it shall transmit written notification to the board of its intent not to proceed with the acquisition.

(3) The board, at any time during the periods specified in paragraph (2), may commence condemnation proceedings if it finds it to be appropriate. However, if during the appropriate authorization period title is not conveyed or a written agreement to transfer title is not signed, the acquisition has not been formally abandoned, or condemnation proceedings have not been commenced, the Department of Parks and Recreation shall notify, by letter, the chair of the committee in each house of the Legislature that considers appropriations, the Chair of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, and the Members of the Legislature within whose district any part of the land or other real property is located of the status of the acquisition. For the purpose of this paragraph, condemnation proceedings shall be deemed to be commenced as of the date the board authorizes acquisition by condemnation.

(4) The board may schedule special meetings as are necessary to expedite the acquisition of options to purchase real property for the state park system.

(e) The board may acquire furnishings that the owner of the furnishings agrees to sell and that are contained within improvements acquired by the board. The cost of acquisition of furnishings shall be charged to the appropriation available for acquisition of the real property.

(f) This section does not apply to the acquisition of conservation easements made pursuant to the California Forest Legacy Program Act of 2007 (Division 10.5 (commencing with Section 12200) of the Public Resources Code).

SEC. 3. Section 15853.1 is added to the Government Code, to read:

15853.1. (a) For the acquisition of fee title or any lesser right or interest in real property by the Department of Parks and Recreation with respect to property acquired for Big Basin Redwoods, Año Nuevo, and Butano State Parks pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 15853, all of the following apply:

(1) The purchase price for the land and other real property acquired by the Department of Parks and Recreation pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 15853 shall not exceed the fair market value of the property, as defined in Section 1263.320 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

(2) The fair market value of the property acquired pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be set forth in an appraisal that is prepared by a licensed real estate appraiser and approved by the Department of General Services pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 5006 of the Public Resources Code.

(3) The real property shall be appraised and an appraisal review completed before commencement of any purchasing negotiations.

(4) All contracts related to the acquisition of real property shall be reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services pursuant to Section 11005.

(5) Public notice shall be given, and a public meeting shall be held, pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 5006.1 of the Public Resources Code.

(b) This section does not exempt the Department of Parks and Recreation from complying with all other applicable laws and regulations.

(c) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2033, and as of that date is repealed.

SEC. 4. Section 5006.1 of the Public Resources Code is amended to read:

5006.1. (a) (1) Before submitting a proposal pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 5006, for an appropriation for the acquisition of real property in excess of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in value for any state park system project, the department shall hold a public meeting within the county in which the proposed project is located at which interested members of the public may comment on the proposed project. Notice of the meeting shall be published at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation within that county.

(2) (A) The department shall provide written notice of its intent to acquire the real property to the city or county, or both, having jurisdiction over the property, to the members of the Legislature who are the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, the chair of the budget subcommittee in each house having jurisdiction over resources, the chair in each house of the appropriate legislative policy committee, and the legislators within whose district the property proposed for acquisition is located, as early as possible in the acquisition process, but not less than 90 days from the date of acquisition. Within 30 days of receiving written notice of the proposed acquisition, a member of the city council or board of supervisors of the respective city or county, or a Member of the Legislature who has been notified pursuant to this subparagraph, may request that the department hold a public meeting regarding the acquisition of the property, if the acquisition is between five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) and five million dollars (\$5,000,000).

(B) The written notice of intent shall describe any potential impact that the acquisition may have on the department's efforts to provide park and recreational opportunities.

(b) With respect to real property in excess of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) that is not proposed to be acquired pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 5006, the department shall hold a public meeting within the county in which the real property is located, at which interested members of the public may comment on the proposed acquisition. Notice of the meeting shall be published at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation within the county. The department shall provide written notice of its intent to

acquire the real property to the city or county, or both, having jurisdiction over the property, as early as possible in the acquisition process.

(c) (1) With respect to real property acquired pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 15853 of the Government Code, the department shall do all of the following:

(A) Provide written notice to the county board of supervisors for the county in which the land is located of the intent to acquire the real property.

