

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



ITEM: 2.4
(ID # 24509)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, May 21, 2024

FROM : EXECUTIVE OFFICE:

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE OFFICE: Receive and File the Legislative Report for May 2024, [All Districts] [\$0]

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive and File the Legislative Report for May 2024.

ACTION:Consent

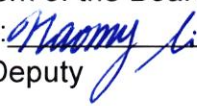
Carolina Salazar Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy

5/15/2024

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Gutierrez, seconded by Supervisor Jeffries and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is received and filed as recommended.

Ayes: Jeffries, Spiegel, Washington, Perez and Gutierrez
Nays: None
Absent: None
Date: May 21, 2024
xc: E.O.

Kimberly A. Rector
Clerk of the Board
By: 
Deputy

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE,
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

BACKGROUND:

Summary

Board Policy A-27 provides, in part, that the County's legislative advocates and/or the Executive Office shall provide monthly reports on the progress of County-sponsored legislation and issues at the forefront of discussion at State/Federal levels that may have a fiscal and/or operational impact on the County. Included in the reports shall be known formal positions of notable associations and/or organizations.

ATTACHMENTS:

Legislative Report (May 2024)

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Board Policy A-27 provides, in part, that the County's legislative advocates and/or the Executive Office shall provide monthly reports on the progress of County-sponsored legislation and issues at the forefront of discussion at state/federal levels that may have a fiscal and/or operational impact on the County. Included in the reports shall be known formal positions of notable associations and/or organizations. The Legislative Report is meant to meet that requirement.

This report includes updates on the County's federal and state legislative advocacy efforts, legislation of interest, and copies of advocacy letters sent.

FEDERAL ADVOCACY

RivCo Bill List

118th Congress

- **S. 3830: Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program Establishment Act (Sen. Alex Padilla [D-CA])** Directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to establish the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program to award grants to eligible entities to provide funds to owners and operators of public water systems or treatment works to assist low-income households in paying arrearages and other rates charged to such households for drinking water or wastewater services.
Position: Support [Per Letter Sent to Author on 04/10/24. Attached]
- **H.R.696 (Rep. Calvert, Ken [CA-41])** To direct the United States Postal Service to designate a single, unique ZIP Code for Eastvale, California.
Position: Support [Per Board Agenda Item 3.1 on 02/07/23]
- **H.R.726 (Rep. McClain, Lisa C. [MI-9])** To amend the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to implement fertility controls to manage populations of wild free-roaming horses and burros, and to encourage training opportunities for military veterans to assist in range management activities, and for other purposes.
Position: Watch
- **H.R. 1586 Forest Protection and Wildland Firefighter Safety Act of 2023 (Rep. LaMalfa, Doug [R-CA-1])/S. 796 Forest Protection and Wildland Firefighter Safety Act of 2023 (Sen. Lummis, Cynthia M. [R-WY])** Exempts discharges of fire retardant by Federal land management agencies and local governments from the permitting requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.
Position: Support

CALIFORNIA STATE ADVOCACY

2023-24 Legislative Session

- AB 444 (Addis-D) California Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP).** Would establish the California Defense Community Infrastructure Program, which would require the Office of Planning and Research, to grant funds to local agencies, which would assist with applications and matching fund requirements, for the federal DCIP.

Position: Support

Impact: The bill could help RivCo more strategically apply for DCIP funds to help the March Air Reserve Base community.
- AB 817 (Pacheco-D) Local government: open meetings.** Would authorize members of local non-decision-making legislative bodies to participate in public meetings via two-way virtual teleconferencing without posting their location.

Position: Support [Per Letter of Support to Author Sent on 02/15/24]

Impact: Would allow virtual participation on County appointed boards and commissions, removing barriers for participation.
- AB 1948 (Rendon-D, Santiago-D, and Gipson- D) Homeless Disciplinary Personnel Teams.** Would allow seven counties to continue using AB 728 authority to apply agency collaboration towards coordinating care for individuals and families at risk of becoming unhoused and reducing inflow into homelessness.

Position: Support [Per Letter of Support Sent to Assembly Human Services Committee on 04/01/24.]

Impact: RivCo was one of the original pilot counties. Removing the current sunset would enable the County to continue using a collaborative approach to homelessness.
- AB 1957 (Wilson-D) Public contracts: Best Value Construction Contracting for Counties.** Authorizes any county in the state to utilize the best-value contracting model and eliminates the statutory sunset on such authority.

Position: Support [Per Letter of Support to Author Sent on 02/15/24]

Impact: RivCo was one of the pilot counties, the use of best-value contracting has allowed for a selection of contractors based on qualifications and experience, not simply lowest bid prices.
- AB 2871 (Manshein-D) Overdose Fatality Review Teams.** This bill would authorize a county to establish an interagency overdose fatality review team to assist local agencies in identifying and reviewing overdose fatalities.

