



**REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON
SUCCESS OF PROGRAM AND PROJECTS
UNDERTAKEN PURSUANT TO PUBLIC
RESOURCES CODE SECTION 14318**

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Background	3
Projects Conducted	4
I. San Jose Conservation Corps	4
II. Greater Valley Conservation Corps	6
Next Steps and Conclusion	7

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public Resources Code (PRC) section 14318 facilitates the California Conservation Corps' (CCC) ability to explore and develop projects and programs with community conservation corps certified pursuant to PRC section 14507.5. Existing statutory authorities and the COVID-19 pandemic did limit the utilization of PRC section 14318. This report will provide information about the projects undertaken pursuant to PRC section 14318 and how the opportunities the statute affords will continue to grow if the statute is not repealed as currently scheduled.

BACKGROUND

This section provides background on the California Conservation Corps, local community conservation corps (LCCs), and Public Resources Code section 14318.

In 1976, then-Governor Jerry Brown had a vision for a youth development program that blended aspects of an Israeli Kibbutz, a Marine Boot Camp, and a Jesuit Seminary. This led to the founding of the California Conservation Corps (CCC) whose enacting legislation charged the CCC with the development of young adults through the performance of arduous public service work protecting California's natural resources. The early CCC was a purely residential program with the majority of its operations occurring in remote natural settings. Within a decade of the CCC's founding, private and local public entities began forming similar organizations to operate in urban and less rural settings than those primarily served by the CCC. These organizations, typically called local or community conservation corps (LCCs), often tried to supplement, rather than compete with, the CCC.

However, in the mid-1980s the CCC's operating statutes were augmented to encourage it to operate nonresidential programs in urban communities. This led to occasional competition between the CCC and LCCs for recruits and sponsors. Contemporaneously, as part of the 1986 California Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act, the Legislature charged the CCC with evaluating community conservation corps' operations against various criteria outlined in Public Resources Code section 14507.5. Community conservation corps that met the PRC section 14507.5 criteria were deemed "certified" and thus made eligible for various funding opportunities. This placed the CCC in a *de facto* role overseeing certain aspects of the LCC's operations and broadened the points of engagement between the CCC and LCCs.

Over the next few decades, the CCC and LCCs repeatedly worked on coordinating and aligning their efforts in support of the overall corps mission and movement. These efforts were sometimes hindered by different entities' application of state contracting requirements. AB 1928 (McCarty, Chapter 253, Statutes of 2018) added a new section to the CCC's operating statutes facilitating agreements between the CCC and LCCs and promoting efficiencies when their programs and/or projects aligned. With the bill's passage in 2018, the Legislature added Public Resources Code section 14318 to the California Conservation Corps' operating statutes.

PRC section 14318, which became effective January 1, 2019, serves to confirm and facilitate the CCC's ability to contract and partner with certified

community conservation corps to complete program and projects in furtherance of the corps' shared missions. It also required that the CCC prepare this report.

PROJECTS CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE SECTION 14318

Since Public Resources Code (PRC) section 14318's enactment, the CCC and various certified community conservation corps (LCCs) have frequently discussed potential collaborative efforts. However, in multiple instances, the CCC and/or LCCs determined that: (a) they already had the necessary authority to proceed with the projects or programs without reliance on PRC section 14318; or, (b) that it was not feasible to collaborate at that time. The latter result was often due to the barriers presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, the pandemic provided the impetus for a contract, entered into pursuant to PRC section 14318, that allowed the CCC and several local corps to jointly support the operations of a Bay Area food bank. PRC section 14318 also facilitated some support aspects associated with the statutorily required development of a Department of Juvenile Justice corps program pilot.

1. [The San Jose Conservation Corps and California Conservation Corps' Collaboration to Provide Services for the Second Harvest of Silicon Valley Food Bank](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic saw an increased demand for food bank services. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the supply of food bank workers. Therefore, the CCC was called upon to provide crews of Corpsmembers to help meet the operational demands of food banks and keep their vital services running. However, the CCC was itself stretched thin by other emergency response demands and the impact of COVID outbreaks among its crews. Thus, in June of 2020, the CCC reached out to the San Jose Conservation Corps and Charter School (SJCC) to take over the CCC's commitment to support the Second Harvest of Silicon Valley Food Bank.

Using PRC section 14318, the CCC was able to immediately contract and coordinate with SJCC to ensure that the Silicon Valley Food Bank continued operations without disruption. Though the initial contract was scheduled to conclude on August 22, 2020, the efficiency of the coordination and cooperation between the CCC and SJCC prompted the parties to extend the arrangement through March 31, 2021. In all, the SJCC provided 82,283 hours of crew labor to support the food bank operations. SJCC also worked with other certified local corps—namely, Conservation Corps Long Beach, Los Angeles

Conservation Corps, Cesar Chavez Environmental Corps (based in Tehachapi), Civicorps (based in Oakland), and San Francisco Conservation Corps—to provide further assistance to the Silicon Valley Food Bank. In total, local conservation corps completed 96,785 hours of food boxing through this collaboration. Corpsmembers assembled hundreds of thousands of food boxes for the community and helped feed 500,000 community members a month. Absent PRC section 14318, it is unclear how the Silicon Valley Food Bank would have been able to secure the necessary labor force to provide uninterrupted services to its community during the darkest days of the pandemic.



Corpsmembers assembling food boxes at the Curtner Warehouse.

Corpsmembers and staff demonstrating how many pounds of produce they packaged a day at the Cypress Warehouse.



Corpsmembers assisting in food distribution to the community.

2. Support of the Greater Valley Conservation Corps' work with the Division of Juvenile Justice's statutorily mandated Pre-Corps Program

Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 1752.2 required that the erstwhile Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and the CCC “enter into an interagency agreement to implement this section [Welfare and Institutions Code, § 1752.2]” and that said interagency agreement “include input from participating certified local conservation corps.” Under that authority, the CCC and DJJ entered into a tripartite agreement that allowed the Greater Valley Conservation Corps (GVCC) to operate a pre-corps transitional training program within a DJJ facility. As part of that agreement, the CCC used PRC section 14318 to authorize and allow for the seamless transfer of training materials and information to the GVCC. Unfortunately, COVID-19 quickly disrupted and necessitated a redesign of the CCC-GVCC-DJJ pre-corps program. However, the lessons learned from its design, implementation, and operation, coupled by the authority granted by PRC section 14318, will allow the CCC and community conservation corps to design and launch similar programs that do not rely on specific statutory authority (e.g., WIC section 1752.2).

NEXT STEPS

The CCC and LCCs regularly meet to discuss opportunities for coordination and collaboration. As barriers related to COVID-19 dissipate or become more manageable, it is anticipated that the CCC and community conservation corps will identify additional areas in which they can collaborate. Similarly, as certain laws sunset or grant programs expire, the CCC and community conservation corps will likely rely on PRC section 14318 to continue to pursue successful or promising programs.

CONCLUSION

Public Resources Code (PRC) section 14318 has facilitated the California Conservation Corps' ability to explore and develop projects and programs with community conservation corps certified pursuant to PRC section 14507.5. Existing statutory authorities and the COVID-19 pandemic did limit the utilization of PRC section 14318. However, the CCC identified no negative impacts from PRC section 14318. Instead, the CCC found PRC section 14318 to be a useful tool, especially in emergency situations, to efficiently design and facilitate novel, coordinated, programs and partnerships between the CCC and LCCs. For these reasons, the Legislature may consider extending PRC section 14318's current sunset date of January 1, 2024, to promote further corps collaboration.