(B) No fewer than 30 days before the close of escrow, hold a meeting where the public may make comments regarding a specific transaction or transactions regarding the real property under consideration by the department.

(i) The meeting may take place via teleconference.

(ii) The meeting may take place at an otherwise planned public meeting hosted by the department.

(C) No fewer than 10 days before the meeting described in subparagraph (B), notify the public of the meeting by posting information about the meeting on the department's internet website on a webpage visible to the public and notifying all owners of record of adjacent parcels of land.

(i) The department shall make a good faith effort to notify owners of record identified pursuant to this subparagraph by using existing distribution lists or available contact information. Owners of record may be contacted electronically or by mail.

(ii) In all circumstances, the meeting notice shall clearly state the specific real property transaction on which the public may comment at the meeting and an explanation of the proposed use of the land by the department.

(iii) The department shall make a good faith effort to locate current contact information for all adjacent landowners displaced due to the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire.

(iv) The department may consult with the relevant county agencies or officials to locate contact information for landowners.

(2) Subparagraphs (B) and (C) of paragraph (1) shall not apply to properties that, on all boundaries, are adjacent to state-owned lands.

(3) (A) On or before January 1, 2028, and on or before January 1 of every even-numbered year thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the Legislature, in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code, detailing the department's use of authority granted under subdivision (c) of Section 15853 of the Government Code for the acquisition without the State Public Works Board of fee title or any lesser right or interest in real property by the department.

(B) A report submitted pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall, for the reporting period, include, but not be limited to, a summary of each transaction conducted, any associated costs or savings as a result of the transaction, and duration of the real estate transaction.

(d) This section does not apply to any real property to be acquired by grant, gift, devise, or bequest.

(e) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2033, and as of that date is repealed.

SEC. 4.5. Section 5006.1 of the Public Resources Code is amended to read:

5006.1. (a) (1) Before submitting a proposal pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 5006, for an appropriation for the acquisition of real property in excess of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in value for any state park system project, the department shall hold a public meeting within the county in which the proposed project is located at which interested members of the public may comment on the proposed project. Notice of the meeting shall be published at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation within that county.

(2) (A) The department shall provide written notice of its intent to acquire the real property to the city or county, or both, having jurisdiction over the property, to the members of the Legislature who are the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, the chair of the budget subcommittee in each house having jurisdiction over resources, the chair in each house of the appropriate legislative policy committee, and the legislators within whose district the property proposed for acquisition is located, as early as possible in the acquisition process, but not less than 90 days from the date of acquisition. Within 30 days of receiving written notice of the proposed acquisition, a member of the city council or board of supervisors of the respective city or county, or a Member of the Legislature who has been notified pursuant to this subparagraph, may request

that the department hold a public meeting regarding the acquisition of the property, if the acquisition is between five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) and five million dollars (\$5,000,000).

(B) The written notice of intent shall describe any potential impact that the acquisition may have on the department's efforts to provide park and recreational opportunities.

(b) With respect to real property in excess of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) that is not proposed to be acquired pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 5006, the department shall hold a public meeting within the county in which the real property is located, at which interested members of the public may comment on the proposed acquisition. Notice of the meeting shall be published at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation within the county. The department shall provide written notice of its intent to acquire the real property to the city or county, or both, having jurisdiction over the property, as early as possible in the acquisition process.

(c) (1) With respect to real property acquired pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 15853 of, and paragraph (8) of subdivision (b) of Section 11005 of, the Government Code, the department shall do all of the following:

(A) Provide written notice to the county board of supervisors for the county in which the land is located of the intent to acquire the real property.

(B) No fewer than 30 days before the close of escrow, hold a meeting where the public may make comments regarding a specific transaction or transactions regarding the real property under consideration by the department.

(i) The meeting may take place via teleconference.

(ii) The meeting may take place at an otherwise planned public meeting hosted by the department.

(C) No fewer than 10 days before the meeting described in subparagraph (B), notify the public of the meeting by posting information about the meeting on the department's internet website on a webpage visible to the public and notifying all owners of record of adjacent parcels of land.