Position: Support [Per Letter of Support Sent to Assembly Appropriations Committee on 04/26/24. Attached]

Impact: This bill codifies the best practices that have been created by the RivCo Overdose Fatality Review Team.
- AB 3149 (Garcia- D) Promotores and Promotoras Advisory and Oversight Workgroup.** Would create the Promotores and Promotoras Advisory and Oversight Workgroup to provide perspective and guidance to changes in the health and human services delivery system, including, but not limited to, the Medi-Cal program.

- Position:** Support [Per Letter of Support Sent to Assembly Appropriations Committee on 04/26/24. Attached]
- **AB 3182 (Lackey- R) Land conservation: California Wildlife, Coastal, and Park Land Conservation Act: County of San Bernardino.** Clarifies state law about the use of Prop 70 land sale proceeds in San Bernardino County, allowing the County to use these land sale proceeds to improve recreational facilities and conserve open space in our region.
Position: Support [Per Letter of Support Sent to Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee on 04/17/24]
 - **AB 3198 (Garcia-D) Joint powers agreements: retail electric services.** Would authorize a public agency with the authority to provide retail electric services to enter into a joint powers agreement with one or more public agencies with jurisdiction within the Coachella Valley Service Area.
Position: Support [Per Letter of Support Sent to Assembly Local Government Committee on 04/25/24. Attached]
 - **SB 21 (Umberg-D) Civil actions: remote proceedings.** Would extend the current ability to appear remotely to conduct conferences, hearings, proceedings, and trials in civil cases, in whole or in part, until 2026.
Position: Support [Per Agenda Item 3.3 on 05/02/23]
Impact: This bill would allow for greater efficiency and increased court access, promoting efficient Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act implementation.
 - **SB 22 (Umberg-D) Courts: remote proceedings.** Would extend the current ability to appear remotely to conduct conferences, hearings, proceedings, and trials in juvenile cases, in whole or in part, until 2026.
Position: Support
Impact: This bill would facilitate more efficient case processing and help the court and its county partners in addressing persistent backlogs.
 - **SB 318 (Ochoa Bogh-R) 211 Infrastructure.** This bill would establish the 211 Support Services Grant Program, which would enhance and scale 211 services across California.
Position: Support
Impact: This bill supports statewide 211 operations, capacity, and grant funding for the various network partners.
 - **SB 366 (Caballero-D) The California Water Plan: long-term supply targets.** This bill would complement and amplify Governor Newsom’s Water Supply Strategy, ensuring there are reasonable water supply targets.
Position: Support [Per Board Agenda Item 3.4 on 11/01/22]
Advocacy Strategy: This bill is being proposed by the Solve the Water Crisis Coalition as a solution to creating more reasonable water targets.
 - **SB 994 (Roth-D) Local government: joint powers authority: transfer of authority.** Would facilitate the transfer of land use authority from the March JPA to RivCo.
Position: Sponsored [Per Letter of Sponsorship Sent to Author on 02/01/24]
Impact: This bill idea was proposed by RivCo and the March JPA.
 - **SB 1175 (Ochoa Bogh-R) Organic waste: reduction goals: local jurisdictions: waivers.** Seeks to facilitate local governments’ implementation of SB 1383 (Chapter 395, Statutes of 2016), which is a statewide effort to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants by setting specific phased-in targets for reduction of organic waste deposited in landfills.

Position: Support [Per Letter Sent to Senate Environmental Quality Committee on 04/01/24]

- **SB 1224 (Ochoa Bogh-R) Alcoholic beverage control: on-sale general license: County of Riverside.** Would facilitate the alcoholic beverage on-sale licensing for the RivCo Fairgrounds for the variety of community-based events held at the Fairgrounds throughout the year.

Position: Sponsored [Per Letter of Sponsorship Sent to Author on 03/05/24]

Impact: This bill idea was proposed by RivCo Facilities Management

- **SB 1245 (Ochoa Bogh-R) In-Home Supportive Services.** Streamlines the process for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) clients to receive paramedical services.

Position: Support [Per Letter of Support Sent to Senate Human Services Committee on 03/26/24]

Impact: This bill supports RivCo's integrated service delivery work.

- **SB 1249 (Roth-D) Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act.** Charges the California Department on Aging (CDA), within specified time periods, to take administrative actions that recognize the state's major demographic shift towards an older, more diverse population.

Position: Support [Per Letter of Support Sent to Senate Human Services Committee on 03/05/25]

Advocacy Strategy: RivCo Office on Aging Director Jewel Lee testified in the Senate Human Services Committee on 04/01/24 as the lead witness in support.



