

Vote NO on Prop 21

Don't Let Prop 21 Kill the General Funding for California's State Parks

California's state parks, considered the jewels of the state, have been mismanaged and underfunded for so many years that they're now in ruins and continually in danger of being closed down. With non-disclosing promises of free park entry and potential tourism revenue to nearby businesses, it's easy to see why the proponent's feel-good rhetoric pulls at the purse... I mean heartstrings for some, while for others yet another car tax is financially distressing.

Don't be fooled into thinking that this new \$18 per year, per car tax is the answer. On the contrary, this flawed agenda is devious, dangerous, and carries manifold consequences.

First let me explain that I am passionate about nature and an enthusiastic supporter of protecting our environmental future. But this new special interest tax, disguised as a 'nominal fee,' is a deceptive and lazy band-aid for our state parks predicament.

Prop 21 will effectively set another precedent for more social and environmental interest groups looking for funding by forcing an inappropriate financial burden on already strained taxpayers. Supporters of Proposition 21 (primarily conservationists and environmentalist, the film industry, education, tourism, park adjacent businesses, government) claim that state park maintenance problems will be solved with this \$500 million per year funding mechanism. 15% of this funding doesn't even go towards maintenance, but to environmental causes.

What they don't tell you is how state parks will lose their general funding which places the entire parks maintenance burden on this new car tax with no guarantee that it will not increase as 39 million Californians will then have free access to these parks. Some of these same environmentalists who support this tax have thwarted countless income producing community development opportunities, none of which can be approved without extensive environmental impact studies (EIRs), yet no EIRs have been performed to examine the environmental effects and associated costs of unrestricted human wear and tear on our state park resources.

Prop 19 advocates also don't tell you that while this fee is purported to allow free entry to all Californian's, that is not entirely true. Californians with dogs are not allowed in almost all state parks and dog owners are more than willing to pay the park fees to exercise with their faithful 4-legged companions. That's why we purchase annual passes to California's regional parks! Environmentalists have cut off their noses to spite their faces in working to ban the hundreds of thousands of registered vehicle owners that hike and camp with their dogs, and as a woman I wouldn't dream of going without my dog to protect me.

Additionally, Prop 19 propaganda tells us that only non-commercial vehicles pay this additional registration tax, as if that's supposed to make the rest of us feel more comfortable about the added costs to each and every household vehicle. But what they don't tell you is that only commercial vehicles over 10,000 pounds are exempt. So while tourism businesses may rake in more revenue, our local and regional businesses will be paying the price of added costs to service and delivery fleets. You better believe that you will see those costs reflected in your PG&E, Comcast, landscaping, and other statements not to mention postage, S&H charges, the list is endless.

As if these were not compelling enough reasons to stop this government responsibility shirking in its tracks (and there are more if you look closely at Prop 19), I implore you to ponder why our state parks are in such a state of ruin and peril when California's regional park systems run beautifully and cover mass expanses of stunning geography with abundant wildlife, yet are extremely well-maintained and lack the criminal deterioration that our state parks have incurred. Regional parks are not funded by Sacramento and they are not managed by the state. They are reasonably well funded, beautifully maintained with elaborate trail systems and sometimes public services, they're appropriately busy, and are dog friendly (unlike state parks)!

Before we get railroaded into yet another unfair tax, please examine the facts and envisage a state parks system that mirrors the efficiency and abundance of our regional parks systems without making pack mules out of every Californian, many of us who will never set foot in a California state park.