

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: March 19-20, 2026

From: TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

Reference Number: 2.5c.(5), Action

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Subject: Allocation for the California Natural Resources Agency's
2025 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program, Resolution FP-25-88

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve an allocation of \$6,507,706 to fund eight projects included in the 2025 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program, as provided in Attachment A.

Issue:

Reference Number 4.17 requested the Commission's approval of the 2025 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program to program funding for eight projects totaling \$6,507,706. This agenda item, Reference Number 2.5c.(5), requests the Commission allocate funds for the projects programmed under Reference Number 4.17. The California Natural Resources Agency requests allocation as follows:

- 38 percent of funds for three projects in Northern California, totaling \$2,497,806.
- 62 percent of funds for five projects in Southern California, totaling \$4,008,900.

As the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency, the California Natural Resources Agency determined that seven projects are categorically exempt from CEQA and filed Notices of Exemption for each project. One project received a Secretarial Suspension Authorization pursuant to the Governor's March 1, 2025, Emergency Proclamation, authorizing the project to proceed subject to compliance with the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan. Five of the recommended projects advance California's 30x30 goal to conserve 30 percent of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030.

Funds for this allocation consist of \$1,700,000 remaining from the Budget Act of 2025 and \$4,808,217 in previously appropriated funds from prior Budget Acts. The Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program experienced project cost savings from prior cycles. Those previously appropriated and unexpended funds are proposed for deallocation pursuant to Item 4.11 on this agenda and, if approved by the Commission, will be available for the 2025 Program.

Background:

The Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program was established by the state Legislature in 1989 to fund environmental enhancement and mitigation projects directly or indirectly related to the environmental impact of modifying new or existing transportation facilities.

Pursuant to Streets and Highways Code Section 164.56, seven million dollars (\$7,000,000) is appropriated to the program from the State Highway Account. The Commission awards annual grants to fund projects as recommended by the California Natural Resources Agency.

The California Natural Resources Agency establishes program guidelines, determines eligibility, evaluates applications, and recommends projects for Commission approval. Eligible projects must fit at least one of the following three categories:

1. **Urban Forestry** - projects designed to offset vehicular emissions of carbon dioxide.
2. **Resource Lands** - projects for acquisition or enhancement of resource lands to mitigate the loss of, or the detriment to, resource lands lying within the right-of-way acquired for proposed transportation improvements.
3. **Mitigation Projects Beyond the Scope of the Lead Agency** - projects to mitigate the impact of proposed transportation facilities or to enhance the environment, where the ability to effectuate the mitigation or enhancement measures is beyond the scope of the lead agency responsible for assessing the environmental impact of the proposed transportation improvement.

Pursuant to Streets and Highways Code Sections 187 and 188, the California Natural Resources Agency targets 40 percent of total funding to projects in northern counties and 60 percent to projects in southern counties, subject to variation based on project applications.

[Executive Order N-82-20](#) established California's [30x30](#) goal to conserve 30 percent of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030.

On March 1, 2025, the Governor [proclaimed a state of emergency](#) due to catastrophic wildfire risk, authorizing the temporary suspension of specified statutory requirements to expedite critical fuels reduction projects. The California Natural Resources Agency Secretary may issue a Secretarial Suspension Authorization pursuant to this proclamation to authorize projects to proceed subject to compliance with the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan.

At its January 2026 meeting, the Commission allocated a total of \$18,835,000 in partial programming for the 2025 grant cycle and advanced partial programming for the 2026 through 2028 grant cycles to support Phase 2 of the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing project in Los Angeles County.

Financial Resolution:

Resolved that \$6,507,706 be allocated to fund eight projects included in the 2025 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program, as identified in Attachment A.

Funds for this allocation consist of \$1,700,000 remaining from the Budget Act of 2025 and \$4,808,217 in previously appropriated funds from prior Budget Acts. The Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program experienced project cost savings from prior cycles.

Those previously appropriated and unexpended funds are proposed for deallocation pursuant to Item 4.11 on this agenda and, if approved by the Commission, will be available for the 2025 Program.

