



## Senate Bill 1061: Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act Streamlining Relocation Permitting for Residential Properties

### Summary

Senate Bill 1061 streamlines the relocation permitting process under the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act (WJTCA) by establishing a clear pathway for residential property owners to relocate up to 10 Western Joshua trees, without payment of fees or other mitigation, when certain conditions are met.

This new process reflects the reality that, in many cases, a take permit issued by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) does not actually authorize the killing of a Western Joshua tree. Instead, relocation is often required as a condition of project approval, and SB 1061 simplifies that process for residents who are trying to preserve a tree by moving it rather than destroying it.

### Background

The WJTCA protects the species by broadly prohibiting the import, export, possession, sale, or take of Western Joshua trees unless authorized by CDFW. Under the current framework, permittees may be required to undertake minimization or relocation measures prescribed by CDFW, pay fees, or both.

However, in practice, many residential property owners do not wish to kill a Western Joshua tree altogether. Instead, they are seeking to move trees so that they can preserve them and still make reasonable use of their property. Residents in the High Desert communities have been good stewards of the environment for decades and given the continued abundance of Western Joshua trees throughout the desert, this modest relocation flexibility reflects a practical approach to what many residents have been doing responsibly for years.

### Existing Law

Current law does not provide this specific streamlined residential relocation process. As a result, homeowners face a permitting structure that was designed around broader take-related compliance, even when the end-goal is not to kill a tree, but to relocate and preserve it.

### Solution

SB 1061 gives community members a practical option to work around their existing Western Joshua trees, while also making reasonable use of their property.

By allowing the relocation of up to 10 Western Joshua trees when certain criteria are met, this bill establishes a clear, commonsense permitting pathway for the very residents who have acted as good stewards of the desert for decades, rather than burdening them with expensive fees and complex mitigation requirements.

### For More Information

Bill text and status can be found at <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>