

A non-profit, non-partisan corporation of public-spirited leaders who have joined together to be catalysts for the economic well-being of the Inland Empire region of California – San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

Fix the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act



Inland Action supports the following proposed bills individually, but recommends adoption as a package:

1. **SB 1061** (Bogh) - Clarifies “take” and allows relocation on the same parcel or a contiguous parcel under common ownership.
2. **SB 1062** (Bogh) - Clarifies project-wide permitting and fee-reduction authority for multi-parcel, multi-tree projects.
3. **SB 1063** (Bogh) - Creates expedited, no-fee permits for life-sustaining utility connections and related wildfire-hardening work.
4. **AB 1663** (Wallis) - Exempts qualifying projects or activities on parcels containing, or planned to contain, a single-family residence.
5. **AB 1808** (Carrillo) - Expands city delegation for some business projects and provides targeted no-fee relief for homeowners and public works.

Background

The Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act was enacted in July 2023 to conserve the western Joshua tree. Rather than wait for the species to be listed through vetted channels (i.e., CDFW), the legislature protected the species with special legislation contrary to scientific recommendations at both the federal and state levels.

The Act subjects development to layered permitting and mitigation, and drives up costs, delays and uncertainty for home, utilities, public works, and private investment in the High Desert.

CDFW has noted that its fee structure disproportionately affects low-income residents and single-family homeowners.

Additional Solutions

If CDFW does not, Inland Action encourages the legislature to take action to:

- Reduce costly monitoring on relocation (i.e., treat as minimization not mitigation).
- Leave the decision to relocate to local experts.
- Expand exemptions (i.e., remove the 10-acre cap and raise the tree threshold to 300).
- Limit discretion to tie projects together.
- Tightly define "good-faith search" for private relocation sites.
- Set firm review timelines and transparent, pre-vetted qualifications for biologists and monitors.
- Establish a 5% post-permit census contingency for newly discovered trees without stopping work.