

Proposed by the Department of Parks and Recreation New California Water Plan Objective

California should protect and enhance public access to the state's waterways, lakes and beaches.

Authority:

- United States Constitution Commerce Clause
- Clean Water Act
- California Constitution Article 10, Section 4
- The public trust doctrine
- An original purpose of the State Water Project
- Davis-Dolwig Act
- California Coastal Act
- Delta Reform Act
- California Public Resources Code, Section 6301
- California Civil Code, Section 830
- California Harbors and Navigation Code, Section 100
- Water Code 12840-12842

The State has an imperative to act, due to the following threats to longstanding rights of access and use of the State's water bodies:

- **CLIMATE CHANGE.** Rising seas will constrict public access to coastal beaches and wetlands, as well as change sedimentation and wave patterns. Coastal armoring is a particular threat to California's beaches. Reduced snowpack will constrict popular snow sports and may reduce surface water available for summer recreation in lakes, streams and rivers.
- **OVERCROWDED, DEGRADED FACILITIES.** California's increasing population face inadequate, crowded recreational opportunities, leading to carrying capacity impacts on our resources. Park staffing reductions and degraded facilities threaten to impact popular access points. Aging State Water Project recreation facilities continue to degrade and are being removed from service. Existing and proposed urban development, transportation infrastructure, water resources infrastructure and agricultural land use increasingly impair navigation and/or limit access to many traditional access points.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE.** Degraded water-associated habitat reduces wildlife (including hunting and fishing stocks), visual enjoyment and other public trust values. Impaired water quality limits body contact sports and fishing opportunities. Invasive species can significantly reduce boating access.
- **PUBLIC HEALTH HAZARDS.** The rising obesity epidemic is affecting many California families, especially those in disadvantaged communities with limited access to outdoor recreation. California's children have less contact with California's natural resources than ever before. When safe facilities are not provided, recreationists use unsafe access points, trespass on agricultural land and park along busy roadways.
- **ECONOMIC MALAISE.** The outdoor recreation and tourism industry is a significant economic sector in the state, often associated with water-associated activities. It creates public and private-sector jobs and generates significant tax revenue. Access to recreation and open space supports the California lifestyle and associated property values.