Board of Supervisors

District 1	Kevin Jeffries 951-955-1010
District 2	Karen Spiegel 951-955-1020
District 3	Chuck Washington 951-955-1030
District 4	V. Manuel Perez 951-955-1040
District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

April 26, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Appropriations Committee
1020 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2871 (Maienschein)- Overdose Fatality Review Teams
SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to express support for AB 2871, which would authorize counties to establish multiagency Overdose Fatality Review Teams. As the first County in the state to adopt the Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) team model, the County of Riverside can attest to the value and benefits of this approach in building community awareness about overdose prevention and analyzing overdose cases to improve countywide overdose epidemiology.

Our nation's drug fatality crisis is well-documented. According to the most recent fatal drug-related overdose data available¹ through California Department of Public Health, there were approximately 11,000 overdose deaths across the state for the 12-month period between December 2022 and November 2023. Riverside County has experienced 889 overdose deaths in 2022 and an estimated 826² in 2023. Our County has committed considerable resources to taking a data-driven approach to inform an array of strategies and interventions to address overdose fatalities, including early deployment of an OFR team.

Piloted in February 2020 and launched in June 2020, Riverside County's OFR team became the first and only such team in California. This four-year effort has proven to be a valuable tool for sharing data, informing strategic planning, promoting health equity, and aligning prevention efforts among Riverside County stakeholders through improved coordination and collaboration. Our multidisciplinary team includes representatives from Riverside County

1

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/CDPH%20Document%20Library/PrelimMonthlyDeathData_2024_01_FINAL_ADA.pdf

² Riverside County's overdose death total is an annualized figure based on 11 months of data. See <https://countyofriverside.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=5e0f2f698264ac6bd8795d688e14a5>

Behavioral Health, Riverside Emergency Medical Services Agency, Riverside County Sheriff Department, Riverside County Probation Department, Inland Empire Health Plan, Inland Empire Harm Reduction, and other community-based organizations.

The team meets monthly to review selected overdose cases within a pre-identified focus area and identifies opportunities to improve countywide overdose epidemiology. In turn, the team develops recommendations that seek to prevent the initiation of substance use and substance use disorders, increase access to treatment for people who use drugs, and increase access to harm reduction resources to prevent overdoses and stop overdose deaths.

These recommendations have guided prevention activities such as the development of a Community Assessment and Transport Team (CATT), developing easier to read and accessible resources for first responders, providing staff and community harm reduction and naloxone trainings, and implementing a Leave Behind Naloxone Program. Additionally, our OFR has welcomed visitors and observers from other counties and other states to our monthly meetings, to share knowledge and promote broader adoption of the OFR model.

We appreciate that this measure would establish an organizational construct for other counties that wish to establish an OFR team. Importantly, AB 2871 also contains needed provisions that govern information sharing, which is critical to assessing how best to address overdose deaths, treat substance use, and promote harm reduction. For these reasons, the County of Riverside supports AB 2871. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the Riverside County Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chuck" being more prominent than the last name "Washington".

Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair

cc: The Honorable Assembly Member Brian Maienschein
Honorable Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

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April 26, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Appropriations Committee
1020 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 3149 (Garcia)- Promotoras Advisory and Oversight Group
SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to express support for AB 3149, which would create a Promotoras Advisory and Oversight Committee in the Health and Human Services Agency.

During the COVID response, we partnered with many community-based organizations that employed community health worker (CHW)/promotoras to provide culturally competent and age-appropriate information to their communities. The CHWs/Promotoras also conducted COVID testing, registered patients for vaccinations, and assisted at COVID vaccination sites. Their participation was integral to reaching the most vulnerable populations in our County. AB 3149 aims to leverage the expertise of CHWs/Promotoras statewide by requiring state agencies to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach strategies, program materials, meeting facilitation, and online platforms when engaging with the workforce.

Promotoras play an essential role in shaping healthcare delivery for communities of color, especially in bridging the gap between healthcare providers and underserved communities. For these reasons, the County of Riverside supports AB 3149. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the Riverside County Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,

Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair

cc: The Honorable Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia
Honorable Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

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District 3	Chuck Washington 951-955-1030
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District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

April 25, 2024

The Honorable Juan Carrillo
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Room 157
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 3198 (Garcia) – Joint powers agreements: retail electric services.
Assembly Local Government – SUPPORT**

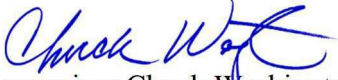
Dear Assembly Member Carrillo:


On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, we write to express our support for AB 3198, which would authorize a public agency with the authority to provide retail electric services to enter into a joint powers agreement with other public agencies in the Coachella Valley Service Area.

The County of Riverside is a self-help County with a record of working collaboratively with regional government agencies to address local issues. A tool by which the County achieves this, is the formation of joint powers agreements. AB 3198 is a local bill which allows the County to work with other public agency and tribal nation stakeholders in the provision of electric services in the Coachella Valley, including the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), to utilize the formation of a joint powers agreement as an option for the provision of electrical services.

