



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 11-0414, **Version:** 1

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Environmental Management Department recommending the Board adopt a Resolution, superseding Resolutions 111-98 and 073-99, amending current language and fees, and establishing new fees for County Parks. (Est. Time: 30 Min.)

**FUNDING:** General Fund.

### **Resolution 071-2011**

**Fiscal Impact:** It is recognized and understood that the proposed fee increases will not offset all the costs associated with operating and maintaining the County Parks. However, these fee increases should increase the overall revenue and reduce the contribution made to the parks program by the County's general fund by approximately \$12,500 for FY 2011-12 and \$25,000 annually thereafter. It is extremely difficult to quantify the increase in revenue, as things like weather and water levels all affect the use of various parks and are beyond Department control.

### **Background:**

On June 14, 1990, the Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 213-90 (Attachment E) which established fees for vehicle parking and boating access for Henningsen-Lotus Park (HLP). On May 19, 1998, the Board of Supervisors passed and adopted Resolution 111-98 (Attachment D) which amended the current fee schedule and established new fees for new park facilities: Henningsen-Lotus Park pavilion and ballfields, and Pioneer Park ballfields and equestrian arena. On April 27, 1999, the Board of Supervisors passed and adopted Resolution 073-99 (Attachment C) which established a fee schedule for the Pioneer Park community center. These fees were approved with the justification that they would be used to assist the Department of General Services in recovering a portion of the costs associated with the operation and maintenance of these park facilities. To date, these fees have never been raised, despite increasing costs to operate and maintain County parks. Vehicle parking and boating access fees for HLP have not been raised since their inception over 20 years ago.

On November 8, 2010, the Board of Supervisors held a Special Meeting which included a presentation and discussion regarding the budget for County Parks. The Environmental Management Department provided an overview of County park facilities, revenues and expenditures. For the fiscal year 2009/2010 the department realized \$51,885 in total revenue and \$260,813 in total expenditures resulting in a general fund net county cost of \$208,928 to operate and maintain the County Parks. Therefore, revenue from the parks provides approximately 20% of the total operating expenses.

Following the Parks information and discussion item, the Department staff analyzed and compared current El Dorado County park user fees to other facility and park fee schedules within El Dorado County, such as the City of Placerville, Cameron Park and El Dorado Hills Community Services Districts, as well as park user fees in the greater Sacramento area. In addition, staff met or spoke with interested stakeholders such as the Parks and Recreation Commission, River Management Advisory Committee, organizations (leagues) that use the parks, river use outfitters, and coordinators

of large events (i.e., Coloma Blues Live and American River Music Festival), as well as representatives of other jurisdictions (i.e., the City of Placerville and the CSDs). During this research phase the Department learned that some jurisdictions realize user fee revenues of approximately 30% of the total cost to operate and maintain the parks, compared to El Dorado Countys 20%, while other jurisdictions were unable to provide this information.

In an effort to provide a consistent process to adjusting park user fees, the Department applied a 3% Consumer Price Index increase to each user fee annually from the year the fee was implemented. When this methodology was applied to HLP fees originally established in 1990, the resulting increase was too significant (a 92% increase or almost a doubling of the fee). As a result, the 3% CPI methodology was applied to the fee schedules in the 1998 and 1999 resolutions instead. This methodology resulted in an approximate 50% increase to user fees. The resulting adjusted fee schedule was then compared to the user fees charged by other jurisdictions both within and outside of the County for reasonableness. The proposed fee schedule falls within the mid to low range of user fees charged by other jurisdictions, and is therefore reasonable, and will result in total revenues of close to 30% of the operating budget, consistent with neighboring jurisdictions.

As a result of the research and analysis conducted by the Department, Environmental Management is now requesting that the prior two parks resolutions be superseded by one new combined resolution which will clarify some previously vague language in the current two resolutions, update the fee use schedule, and modify the manner in which fees are charged for large community events that take place in County Parks (i.e., switch from % of gross receipts to admission ticket surcharge). The proposed fee schedule changes will assist the Department with recovering a portion of both operational and maintenance costs associated with the use of the County Parks.