Attachment:

- Attachment A: California Natural Resources Agency's Proposed 2025 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program - List of Projects for Allocation

2025 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program Recommendations

Applicant	Project	County	Requested	Recommended	Cumulative	Project Description	30x30
SOUTHERN PROJECTS							
Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority	Saddle Peak Springs Acquisition	Los Angeles	\$ 1,500,000.00	\$ 1,500,000.00	\$ 1,500,000.00	Recommend Full Funding. Project to acquire the 54.4-acre Saddle Peak Springs property. The acquisition will protect a property with dramatic coastal and mountain views, rare spring-fed ponds, high biodiversity, adjacent trail connections and wildlife connectivity.	Yes
Koreatown Youth & Community Center	Expo Line Canopy Revival Initiative	Los Angeles	\$ 595,000.00	\$ 595,000.00	\$ 2,095,000.00	Recommend Full Funding. Project to enhance environmental quality and community resilience in neighborhoods adjacent to the LA Metro Expo Line by planting 300 new street trees, including 30 new tree wells and the removal of concrete.	No
TreePeople	Lillian Street Elementary: Alameda Corridor Mitigation Project	Los Angeles	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 2,845,000.00	Recommend Full Funding. Project at Lillian Street Elementary School to remove 30,000 square feet of asphalt, plant 60 trees and 539 native plants, and add two outdoor learning gardens and a grass play area.	No
Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County	McMillan Ranch Conservation Easements	San Luis Obispo	\$ 1,003,900.00	\$ 1,003,900.00	\$ 3,848,900.00	Recommend Full Funding. Project to permanently protect 1,645 acres of intact grassland, oak woodland, and riparian habitat through the acquisition of two contiguous conservation easements in eastern San Luis Obispo County.	Yes
County of Santa Barbara Public Works	Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Habitat Enhancement Project	Santa Barbara	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 4,008,900.00	Recommend Full Funding. Project to restore five acres of dune habitat at Rancho Guadalupe Dunes County Park. Includes removal of invasive species such as iceplant, planting native species, and installation of sand fencing to protect native dune vegetation to enhance biodiversity and the dune ecosystem.	Yes
5 SOUTHERN PROJECTS (62% OF TOTAL FUNDING)			\$ 4,008,900.00	\$ 4,008,900.00			
NORTHERN PROJECTS							
Northcoast Regional Land Trust	Black Dog Woodlands	Humboldt	\$ 1,500,000.00	\$ 1,500,000.00	\$ 5,508,900.00	Recommend Full Funding. Project to acquire a 554-acre conservation easement to permanently protect intact headwater springs, riparian areas, wetlands, and upland forests in the Mad River watershed.	Yes

2025 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program Recommendations

Applicant	Project	County	Requested	Recommended	Cumulative	Project Description	30x30
mak-warép Ohlone Land Conservancy, Inc.	Ohlone Cultural Gardens Restoration & Mitigation Project	Contra Costa	\$ 498,806.00	\$ 498,806.00	\$ 6,007,706.00	Recommend Full Funding. Project to establish four Ohlone cultural garden plots at UC Berkeley's Russell Research Station, reconnect the Chochenyo Ohlone community to ancestral lands, and revitalize traditional stewardship practices. Site restoration includes invasive species removal and reintroduction of culturally significant native plants across three acres, half-acre of riparian restoration, six bilingual interpretive signs, and an outdoor gathering space to teach Traditional Ecological Knowledge and wildfire literacy.	Yes
City of Berkeley	Trees Make Life Better	Alameda	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 6,507,706.00	Recommend Partial Funding. Project to plant 1,000 trees throughout West Berkeley, Aquatic Park, and Berkeley Waterfront. Project will include new tree wells and removal of concrete where necessary. Staff and resident volunteers will provide two years of establishment water.	No
3 NORTHERN PROJECTS (38% OF TOTAL FUNDING)			\$ 2,748,806.00	\$ 2,498,806.00			
8 PROJECTS - TOTAL RECOMMENDED				\$ 6,507,706.00			