

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 6, 2001

CONTACT: Roy Stearns (916) 654-7538
Steve Capps (916) 651-8750

MILLIONS FROM PROPOSITION 12 HEADED FOR LOCAL PARKS

LOS ANGELES – State Parks Director Rusty Areias today joined other leading state and local officials at a community park in Los Angeles to officially announce the allocation of \$388 million from Proposition 12 for city, county and regional park projects.

“This is a day that cities, counties and eligible park districts have been waiting for since the passage of the Bond Act on March 7, 2000,” said Areias, director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

“Voters sent a clear message with the passage of Proposition 12 that not only did they support state parks, but local ones as well,” Areias said. “We are moving forward on schedule to begin providing that money for local park projects.”

Proposition 12 provided \$824.5 million for local projects, including \$388 million to be distributed on a per capita basis. Under the bond measure, cities, counties and eligible local districts had until April 1 to resolve any issues over jurisdictional overlaps for distribution of the per capita bond funds. With those matters now resolved, the Department of Parks and Recreation was able to announce the allocation figures today on schedule at a news conference at Jesse Owens Community Regional Park.

“These grants build upon an unprecedented legacy of commitment to parks by Governor Gray Davis,” said Mary D. Nichols, Secretary of Resources. “This infusion of money will improve local parks throughout the state and touch the lives of millions of children and families.”

The per capita allocations for local park development is just one of several local assistance programs provided under Proposition 12, which was authored by Assemblyman Fred Keeley and former Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa. The ballot measure also earmarks money specifically for urban parks, youth sports facilities, historical resources and trails, as well as other projects. The local assistance grants are divided into three general areas – those allocated on a competitive basis, those allocated by the Legislature and Governor and those allocated on a per capita basis.

(more)

Local officials said the money earmarked for local projects would be put to good use. Rodney Cooper, Director of Parks and Recreation for Los Angeles County, said his department operates 90 park facilities, 344 riding and hiking trails, and various nature centers.

"Many of these facilities, built in the 1940's and '50's, are in need of renovation and improvement," he said. "In fact, the Department has identified approximately \$300 million in unfunded capital improvement requirements. The per capita funding provided through Proposition 12 will greatly assist Los Angeles County in providing modern facilities, and meeting the demand for new recreation facilities."

Sacramento County Supervisor Muriel Johnson, who serves as First Vice President of the California State Association of Counties, noted that \$824.5 million is included from Proposition 12 to invest in recreational, cultural and nature areas in both rural and urban communities.

"Local communities need this funding because our bare bones budgets seldom allow sufficient spending on parks and cultural projects - no matter how important we believe they are," she said.

Ken Blake, a city councilman from La Palma who specializes in community services issues for the statewide League of California Cities, said with possible energy shortages this summer, local parks will become even more important to communities.

"Cities from one end of this state to the other will be looking for ways to shed peak energy demand this summer," he said. "Now more than ever, city park departments will be looking for fun ways to encourage people to get out and enjoy their communities. These additional revenues from the park bond couldn't have come at a better time."

Tim Gallagher, the Director of Parks and Recreation for Stockton, said, "We appreciate Proposition 12 monies coming into local jurisdictions to help repair infrastructure and help meet a backlog of other needs. At the same time, however, we continue to seek a long-term, stable source of funding for these purposes." Gallagher serves as chairman of the legislative issues committee for the California Park and Recreation Society, a nonprofit, statewide association of parks, recreation and leisure services professionals and supporters.

Governor Gray Davis was a major backer of the bond measure, and was especially pleased with its provisions relating to urban park development, a key goal of his administration. The Governor signed legislation placing Proposition 12 on the ballot during a ceremony at Will Rogers State Historic Park in Pacific Palisades last year.

The majority of programs provided for by Proposition 12 are administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Details of the various programs, as well as a complete list of the per capita allocations, can be found on the department's website, www.parks.ca.gov.

Of the \$2.1 billion provided for under Proposition 12, the largest amount -- \$824.5 million or 39 percent -- is earmarked for local parks. About \$524 million or 25 percent is for state parks, \$393 million or 19 percent is for conservancies and \$266 million or 13 percent is earmarked for wildlife and land acquisition.