### **Reason for Recommendation:**

#### Update Current Fee Schedule

HLP and Pioneer Park facility fees have remained constant for over 12 years. The HLP fees for parking, kayak input, etc., have remained unchanged for over 20 years. There have been no changes to fees to assist with offsetting the increased operational and maintenance costs at these parks and no new fees introduced to reflect new usages of the parks.

The proposed fee schedule has been developed through a process that involved a methodical, consistent approach to the fee adjustments combined with the analysis and comparison of park user fees for facilities and parks within El Dorado County, such as the City of Placerville and the Cameron Park and El Dorado Hills Community Services Districts, as well as user fees for parks in the greater Sacramento area. Department staff either met with or spoke to various stakeholders, such as the Parks and Recreation Commission, River Management Advisory Committee, representatives of river use outfitters, and organizations that use the parks such as baseball leagues and large event organizers, to get input on the proposed resolution and fee schedule. The proposed adjusted fee schedule falls within the mid to low range of fees charged by neighboring jurisdictions.

#### Proposed New Fees

##### **Special Event Ticket Surcharge:**

One of the major costs associated with HLP, and to a much lesser extent with Pioneer Park, are the special or community events that are held in the parks. Hundreds, if not thousands, of members of the public utilize the parks during these events, which results in additional costs to the County, such

as staffing at the parks, and other costs associated with wear and tear on the facilities. In an effort to assist with offsetting these costs, EMD is proposing that for all special events held in County Parks where tickets are sold for admission to the event, that a ticket surcharge be applied to each ticket sold and remitted to the County, as opposed to a percentage of gross sales. Events of 200 people to 1,999 people in attendance would be charged an additional \$1.00 surcharge per ticket by the event organizer. Events of 2,000 people or more would be charged an additional \$2.00 surcharge per ticket. This surcharge does not impact the event organizer directly. The surcharge is a pass through cost to the purchaser of the ticket which the event organizer is collecting on behalf of the County. Ticket sales are easily verifiable. Therefore, the application of a ticket surcharge will result in a more efficient method for the County to receive funds resulting from use of County Parks for large special events. The ticket surcharge will be in lieu of the event organizer paying rental fees for the area of the park to be reserved, as well as parking fees. In addition, events of 2,000 people or more require the event organizer to obtain and pay for appropriate permits through the Planning Division of Development Services. Under this proposal, the event organizer would still have to go through the permit process; however, they will not have to pay the permit fees to Planning. EMD would reimburse Planning for the permit fees from monies collected via the per ticket surcharge. The Director of Development Services is in support of this proposal.

**Vendor Booth Fee:**

If a special event taking place in a County park includes individual vendor booths then a vendor booth fee of \$20 is being proposed for the new fee schedule. Non-profit promotional booths, official event booths, and vendors who already possess an EMD Health Permit will be exempt from the vendor booth fee.

**Application Fee:**

An application fee in the amount of \$20.00 is also being proposed for all park reservations for exclusive use of a park. This fee is being proposed to offset costs incurred for staff time to review, approve, and monitor parks reservations.

**Bradford Park Fee Schedule:**

EMD has on occasion received requests to rent the field at Bradford Park however, there is no fee schedule for Bradford Park. The proposed resolution allows for reservation of the Bradford Park grass area. The playground area may not be rented or reserved for private use and will remain open to the public even when the ballfield is reserved.

As a result of the input by interested stakeholders, and combined with the consistent methodology used to adjust user fees, the proposed fee schedule falls within the mid to low range of comparable user fees established in other jurisdictions, will help to increase park revenues and offset a portion of general fund contributions to operate and maintain County parks, and has the broad support of park user groups.

**Action to Be Taken Following Approval:**

Forward executed resolution to EMD for implementation. The new resolution and park fee schedules will be become effective January 1, 2012, and placed at all County Parks.

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