

FAQ: Assembly Bill (AB) 2939

Expanding Access to California's Local City and County Parks & Beaches

Effective January 1, 2025

1. What is AB 2939 and what is its purpose?

AB 2939 (Rendon, 2024) simplifies access to parks and beaches **owned, operated, or managed by local governments** (not state or federal) for eligible entities that offer interpretive services to groups of 30 or fewer participants. The law ensures eligible entities are treated the same as the general public by reducing barriers—such as excessive permitting or fees—for eligible entities so they can enjoy public spaces and environmental education.

2. Who is an eligible entity under AB 2939?

AB 2939 defines eligible entities as any of the following:

- A qualified nonprofit public benefit corporation with the mission of increasing equity to outdoor access;
- A federally recognized Native American tribe; or
- A California Native American tribe listed on the California Tribal Consultation List maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission.

3. What does interpretive services mean under AB 2939?

Interpretive services are activities and programs that seek to help participating park visitors to understand and connect with natural, cultural, and historic resources of a local park and are not generally offered by the local entity.

4. What jurisdictions or parks does AB 2939 apply to?

All California local jurisdictions that manage public parks and beaches are required to comply. This includes a city and/or county that owns, maintains, or operates a local park that is **not** part of the state or federal park systems.

5. How should local governments implement AB 2939?

Local jurisdictions must **treat eligible nonprofit and tribal entities as general public users** for purposes of accessing parks and beaches. This means:

- **No special permits or additional fees** may be required unless the jurisdiction adopts **new regulations** under Section 5386(b) of the Public Resources Code.
- Existing special restrictions (e.g., public access hours, fire rules, noise limits) may still apply to all users equally.
- The liability is the same as the general public access.
- If new regulations are necessary (e.g., for resource protection or liability concerns), they must be supported by substantial evidence and meet one of three legal justifications outlined in Section 5386(b).