

## SUGGESTED LETTER TO LEGISLATORS & TO GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER

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State Assembly and Senate Member  
Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

I am writing to strongly oppose any effort to close California's state parks. The Governor's 08-09 budget proposal to close 48 state parks and to take lifeguards off 16 state beaches is devastating to millions of Californians who rely on their state parks and I urge you to oppose these proposals. Closing state parks and reducing lifeguards will create significant negative consequences for Californian's health and safety. Millions of children and adults rely on our state parks for recreation, mental and physical health, and social connections between people and nature.

The 48 parks slated for closure represent some of the state's most significant cultural, historic, and natural resources. Each year, thousands of schoolchildren visit Sutter's Fort, La Purisima Mission, and Will Rogers State Historic Parks as part of their lessons on California history. Millions of Californians rely on Montana de Oro, San Simeon and Tomales Bay State Parks to gain access to California's world-class coastline.

Suggesting that California's state beaches can go through the popular summer seasons without adequate lifeguard staffing is a dangerous proposal that threatens the health and public safety of Californians. At a time when the Governor and the Legislature is encouraging Californians to become more active and engaged in outdoor pursuits, it is irresponsible to put the state's beachgoers at risk for doing so and to reduce the places and spaces where residents can be physically active.

Due to these cuts residents will experience the closure of 48 state parks, including 17 state parks, 17 state historic parks and museums, 3 state beaches, 9 state recreation areas and 2 state reserves. There will be at least a 50% reduction in lifeguards on state beaches in Orange, San Diego, and Santa Cruz counties where 6.4 million Californians live, work and play. Additionally, there will be a \$4.4 million cut in management and operations within the state park system. Before those changes are felt, we understand the 07-08 state park budget will lose \$30 M in general fund support that has been earmarked for deferred maintenance and take from the publicly supported Proposition 84 funds to backfill that budget reduction. There will also be a \$1 M reduction in general fund support.

California is a national and international leader. To close our state parks is a draconian measure that will not even begin to solve our state budget crisis. Our state parks are vital to local economies due to the small businesses that rely on their availability. It is important to realize that hundreds of small business owners, camp ground operators and others involved in the park industry will also suffer.

We ask you find other more responsible ways to balance our State's budget and solve California's fiscal crisis. Vote "no" to close our state parks.

Sincerely,

[name]