



## Town Council Agenda Report

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Date: October 8, 2019 Item No. 10

To: Honorable Mayor and Town Council

Subject: CALIFORNIA DESERT PROTECTION ACT

From: Douglas Robertson, Town Manager

Submitted by: Julie Ryan, Administrative Analyst II  
Town Manager's Office

Budgeted Item:  Yes  No  N/A

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### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adopt Resolution No. 2019-29 approving the resolution for the twenty-five year history of the California Desert Protection Act.

### BACKGROUND

The California Desert Protection Act (CDPA) of 1994, which was signed into law on October 31, 1994, was the largest land conservation designation in the continental United States, protecting more than 9.6 million acres of desert and establishing the Death Valley National Park, Joshua Tree National Park and the Mojave National Preserve.

Some of the key provisions in the bill passed in 1994:

- Added 1.3 million acres of land to the existing Death Valley national Monument and redesignated the monument a National Park, with a total of 3.4 million acres.
- Added 234,000 acres of land to the existing Joshua Tree National Monument and redesignated the area a National Park, with a total of 800,000 acres.
- Established a new 1.6 million acre Mojave National Preserve.
- Designated nearly 3.6 million acres of desert administered by the Bureau of Land Management as wilderness.
- Transferred 20,500 acres of BLM land to the state of California to expand the Red Rock Canyon State Park.

## **ANALYSIS**

On October 31, 2019, the CDPA will mark its 25-year anniversary of protecting desert wildlife, natural areas and military installation. The economic benefit of desert travel, including visitor spending, has increased substantially since 1994 and the protection of the California desert land has provided a place for visitors to view wildlife, hike, bike and engage in off-road motorized recreation. The protected lands and conservation measures of the California desert have also safeguarded precious groundwater, aquifer watersheds, desert plants and wildlife, and air quality critical to our region and economy. It remains in the Town of Apple Valley's interest to maintain the protected lands of the California desert as a recreational resource, as part of the larger ecosystem, and as wildlands.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact with approval of the resolution.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Resolution No. 2019-29

## RESOLUTION NO. 2019-29

### A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF APPLE VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING THE TWENTY-FIVE YEAR HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA DESERT PROTECTION ACT

**WHEREAS**, October 31, 2019 marks twenty-five years since the signing of the 1994 California Desert Protection Act (CDPA), which recognized the world class uniqueness of the California deserts and provided destination points by creating the Mojave National Preserve, Joshua Tree National Park and Death Valley National Park, as well as 69 new desert wilderness areas in the California desert region; and

**WHEREAS**, the California Desert Protection Act catalyzed efforts to protect desert wildlife, natural areas and military installations through subsequent legislative and administrative efforts including the creation of the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa National Monuments, the 2009 Public Lands Omnibus Act, the designations of Castle Mountain, Mojave Trails and Sand to Snow National Monuments, the landmark collaborative Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (a 2016 amendment to the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan that designated 4.2 million acres of the desert's most sensitive natural and cultural landscapes for conservation, included conservation management actions to protect desert resources, and streamlined renewable energy development in targeted areas) and the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 (collectively, with the CDPA, "Twenty Five Years of Desert Protection"); and

**WHEREAS**, over the last twenty-five years, the protected lands and wildlife values of the California desert have created an economic windfall. The economic benefit of desert travel, including visitor spending, industry earnings and government revenue, is increasing every year - to \$7.62 billion in 2018. Travel industry-generated employment in the California desert region has increased by more than 35% since 2010 alone, with more than 73,000 employees in 2018. In 2018, 787,000 park visitors spent an estimated \$46.5 million in local gateway regions (including the communities of Victor Valley, Barstow and Baker) while visiting Mojave National Preserve. These expenditures supported a total of 588 jobs, \$22.2 million in labor income, \$36.7 million in value added, and \$58.8 million in economic output in local gateway economies surrounding Mojave National Preserve; and

**WHEREAS**, the protected lands of the California desert are the historic home and contain the sacred sites, cultural artifacts and cultural landscapes of the Chemehuevi, Mojave, Serrano, Cahuilla, Paiute and other tribes that have lived in the desert region for millennia; and

**WHEREAS**, the protected lands of the California desert provide a place for members of the desert community and visitors alike to view wildlife, hike, bike and engage in off-road motorized recreation; and

**WHEREAS**, the protected lands of the California desert provide a place for residents who enjoy the rural character of deserts, mountains and wildlands to experience solitude, undisturbed vistas and glorious sunsets and to gaze up into the night sky without light or noise pollution; and

**WHEREAS**, the protected lands of the California desert support training activities at five military installations representing four of the five military services (Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force), each of which are vital to our nation's military security and to our region's economy. Protected public lands buffer installations and airspace against development and unsustainable use of groundwater which could threaten the military's ability to safely and effectively train for wartime and peacetime contingencies; and

**WHEREAS**, the protected lands and conservation measures of the California desert safeguard precious groundwater, aquifer watersheds, desert plants and wildlife, and air quality critical to our region and economy; and

**WHEREAS**, the protected lands and conservation measures of the California desert support local planning by providing certainty to establish goals, policies, and implementation actions related to renewable energy production, habitat mitigation, environmental protection, recreational opportunities, community character, natural resource utilization, scenic resource protection, and economic development; and

**WHEREAS**, the protected lands and conservation measures of the California desert are the product of community input and stakeholder engagement; and

**WHEREAS**, it remains in the Town of Apple Valley's interest to maintain the protected lands of the California desert as a recreational resource, as part of the larger ecosystem, and as wildlands.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Town Council of the Town of Apple Valley as follows:

**Section 1.** That the Town Clerk shall certify to the passage and adoption of this resolution and enter it into the book of original resolutions.

**ADOPTED** and **APPROVED** by the Town Council of the Town of Apple Valley this 8<sup>th</sup> day of October 2019.

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Larry Cusack, Mayor

ATTEST:

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LaVonda M-Pearson, Town Clerk