For these reasons, the County of Riverside supports AB 3198. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the Riverside County Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,


Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair


Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
Vice Chair

cc: Honorable Members and Consultants, Assembly Local Government Committee
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation

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Riverside County

**CEO**

Graham Knaus

May 9, 2024

The Honorable Thomas Umberg
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1879 (Gipson) – Electronic signatures.
As Amended March 7, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee – June 4, 2024**

Dear Senator Umberg,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in California, I write in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 1879 by Assemblymember Mike Gipson, which would allow the acceptance of electronic signatures by county assessors.

Counties strive to simplify interactions with local fiscal offices whenever possible. AB 1879 will benefit taxpayers and improve the ability of county assessors to serve their constituents, especially those facing transportation or mobility challenges. The use of electronic signatures will simplify the tasks of local government agencies and alleviate the burdens for taxpayers associated with sending government documents via mail.

It is for these reasons CSAC supports AB 1879 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at elawyer@counties.org.

Sincerely,

Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Mike Gipson, California State Assembly
Members and Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
Morgan Branch, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus

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May 8, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1975 (Bonta): Medi-Cal: medically supportive food and nutrition interventions.
As Introduced – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, I am writing in support of Assembly Bill 1975 by Assembly Member Mia Bonta. This measure would, subject to federal approval, make medically supportive food and nutrition interventions a covered benefit under Medi-Cal fee-for-service and managed care delivery systems.

Adequate food and nutrition are key to preventing and treating many health conditions, including preventable chronic conditions that disproportionately affect low-income communities and people of color. Healthy nutrition can significantly improve an individual's quality of life and reduce lifelong health care costs. Recognizing the important connection between nutrition and health outcomes, medically tailored meals and supportive food are included as one of 14 pre-approved Community Supports available through CalAIM. Over a 12-month reporting period between 2023-2024, medically tailored meals and supportive food was the most utilized Community Support, with nearly 40,450 Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan (MCP) members receiving this benefit. Despite the high utilization, not all MCPs offer medically tailored meals and supportive food as a Community Support and the federal approval to offer this benefit is currently only effective through December 31, 2026.

AB 1975 would permanently expand this benefit by adding medically supportive food and nutrition interventions as a covered Medi-Cal benefit if determined to be medically necessary by a health care provider or health plan. In addition, this measure requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to establish a stakeholder group to advise DHCS on the qualifying medical conditions for this benefit, rate setting, and other guidance on benefit design.

Counties are deeply invested in improving health outcomes and health equity for Californians. Counties also support preventative health interventions that reduce avoidable healthcare costs. AB 1975 will expand a highly utilized and cost-effective health benefit to all Medi-Cal recipients, reduce long-term healthcare spending, and advance health equity. It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 1975. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 591-5308 or jonodera@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jolie", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Mia Bonta, California State Assembly
Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus



May 6, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2061 (Wilson) Sales and Use Tax: exemptions: zero-emission public transportation ferries.
As Amended May 1, 2024 - SUPPORT
Awaiting to be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, and the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), are pleased to support Assembly Bill (AB) 2061 (Wilson), which would establish, from January 1, 2025, until January 1, 2030, a new exemption for the purchase of zero-emission ferries by public transit agencies from the state portion of the sales and use tax.

This proposal would expand on previous legislative actions to exempt from the state portion of the sales and use tax the purchase of zero-emission buses purchased by public transit agencies through AB 784 (Mullin, Chapter 684, Statutes of 2019) and AB 2622 (Mullin, Chapter 353, Statutes of 2022). Importantly for cities and counties, the bill would aid local governments in complying with California Air Resources Board regulations that require local agencies to transition to full zero-emission ferry operations by December 31, 2025. While the regulations are important to improving local air quality, they are expensive and difficult for local agencies.

The local portion of the statewide sales and use tax helps fund a broad variety of county and city services ranging from anti-poverty programs, behavioral health services, and communicable disease control to regional parks, veterans' services, and weights and measures, among a litany of programs and services. AB 2061 would specify that this sales and use tax exemption does not apply to those state sales and use tax rates imposed or dedicated for local government funding, including those rates for which revenues are deposited into the Local Revenue Funds (i.e., 1991 and 2011 Realignment).

CSAC and Cal Cities appreciate Assembly Member Wilson's efforts in crafting AB 2061 in a manner that protects local services and realignment funds while recognizing that the biggest portion of the sales and use tax (and thus the biggest benefit for the buyer) is the state's share. As a result, the measure does not negatively impact the fiscal sustainability of counties and cities and aids local governments in improving their local air quality and complying with state regulations.

For these reasons, CSAC and Cal Cities are pleased to support AB 2061 and urge your AYE vote. If you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact us at elawyer@counties.org and btriffo@calcities.org.

