

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: 04/17/2012
POSITION: Oppose

BILL NUMBER: SB 1249
AUTHOR: Wolk, Lois

BILL SUMMARY: Department of Fish and Game: lands: expenditures

Existing law authorizes the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to accept donations of land or otherwise acquire lands or non-marine waters for several purposes including wildlife management areas, public shooting grounds, and ecological reserves. DFG may charge fees for the privilege of using these specific lands.

This bill would authorize DFG to enter into agreements with nonprofit conservation groups to manage and operate department lands and require the purchase of an entry permit for access to department lands for uses other than hunting or fishing. The bill would require that 35 percent of funds generated pursuant to this bill are spent on the lands from which the fees were collected.

FISCAL SUMMARY

The bill may allow expansion of on-site fee collection to 408 DFG properties throughout the state, many of which are in remote areas and have no on-site staff. If on-site fee collection expands to all 408 properties, DFG estimates it would need 48 additional staff for fee collection, enforcement and administration. The department estimates it would also need two positions to develop new regulations regarding entry fees and public use, prepare management plans, and conduct environmental review. To implement the bill for all 408 properties, DFG estimates it would cost \$19,068,000 for the first year and \$7,908,000 ongoing. To the extent that DFG chooses to collect fees at fewer properties, the implementation costs would be reduced.

As many of the facilities are unmanned, the precise number of visitors to DFG lands each year is unknown. Based on a previous report provided to the Legislature, DFG estimates the current revenue from non-hunting and non-fishing visitors each year at \$2,587,000. Assuming that two-thirds of all visitors purchase entry permits at a cost of \$4.32, requiring permits for admission to all DFG-owned lands would result in revenue from entry permits increasing to an estimated \$7,450,560. The bill requires the revenue generated from entry permits to be deposited into the Fish and Game Preservation Fund (FGPF) and the funding to be continuously appropriated for the management of department lands.

The bill would require reimbursement to local agencies for implementation costs if the Commission on State Mandates determines this act contains costs mandated by the state. However, it does not appear that the provisions of this bill would result in any additional costs to local governments.

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance (Finance) is opposed to the bill as it is unnecessary and conflicts with existing DFG statutes. Existing statute identifies the purposes of DFG lands and authorizes DFG to adopt regulations for the management and operation of those lands and set fees for any visitor use. Furthermore, if DFG had on-site fee collection at all 408 properties the estimated revenue from entry permits would not cover the costs for DFG to implement the bill. The additional costs would be borne by the FGPF which is structurally imbalanced.

Analyst/Principal (0634) K.Gmeinder	Date	Program Budget Manager Karen Finn	Date
Department Deputy Director		Date	
Governor's Office:	By:	Date:	Position Approved _____ Position Disapproved _____
BILL ANALYSIS			Form DF-43 (Rev 03/95 Buff)

Wolk, Lois

04/17/2012

SB 1249

COMMENTS (continued)

Finance notes Chapter 424, Statutes of 2010 (AB 2376), required the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to convene a committee to develop and submit to the Governor and Legislature a strategic vision for DFG by July 1, 2012. Without a final strategic vision plan, the bill is premature as new or amended regulations could be recommended by the committee regarding permit requirements, fees, and many other issues.

According to staff at the author's office, the bill is intended to broaden the revenue base for DFG-owned lands to all individuals using the lands. The bill would recover costs and increase revenues derived from users of Department lands who are not fishing and hunting. However, DFG is currently in the process of reviewing the regulations that pertain to public use of DFG lands. The proposed regulations would address the definition of compatible uses and the rules and fees for special use permits. DFG is also in the process of evaluating its user fee structure and the feasibility of expanding fee collection to additional sites.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)						Fund Code
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)						
	CO	PROP						
	RV	98	FC	2011-2012	FC	2012-2013	FC	2013-2014
3600/Dept FishGam	SO	No	C	--	C	9,534	C	13,488
1215/Fish GameLic	RV	No	U	--	U	2,432	U	4,864
<u>Fund Code</u>	<u>Title</u>							
0200	Fish and Game Preservation Fund							