



Assemblyman Brian Nestande

42nd District

AB 1096

Salton Sea License Plates

What specifically does this bill do?

This measure will create the Salton Sea Specialty License Plate Fund, and will authorize the Department of Fish & Wildlife to apply to the DMV for issuance of special Salton Sea environmental license plates for motor vehicles in California.

In addition to the regular fees for an original registration or renewal, the original issuance of the plates will be \$50; for a renewal of registration, \$40; for transfer of plates to another vehicle, \$15; and for each replacement plate \$35. After deducting standard administrative fees, the remaining revenue derived shall be deposited in the Salton Sea Restoration Account to be used by the Salton Sea Joint Powers Authority.

What is the background of this proposal?

There are several specialty license plates available in California ranging from environmental and collegiate, to veteran's organizations. Each of these specialty license plates helps raise funds for the specified cause while at the same time, increasing public awareness.

The California Lake Tahoe license plate program has been one of the most successful since its inception in 1996. Over 96% of the funds from purchase and renewal fees for Lake Tahoe License plates are used to build, maintain, and protect the trails, water quality, wildlife and forest health of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Since the program started, the license plate fund has generated more than \$12 million in revenue.

The Salton Sea is largest inland lake in California. The transfer of Colorado River water from Imperial Valley to San Diego County will reduce the amount of agriculture runoff that currently flows into the Sea. Primarily due to the change in water use, the Sea is beginning to dry up. This has severely impaired air quality, wildlife habitat, and has increased the salinity of the remaining Sea, thereby killing off most aquatic life. Currently, the state has an obligation to restore the Sea. The restoration plan that has been recommended by the Resources Secretary is approximately \$8.9 billion. Despite this obligation, action has not been taken and the Sea and surrounding community is suffering. The Salton Sea Specialty License Plate program will help infuse the Salton Sea Restoration Fund with vital resources to help address the restoration efforts.

The revenue derived from the license plate program might be minimal when compared to the total cost of the restoration project. However, any and all funding will be an asset to the Salton Sea. Additionally, the Salton Sea can use the funds raised to leverage grants and other matching funds for the project. Once the plates are issued, it will provide a continuous funding stream for related restoration projects and studies in future years.

What is the problem to be addressed?

California's fiscal obligations are on the rise and residents already face a very high tax burden. This proposal allows Californian's to support a specific environmental cause, and helps raise public awareness for the effort. There was a time when the Salton Sea attracted more visitors per year than Yosemite. Decades of neglect have had a negative impact on the wildlife and local residents.



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By looking at every viable solution to raise these crucial funds that are needed, we can protect the residents of the Coachella Valley and its economic vitality, restore a vibrant ecosystem that benefits countless species, and establish a new recreational resource that will help draw new visitors to our region to enjoy all that our desert has to offer.

Which code section(s) does this bill affect?

An act to amend add Section 5162 to the Vehicle Code.

Support

Indio Chamber of Commerce
98 Individual Constituents
City of Palm Springs
Palm Desert Chamber of Commerce
Coachella Valley Economic Partnership
Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau

Opposition

None on File

Who is the staff contact for this bill?

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