Sincerely,



Eric Lawyer

Legislative Advocate

California State Association of Counties



Ben Triffo

Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist

League of California Cities

- cc. The Honorable Lori Wilson, California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Irene Ho, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



May 8, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2149 (Connolly) – Oppose Unless Amended
As Amended April 17, 2024**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) we must regrettably oppose your Assembly Bill 2149 unless amended. This measure creates a requirement for local agency to regulate and enforce safety provisions set forth in the bill on all gates over 50 pounds and 48 inches wide.

AB 2149 creates an entirely new regulatory and enforcement burden on local agencies at a scale that is unworkable. As currently drafted, the bill's definition of a regulated gate covers a wide universe of barriers that would likely create enforcement duties over thousands of gates in each jurisdiction. This would create the need to train existing and hire new staff to perform the enforcement duties required by this bill. With the wide universe of gates involved and the industry incentive to compel the installation of the hardware required by this bill, it is likely that local government staffing costs statewide could be range from the mid to high hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. Additionally, we are greatly concerned with the sponsors testimony in Assembly Judiciary indicating that local governments could recover their enforcement costs from the fines authorized by the bill. The legislature has made clear in several public safety statutes that county governments should not utilize administrative penalties and fees to fund their operations. We believe the legislature's guidance provided in the public safety area apply equally to this bill and note that this would create costs implication on any future mandate claims made pursuant to this bill.

After discussions with the author's office, it seems clear that a local government role is a key part of this effort. However, we don't believe all of our members have uniform agreement that local agency involvement in this regulatory space is the most effective

1215 K Street, Suite 1650, Sacramento, CA 95814 | www.rcrcnet.org | 916.447.4806 | Fax: 916.448.3154

The Honorable Damon Connolly
Assembly Bill 2149 (Connolly)
April 9, 2024
Page 2

way to address the risks identified by this bill. With that in mind and to reduce the fiscal impacts, we suggest amending the bill to create a process where local jurisdiction regulatory and enforcement involvement only occurs when a county Board of Supervisors or City Council takes an affirmative step to enforce the provisions of this bill.

Additionally, we note that the current definition of regulated gate in the bill does not adequately focus attention on the type of gates that motivated the introduction of this bill. To further reduce the fiscal impacts of this measure, we suggest that the author's office should limit the bill to apply to gates on school grounds. This would ensure that counties have a clear understanding of the scope and risk of the gates they are considering to regulate.

For these reasons, RCRC and CSAC are regrettably opposed to AB 2149 unless amended to address our concerns. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tracy Rhine (RCRC) trhine@rcrcnet.org, Mark Neuburger (CSAC) mneuburger@counties.org.

Sincerely,



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Tracy Rhine
Senior Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California

cc: The Honorable Damon Connolly, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jennifer Swenson, Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

May 3, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2432 (Gabriel) Corporations: criminal enhancements.
As Amended April 10, 2024 – SUPPORT
Suspense File – Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

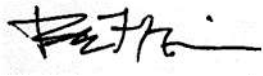
The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) writes in support of AB 2432 by Assembly Member Jesse Gabriel. This measure would establish the California Crime Victims Fund (CVF) in the California State Treasury and authorizes courts to impose additional fines on *corporations* convicted of a misdemeanor or felony, otherwise known as the corporate while collar criminal enhancement, with the fines deposited into the California Crime Victims Fund. AB 2432 (Gabriel) supports victims of crime through additional and separate restitution fines.

The existing federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) facilitates funding for the delivery of essential crime victim services via the VOCA Crime Victims Fund (CVF). The CVF is a non-taxpayer source of funding that is financed by monetary penalties associated with federal criminal convictions, as well as penalties from federal deferred prosecution and non-prosecution agreements. Deposits into the CVF fluctuate based on the number of criminal cases that are handled by the United States Department of Justice, with Congress determining on an annual basis how much to release from the CVF to states. Unfortunately, funding through VOCA has steadily declined in recent years. As such, a tangible impact will undeniably be felt across California's victim service providers as many will be forced to lay off staff, cut programs, and shut down operations unless there is supplemental support.

The positive impact of victim services across California cannot be understated. This can include health and higher education access for victims of gender-based violence, legal and housing services for victims of human trafficking, a wide range of culturally appropriate victim services programs, and plenty more. Accordingly, AB 2432 (Gabriel) will provide a crucial source of revenue to support the provision of victim services in California by helping address reductions in federal dollars by imposing additional penalties against a corporation of up to 25 million dollars.