(i) The department shall make a good faith effort to notify owners of record identified pursuant to this subparagraph by using existing distribution lists or available contact information. Owners of record may be contacted electronically or by mail.

(ii) In all circumstances, the meeting notice shall clearly state the specific real property transaction on which the public may comment at the meeting and an explanation of the proposed use of the land by the department.

(2) With respect to real property acquired pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 15853 of the Government Code, for purposes of the notification in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (1), the following:

(A) The department shall also make a good faith effort to locate current contact information for all adjacent landowners displaced due to the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire.

(B) The department may consult with the relevant county agencies or officials to locate contact information for landowners.

(3) Subparagraphs (B) and (C) of paragraph (1) shall not apply to properties that, on all boundaries, are adjacent to state-owned lands.

(4) (A) On or before January 1, 2028, and on or before January 1 of every even-numbered year thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the Legislature, in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code, detailing the department's use of authority granted under subdivision (c) of Section 15853 of, and paragraph (8) of subdivision (b) of Section 11005 of, the Government Code for the acquisition without the State Public Works Board or without the approval of the Director of General Services, as applicable, of fee title or any lesser right or interest in real property by the department.

(B) A report submitted pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall, for the reporting period, include, but not be limited to, a summary of each transaction conducted, any associated costs or savings as a result of the transaction, and duration of the real estate transaction.

(d) This section does not apply to any real property to be acquired by grant, gift, devise, or bequest.

(e) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2033, and as of that date is repealed.

SEC. 5. Section 5006.1 is added to the Public Resources Code, to read:

5006.1. (a) (1) Before submitting a proposal pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 5006, for an appropriation for the acquisition of real property in excess of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in value for any state park system project, the department shall hold a

public meeting within the county in which the proposed project is located at which interested members of the public may comment on the proposed project. Notice of the meeting shall be published at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation within that county.

(2) (A) The department shall provide written notice of its intent to acquire the real property to the city or county, or both, having jurisdiction over the property, to the members of the Legislature who are the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, the chair of the budget subcommittee in each house having jurisdiction over resources, the chair in each house of the appropriate legislative policy committee, and the legislators within whose district the property proposed for acquisition is located, as early as possible in the acquisition process, but not less than 90 days from the date of acquisition. Within 30 days of receiving written notice of the proposed acquisition, a member of the city council or board of supervisors of the respective city or county, or a Member of the Legislature who has been notified pursuant to this subparagraph, may request that the department hold a public meeting regarding the acquisition of the property, if the acquisition is between five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) and five million dollars (\$5,000,000).

(B) The written notice of intent shall describe any potential impact that the acquisition may have on the department's efforts to provide park and recreational opportunities.

(b) With respect to real property in excess of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) that is not proposed to be acquired pursuant to subdivision (f) of Section 5006, the department shall hold a public meeting within the county in which the real property is located, at which interested members of the public may comment on the proposed acquisition. Notice of the meeting shall be published at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation within the county. The department shall provide written notice of its intent to acquire the real property to the city or county, or both, having jurisdiction over the property, as early as possible in the acquisition process.

(c) This section does not apply to any real property to be acquired by grant, gift, devise, or bequest.

(d) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2033.

SEC. 6. The Legislature finds and declares that a special statute is necessary and that a general statute cannot be made applicable within the meaning of Section 16 of Article IV of the California Constitution because of the damage caused by the CZU Lightning Complex Wildfire in 2020 to the Big Basin Redwoods, Año Nuevo, and Butano State Parks.

SEC. 7. (a) Section 2.5 of this bill incorporates amendments to Section 15853 of the Government Code proposed by both this bill and Senate Bill 630. That section of this bill shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2026, (2) each bill amends Section 15853 of the Government Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after Senate Bill 630, in which case Section 2 of this bill shall not become operative.

(b) Section 4.5 of this bill incorporates amendments to Section 5006.1 of the Public Resources Code proposed by both this bill and Senate Bill 630. That section of this bill shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2026, (2) each bill amends Section 5006.1 of the Public Resources Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after Senate Bill 630, in which case Section 4 of this bill shall not become operative.