AB 1511 (Bloom)
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

PROBLEM

This measure would update statutes governing the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and replace the State Water Resources Control Board with the state Coastal Conservancy as the administrative oversight agency for the Commission.

EXISTING LAW

Current law (Division 7 commencing with 13000 of the Water Code) establishes the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) that provides administrative services to the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission. The SWRCB is a water quality control agency primarily focused on improving water quality and protecting the beneficial uses of the waters of the state.

Current law (Division 21 commencing with Section 31000 of the Public Resources Code), establishes the State Coastal Conservancy to protect and improve natural lands and waterways, to help people enjoy the outdoors, and to sustain local economies along California's coast. The Conservancy is a non-regulatory agency that supports projects to protect coastal resources and increase opportunities for the public to enjoy the coast.

BACKGROUND

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, following extensive research and coordination, adopted and updated the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Plan in October 2018 now identified as the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. This plan identifies the goals and objectives for restoring and enhancing the Bay and its watershed.

As the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission moves forward with a focus on implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, the State Coastal Conservancy, which has supported implementation of the Bay Restoration Plan through grants and other actions, is the appropriate state agency to administer the affairs of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission.

SOLUTION

AB 1511 requires the Secretary for Environmental Protection, the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, the State Coastal Conservancy, and the Chair of the Bay Watershed Council of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that ensures greater coordination of state programs affecting Santa Monica Bay, and that delineates the authority of that commission, and its governance structure with respect to the implementation of those state programs.

The bill further provides that the commission membership shall be prescribed in the memorandum of understanding, and shall include federal, state, and local public agency officials and employees, and representatives of other stakeholder interests.

Finally, the bill updates and specifies the purposes of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission.

SUPPORT

The Bay Foundation (Sponsor)

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