It is for these reasons that CSAC is in strong support of AB 2432 (Gabriel). Should you have any questions regarding CSAC's position, please do not hesitate to contact Ryan Morimune at CSAC (rmorimune@counties.org). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Morimune". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Ryan Morimune
Legislative Advocate

CC: Assembly Member Jesse Gabriel
Members and Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee



May 7, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks, Chair
 Assembly Appropriations Committee
 1021 O Street, Suite 8140
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 2489 (Ward): contracts for special services and temporary help
 As amended 4/29/24 – OPPOSE
 Awaiting hearing – Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities (CalCities), the California Special Districts Association (CSDA), the Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD), the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts (CARPD), the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), the County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC), the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), the County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), the California School Boards Association (CSBA), the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC), the California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA), the Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH), the California Association of Joint Powers Authorities (CAJPA), the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), the American Institute of Architects (AIA), California Building Officials (CALBO), Transportation California, the Southern California Contractors Association (SCCA), the American Public Works Association (APWA), and the California Geotechnical Engineering Association (CalGeo), we write to inform you of our opposition to Assembly Bill 2489, Assembly Member Chris Ward’s measure relating to contracting by local agencies. Like previous legislative efforts that attempted to curb local agency authority for contracting, our organizations

believe the proposal contained in AB 2489 is unnecessary and inflexible, likely resulting in worse outcomes for vulnerable communities and diminished local services for our residents and students.

Broad application has costly implications. There are more than 4800 local agencies in the state, most of which rely – at least in part – on contractors to provide a variety of local programs and services that, given our current public sector workforce shortages, would be difficult to provide without their capable assistance. With the additional reporting obligations and requirements of AB 2489 – and its partner measure, AB 2557 (Ortega) – for local agencies with represented workforces and for their contractors, we anticipate (1) fewer non-profit providers, community-based organizations, and other private service providers willing to engage with local agencies, (2) exacerbated already-demanding caseloads and workloads for our existing staff, and (3) increased costs for local agencies. Given the extensive applications of the measure, we can easily anticipate costs associated with this measure in the hundreds of millions of dollars statewide, which includes portions of Proposition 98 funding.

Further, there remains a chronic and sustained under-investment in funding local government programs and services in California. In fact, most of the new resources that local agencies have received from the state and federal governments over the past many years have been one-time in nature. As the state repeatedly acknowledges regarding its own budget, responsible budgeting means that one-time revenues should be spent on one-time expenditures.

10-month notification is infeasible and unnecessary. AB 2489 would require local agencies – at least 10 months prior to a procurement process to contract for special services that are currently or in the past 10 years provided by a member of an employee organization – to notify the employee organization affected by the contract of its determination to begin a procurement process by the governing body. The special services statutes vary by agency type, but cover a broad array of services provided by local agencies, from essential government administration services to medical and therapeutic services to legal, financial, and other technical services. This is an infeasible obligation, as local agencies often are unaware of a need for a procurement process 10 months prior. Local agencies have proven their ability to be adaptable in times of need, but the 10-month timeframe and extensive range of services included in AB 2489 are both arbitrary and unworkable, impeding local agencies' capacity to respond to local needs.

Local agencies are already subject to the statutory provisions of the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA), Educational Employment Relations Act (EERA) and related provisions of state law. These laws establish that local agencies cannot contract out work currently being performed by bargaining unit employees simply to save money and most contracting-out decisions are already subject to meet-and-confer requirements during which concerns like qualifications of contractors can be addressed. There are exceptions to the meet-and-confer requirement in cases of compelling necessity (like an emergency) or when there is an established past practice of contracting out particular work. AB 2489 does not incorporate either of these limitations. More broadly, any of the requirements of this bill, if desirable to local agency employees and their representatives, can be negotiated at the bargaining table. Our position is that all of these issues are better addressed at the bargaining table where local conditions can be appropriately considered.

Definition of emergency is unreasonably narrow. Recent amendments to AB 2489 define “emergency” for purposes of the bill in an exceptionally narrow manner that does not comport with long-standing definitions and understanding in other parts of the code. The measure defines an “emergency” as “one that calls for immediate action to respond to the threat of serious harm or mass casualties, including conditions of natural disaster or conditions posing extreme peril...” Local agencies regularly experience emergent needs that must be met in order to maintain public health and safety. An emergency situation

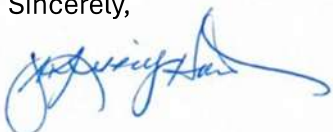
could occur under any number of circumstances: from a labor dispute that results in a strike, a natural disaster, a global pandemic, emergency utility repairs, emergent and on-call situations, an unanticipated need to care for those crossing our southern border seeking asylum, and so forth. While any one of these instances may not meet the definition contained in the measure, there is no doubt that the public expects an immediate and thorough response that may not be possible without support from a contractor. (By contrast, existing definitions of “emergency” *in public contracting statutes* include this full range of circumstances where prompt action is needed to protect the public interest. See, e.g., Public Contract Code section 1102: “Emergency’... means a sudden, unexpected occurrence that poses a clear and imminent danger, requiring immediate action to prevent or mitigate the loss or impairment of life, health, property, or essential public services.”)

