



Assemblymember Tasha Boerner Horvath, 76th District AB 467 – SPORTS PRIZE EQUITY: EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL PLAY

(AS INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 11, 2019)

SUMMARY

AB 467 would codify a 2018 decision by the California State Lands Commission (Commission) to require equal prize pay for both men and women athletes when competing on state property used for recreation.

BACKGROUND

The sports world has historically engaged in the practice of paying women markedly less than men. Across the sport sectors, pay disparities exist. For example, professional female basketball players earn on average 1.6 percent of their male counterparts. In 2016, the national women’s soccer team took a stand on equal pay, filing a complaint against U.S. Soccer for wage discrimination. Paid on average 40 percent less than male counterparts, the women’s teams ranked first in the nation in 2014 and won \$2 million dollars, while the men’s team, knocked out in the first round of the 2014 World Cup, earned \$9 million.

It has become increasingly apparent that there is more work to be done to ensure pay equity for men and women athletes. When men and women compete at the same level and, in some cases, women outperform their male counterparts, pay disparities are not justified.

In 2016, the California Coastal Commission considered a Coastal Development Permit for a men-only surf event at Mavericks Beach in Half Moon Bay. The Mavericks Challenge in Half Moon Bay is a professional surfing contest owned by the World Surf League, the international sports league for professional surfing.

By 2018, the California Coastal Commission added a special condition to the Coastal Development Permit for the event to require a women’s division with a comparable format and prize purse to the men’s division.

The State Lands Commission, within its authority as the land manager for the public trust lands that include Mavericks Beach, preemptively ruled that it would only lease the public beach for the Mavericks competition if equal prize compensation was

guaranteed to both the Men’s and Women’s divisions. In their ruling, the State Lands Commission stated that it “believes it is the best interest of the state to require the event to implement certain measures to promote equity by requiring that the amount of compensation awarded to any participants does not depend on gender.”

WSL resubmitted their lease application for consideration at the Commission’s 2018 October meeting and it was approved because the lease included equal pay for all competitors regardless of gender.

This decision by the State Lands Commission established an equitable pay standard for California surfers, and can now serve as the model for establishing gender pay equity across all sports held on state lands.

EXISTING LAW

Existing law authorizes the State Lands Commission to lease state lands under the jurisdiction of the Commission for purposes as the Commission deems advisable, including but not limited to, grazing leases and leases for commercial, industrial, and recreational purposes.

THIS BILL

AB 467 would require equal pay for all athletes regardless of gender as a condition for approving a lease or permit request for an event held on state property used for recreation. The bill would also require that the lease or permit requested be declined unless that competition affirms its prize pay will be equal for both men and women categories at each participant level.

SUPPORT

None on file

OPPOSITION

None on file

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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