



Legislation Text

File #: 21-537, Version: 1

TITLE:

ADOPT A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE ACQUISITION OF BANNING RANCH BY THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT, CONSTITUENT SERVICES DIVISION

PRESENTED BY: ALEXANDER GONZALEZ, CHIEF OF STAFF

CONTACT INFORMATION: ALEXANDER GONZALEZ, CHIEF OF STAFF (714) 754-5192

RECOMMENDATION:

City Council to consider the adoption of Resolution 2022-XX in support of the acquisition of Banning Ranch by The Trust for Public Land (TPL) for the permanent preservation of public open space.

BACKGROUND:

Council Member Arlis Reynolds has requested that the City Council consider adopting a resolution in support of the acquisition of Banning Ranch by the Trust for Public Land. The 401-acre parcel of land known as Banning Ranch is the site of a former oil field located west of Newport Beach and south of Costa Mesa, adjacent to the mouth of the Santa Ana River. It is the largest piece of privately owned coastal open space in Southern California and home to many native rare species that migrate and nest in the surrounding natural habitat. Located within the ancestral homelands of the Tongva and Acjachemen Nations and known as the site of Genga, Banning Ranch is also a sacred and culturally significant site to members of these tribal communities.

Since 2008, the Banning Ranch Conservancy (BRC), a local 501(c)(3) non-profit, has been dedicated to the mission of the "preservation, acquisition, conservation, and management of the entire Banning Ranch as permanent public open space, park and coastal nature preserve." The effort to "Save Banning Ranch" has been supported by coastal and environmental organizations, environmental justice organizations, indigenous groups, and local community members.

ANALYSIS:

In September 2016, the California Coastal Commission denied a proposed development that conflicted with the California Coastal Act. In May 2021, TPL negotiated a purchase agreement with Newport Banning Ranch LLC (NBR) to acquire 384 acres of the property for \$97 million by June 2022.

On December 17, 2021 Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris presented \$8 million included in the Governor's budget for the acquisition of Banning Ranch. This allocation of state funding brings the

total amount raised for the acquisition of Banning Ranch to \$83 million.

The acquisition of Banning Ranch by TPL for the permanent preservation of public open space would create accessible open space and outdoor recreation opportunities for Costa Mesa and Orange County residents, supporting the City Council's goal to increase park and open space access.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council may choose to receive and file this report.

FISCAL REVIEW:

There is no fiscal impact to the City from adopting Resolution 2022-XX.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this report and prepared Resolution 2022-XX, and approved them as to form.

CONCLUSION:

Banning Ranch is a valuable natural resource that is home to many rare native species and one of the largest open space areas in the region by acreage. The City Council's strategic objectives include identifying strategies to increase park access and the acquisition of Banning Ranch would significantly increase open park space and outdoor recreational opportunities. Therefore, Council Member Arlis Reynolds requests that the City Council consider the adoption of Resolution 2022-XX in support of the acquisition of Banning Ranch by TPL for the permanent preservation of open space.