Minimum qualifications requirements undermine efforts to provide services in a manner that prioritizes cultural competency and lived experience. In recent years, the Newsom Administration and Legislature has challenged local agencies to engage with community partners to connect with vulnerable communities more effectively. There are countless examples of programs and policies that have specified components that are directed to be delivered by entities that have direct, lived experience and/or cultural familiarity. One need only look to efforts over the last few years with the state’s Homeless Housing and Prevention (HHAP) program or the significant reforms to the Medi-Cal program contained in CalAIM or various criminal justice reforms, to name a few. These efforts explicitly include a role for non-profit, community-based, and private sector providers, sometimes specifically with individuals with different lived experience and expertise than those in a similar government job. Without that partnership, local agencies will be less successful in meeting the expectations and outcomes the state has directed – a consequence of which could be penalties and fines – and, in doing so, will have failed those that we are jointly committed to serve.

Making private employee data subject to the California Public Records Act deters effective partnerships with the private sector. AB 2489 requires contractors to provide information to ensure that their employees meet the minimum qualifications and standards and to retain this information for two years. This private employee data would be accessible to any member of the public via the California Public Records Act; public employee data subject to the CPRA has resulted in data mining for profit, as well as subjecting employees to harassment and threats.

AB 2489 represents a sweeping change to the fundamental work of local governments, but we are unaware of a specific, current problem that this measure would resolve or prevent. We are keenly aware, though, of the very real harm that could result from this measure. AB 2489 will not improve services, reduce costs, or protect employees. As a result, we are opposed to AB 2489. Should you have any questions about our position, please reach out directly.

Sincerely,



Jean Kinney Hurst
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California



Aaron Avery
Director of State Legislative Affairs
California Special Districts Association



Alyssa Silhi
Legislative Advocate
California Association of Recreation and Park Districts



Johnnie Pina
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities



Kalyn Dean
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California



Sarah Bridge
Legislative Advocate
Association of California Healthcare Districts



Jessica Gauger
Director of Legislative Advocacy & Public Affairs
California Association of Sanitation Agencies



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California Welfare Directors Association



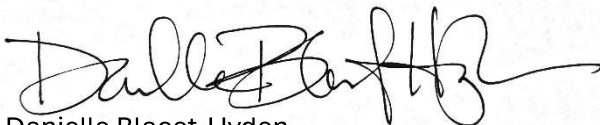
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President
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California



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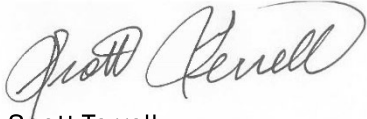
Ian Padilla
Legislative Director
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Faith Borges
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American Council of Engineering Companies,
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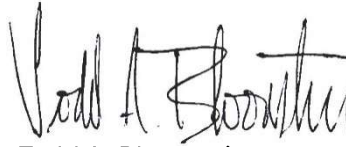
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Transportation California



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Legislative Advocate
Southern California Contractors Association



Joubin Pakpour, P.E.
Director
APWA Region VIII



Michael Cazeneuve, P.E., CEG
President
CalGeo

- cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Chris Ward, California State Assembly
The Honorable Robert Rivas, Speaker, California State Assembly
The Honorable Juan Carrillo, Chair, Assembly Local Government Committee
The Honorable Liz Ortega, California State Assembly
Mary Hernandez, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Katie Kolitsos, Consultant, Office of Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas
Tim Rainey, Consultant, Office of Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas



May 6, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks, Chair
Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Room 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

Chair Wicks,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we must respectfully **OPPOSE AB 2535 UNLESS AMENDED.**

AB 2535, as amended on April 24, proposes:

- 1) Direct the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to establish a goal restricting 15% of Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) to zero-emission freight infrastructure, increasing 5% each funding cycle until meeting a target of 50% of funds dedicated to this single eligible use.
- 2) Commencing January 1, 2025, the commission, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the State Air Resources Board shall create guidance for the programming of projects that expand the physical footprint of a highway to address the impact on the highest 10 percent of CalEnviroScreen communities.
- 3) Program funding for design, right of way and capital construction costs to applicant agency only if CEQA/NEPA is completed within six months of the CTC adopting the program of projects.

Proposed Amendments

- Reduce 50% target to 25% and sunset 5% increases after two funding cycles.

While zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure are funded through dedicated programs administered by the California Air Resources Board and the California Energy Commission, the TCEP is California's only dedicated account whose objective is to provide funding for projects that make infrastructure improvements along corridors that have a high volume of freight movement.¹¹ Zero-emission infrastructure is currently only a subset of one of the eight eligible uses for TCEP funds.

