

A Leg Up In Climate Policy Work

[The Aspen Institute's Policy Academy](#) turns professionals into policy advocates. We offer innovative training programs to equip leaders across sectors – from tech to climate, science to social impact – with the practical policy skills to craft solutions for society's most pressing challenges. Based in the Bay Area, the Policy Academy is the first comprehensive nonpartisan and non-university training program in the United States offering a step-by-step process to learn practical strategies for policymaking. The Academy's predecessor, the Aspen Tech Policy Hub, has helped more than 500 alumni and staff gain government experience and seek policy impact.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After graduating from the Hub's [Climate Policy Fellowship](#) in 2022, Emily Doyle used her research background and newfound policy toolkit to obtain a job at the California State Parks Foundation and [author a report on building climate resilience in California state parks](#). Utilizing her fellowship experience of structuring policy recommendations and drafting climate-oriented bills, Emily's report findings contributed to AB 2440, a bill that passed in the California State Legislature. [AB 2440](#) enables state parks to receive increased recognition toward promoting conservation, preserving biodiversity, and ensuring that they are on track for California's initiative to conserve 30% of lands and coastal waters by 2030.

BACKGROUND

With an extensive background in academic research, Emily has worked in labs and on scientific projects related to polar climates. As a Climate Policy Fellow, Emily originally felt most comfortable conducting the research portion of her projects. She explained that she had to remind herself “not to get absorbed in the research bubble” and to leave enough time to construct policy recommendations and focus on impact.

With the Hub’s support, Emily worked on shifting her mindset from producing quantitative research to effectively developing policy. She found her current role – as the founding manager of the [Climate Resilience Program at California State Parks Foundation](#) – through a Hub policy advisor, Alli Rogers, with whom she worked closely to prepare for interviews and obtained references.

“The Hub has been very valuable in my policy work and instrumental in this stage of my career.”

Emily Doyle

IMPACT

After graduating as a Climate Policy Fellow, Emily continued her sustainability research by writing a report containing a comprehensive view of climate resilience in California state parks. Looking at major climate threats such as extreme heat, wildfires, and sea level rise, she highlighted the work parks have already done while identifying the gaps preventing further expansion of risk mitigation. Her report discussed policy solutions to fill these gaps, which then inspired the background evidence of AB 2440. Emily even was able to draw from the project she developed at the Hub on [the equitable expansion of bus lanes and green transit in Los Angeles](#). Emily drew on this sustainability work in her report section discussing how to help California reach its carbon neutrality goal by 2045, mitigate park emissions, and switch to electric vehicles.

Utilizing the Hub’s policy toolkit when maximizing clarity and precision, structuring arguments, and writing recommendations, Emily contributed to the construction of AB 2440 and saw it successfully passed through the California State Assembly. The law will help state parks steward their land in a way that preserves biodiversity over time.

Emily is now developing new ideas for future policy legislation surrounding state parks. She described how AB 2440 taught her the logistics of finance committees and funding operations at the state level, as well as how to minimize fiscal impact and be cost-neutral to ensure impact rather than simply aspiration. Emily is excited to continue flexing her policy skills in her career and in future advocacy work.