



Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia, 56th Assembly District

AB 1089 – Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Board Updated: 4/13/15

BACKGROUND

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) was established in 1991 via state legislation to protect the diverse ecological and biological resources of the Coachella Valley. When first established, the primary purpose of the Conservancy was to protect and conserve the natural resources in and around the mountains surrounding the Coachella Valley. As a result, the Conservancy was not inclusive of cities on the valley floor, such as the cities of Indio and Coachella.

However, in 1996, state legislation made the CVMC a part of the Natural Resources Agency and expanded their boundaries to include the valley floor and coincide with the boundaries of the Multi Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).

The MSHCP aims to conserve over 240,000 acres of open space and protect 27 plant and animal species. One of the fastest growing areas in Riverside County, the Coachella Valley has a projected population growth of 600,000 over the next 10 years. The MSHCP encompasses all 9 cities in the valley and provides a regional vision for balanced growth to meet the requirements of the federal and state endangered species laws, while promoting opportunities for tourism, recreation and economic development.

To fund the MSHCP implementation and management, all 9 cities in the Coachella Valley, including the cities of Indio and Coachella, impose a local development mitigation fee on new commercial and residential development.

All 9 cities in Coachella Valley are members to the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG). The CVAG Conservation Committee oversees the implementation and management of the MSHCP, and partners with organizations such as the Conservancy to facilitate the acquisition and management of lands for conservation. To date, the Conservancy has helped place more than 46,200 acres into conservation as a result of direct acquisition, or by facilitating acquisition transactions.

ISSUE

Currently, the Cities of Indio and Coachella do not have seat at the table of the Conservancy board despite the

Conservancy's authority to acquire MSHCP conservation land on behalf of CVAG in, and with funds generated from, the cities of Indio and Coachella.

When first established, the Conservancy's role was to protect the biological resources in the mountains surrounding the Coachella Valley. As a result of the Cities of Indio and Coachella being geographically located on the valley floor, they were not included on the Conservancy. When the boundaries of the Conservancy were expanded to coincide with the MSHCP, which includes the cities of Coachella and Indio, these two cities were still not included on the Conservancy board.

The cities of Indio and Coachella are members of CVAG, which oversees implementation of the MSHCP. Because the Conservancy is CVAG's MSHCP implementing partner, not having the cities of Indio and Coachella on the Conservancy board has the potential to disrupt any future economic growth opportunities by increasing uncertainty for builders due to the lack of inclusivity in the Conservancy's decision making process.

To ensure inclusivity, better coordination and communication, including the cities of Indio and Coachella on the Conservancy board is needed.

BILL SUMMARY

AB 1089 is a simple bill that would expand the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy governing board and territory, to include the Cities of Indio and Coachella.

Support

- Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (Sponsor)
- City of Indio
- City of Coachella
- Supervisor John Benoit, Riverside County 4th District
- Friends of the Desert Mountains
- Granite Construction Co.
- CVAG

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Carlos Gonzalez, Policy Director
State Capitol, Room 4162
Carlos.gonzalez@asm.ca.gov
(916) 319-2056