

BILL ANALYSIS

RESOURCES AGENCY

DEPARTMENT California Coastal Commission	AUTHOR Strom-Martin	BILL NUMBER AB 809
SPONSORED BY California Coastal Commission	RELATED BILLS	DATE LAST AMENDED

SUBJECT
Special Environmental Design License Plates

SUMMARY

AB 809 would require one-half of the fees that are currently deposited in the California Environmental License Plate Fund to instead be deposited in the License Plate Coastal Access Account, which the bill would create, in the State Coastal Conservancy Fund of 1984. The bill would require the money in this new account to be available, upon appropriation, to the State Coastal Conservancy for grants to public agencies and nonprofit entities or organizations for the operation and maintenance of coastal accessways.

The Commission voted to support AB 809 on March 10, 1999.

ANALYSIS

Existing Law: Existing law requires the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue special interest license plates that bear a design depicting a California coastal motif (whale tail plate). Currently, funds generated by the sale of the whale tail plate are distributed equally between the Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF) and the California Beach and Coastal Enhancement Fund (CBCEF). Funds in the ELPF are appropriated to various environmental agencies and projects. The Coastal Commission does not receive any funding from the ELPF. CBCEF funds are appropriated to the Commission's Adopt-A-Beach and coastal public education programs each year through the budget process.

Changes Proposed by this Bill: This bill would amend Section 5067 of the Vehicle Code to direct the half of the funds generated by the sale of the coastal license plate that is currently deposited in the ELPF to the Coastal Access Account in the Coastal Conservancy Fund. Fees in the Access Account are used to provide grants to nonprofit and public agencies for the maintenance and operation of new coastal accessways.

Discussion: One of the Coastal Act's primary mandates calls for the protection and development of public access and recreational opportunities to and along the coast. In carrying out this mandate, the Commission has, in appropriate circumstances, applied conditions to coastal development permits that require permit applicants to record an Offer to Dedicate an access easement (OTD). These OTD's constitute mitigation for the adverse impacts of the new development on public access opportunities. OTD's become public accessways when an entity acceptable to the Commission's Executive Director agrees to operate and maintain the accessway.

DEPARTMENTS THAT MAY BE AFFECTED
California Coastal Commission, Coastal Conservancy

STATE MANDATE

GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENT

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

- S O
 SA OUA
 N NP
 NA NAR
 DEFER TO _____

AGENCY SECRETARY POSITION

- S O
 SA OUA
 N NP
 NA NAR
 DEFER TO _____

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE USE

- Position approved.....
 Position disapproved
 Position Noted

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

AGENCY SECRETARY

BY _____

DATE _____

Since the Commission began using OTD's as a mitigation technique, 1269 OTD's have been recorded. Most OTD's are available for 21 years and if not accepted within that time frame, the offer expires. While the Commission has entered into a formal agreement with the State Coastal Conservancy so that no OTD's will expire, and actively seeks local governments and nonprofit agencies to accept and open public access easements, most of the OTD's have not been opened to the public because of lack of funds for the improvement, operation, and maintenance of the accessways.

The Commission currently collects approximately \$600,000 in coastal development permit application fees per year which will become available to the Conservancy for grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations to support improvement, operation, and maintenance of public accessways. However, with the current emphasis on getting the remaining Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) certified and coastal development permitting authority returned to local governments, the money available from this source will steadily decline. By designating half of the license plate funds to go to public access grants, a steady source of public access funding will be secured and the public will gain more for their purchase of the coastal license plate. This will undoubtedly enhance the sales of the coastal license plate.

FISCAL IMPACT

This proposal would provide up to \$400,000 to the Coastal Conservancy's coastal access account for grants to local governments to local governments and nonprofit agencies to open, operate and maintain public accessways.

POSITION

The Commission voted to support AB 809 on March 10, 1999.

For more information contact Jeff Stump, Legislative Coordinator, at (415) 904-5266.