- Direct the CTC, not other agencies, to create guidelines for programming projects that expand the physical footprint of a highway in identified communities.

As the agency tasked by the law to program and allocate transportation funds, the CTC should be allowed to develop its own guidelines with other agencies serving in advisory roles.

¹¹ <https://catc.ca.gov/-/media/catc-media/documents/programs/tcep/102622-adopted-2022-tcep-guidelines-v2-a11y.pdf>

- Delete the CEQA/NEPA requirements.

The CTC's TCEP Guidelines already require that CEQA/NEPA is completed within six months. Putting this requirement into statute will not allow the CTC to provide applicant agencies necessary flexibility or respond to changes in regulation without seeking additional legislation.

Fiscal Comments

Zero-emission infrastructure is funded through a variety of dedicated state programs, including:

- \$110 million per year from the Energy Commissions Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Fund
- A portfolio totaling \$623.6 million in FY23-24 in CARB's Clean Transportation Incentives program

Redirecting the TCEP to fund the same or similar projects would deprive other eligible uses of approximately \$150 million in State funding and \$77 million in federal formula funding per year.

Setting arbitrary goals to redirect TCEP funding to zero-emission infrastructure reduces the already limited funds that can be utilized to improve efficiencies in our goods movement corridors that would have positive impacts for all motorists – including transit.

To clarify, redirection jeopardizes regional transportation agencies' ability to leverage local dollars in pulling down, or "matching," TCEP grants for goods movement projects. Similarly, redirection of resources to zero-emission infrastructure could also limit or reduce the amount of funds that may be utilized for federal matching requirements as part of eligibility for projects. As a result, local transportation agencies will be required to allocate a greater share of local transportation funds to goods movement projects, in turn, potentially reducing the number of projects that can be completed.

As many other state programs are currently available to fund zero-emission infrastructure, the provisions specified in this bill would impose unnecessary fiscal pressures on the TCEP program in a period when goods movement volume increasing in California's ports of entry and State and local budgets are constrained.

California Must Continue to Invest in Its Critical Freight Highway Infrastructure

Goods movement-dependent industries account for one-third of California's economy and jobs, as well as delivering 80% of the State's goods via trucks. Therefore, it is critical that the State not restrict its only dedicated freight funding source in perpetuity.

Congestion continues to challenge California's trucking industry, leading to supply chain delays, increased freight costs and increased emissions. The American Transportation Research Institute 2024 report on the nation's worse freight bottlenecks identified 8 locations in California among the most congested in the nation, including three in the Top 20.ⁱⁱ

From the initial creation of the TCEP program in 2006 (originally the Transportation Corridor Improvement Fund, TCIF), TCEP has funded goods movement projects that have provided significant impacts to regional economies. From the well-paying union jobs created to complete these projects, to the economic stimulus to local businesses, to the mobility efficiencies created (i.e. cost savings both to passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles) from these projects, TCEP has created thousands of unionized construction jobs and clearly demonstrated how vital these enhancement projects are to regional economies.

ⁱⁱ[ATRI's 2024 Top 100 Truck Bottleneck List "Traffic congestion on our National Highway System inflicts an enormous cost on the supply chain and environment, adding \\$95 billion to the cost of freight transportation and generating 69 million metric tons of excess carbon emissions every year," said ATA President and CEO Chris Spear.](#)

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, the undersigned organizations must unfortunately oppose AB 2535 unless amended.

Respectfully,

Bernice Jimenez Creager, Director
California Trucking Association

Brady Van Engelen, Policy Advocate
California Chamber of Commerce

Peter Friedmann, Executive Director
Agriculture Transportation Coalition

Michael P. Quigley, Executive Director
California Alliance for Jobs

Matt Schrap, Chief Executive Officer
Harbor Trucking Association

Matthew Hargrove, Executive Director
California Business Properties Association
Building Owners and Managers Association of California

Damon Conklin, Legislative Affairs - Lobbyist
League of California Cities

Rob Lapsley, President
California Business Roundtable

Marisa S. Salinas, President & CEO
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

Robert Spiegel, Vice President Government Affairs
California Manufacturers & Technology Association

Amanda Walsh, Vice President of Government Affairs
Orange County Business Council

Mark Neuburger, Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

Luis Portillo, President & CEO
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership



Richard Lambros, Managing Director
Southern California Leadership Council



Lee Brown, Executive Director
Western States Trucking Association



Mike Jacob, President
Pacific Merchant Shipping Association

Cc: Natalie Pita, Legislative Fellow, Office of Assemblymember Mia Bonta



May 7, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks, Chair
 Assembly Appropriations Committee
 1021 O Street, Suite 8140
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 2557 (Ortega): Local agencies: contracts for special services and temporary help: performance reports**
As amended 4/25/24 – OPPOSE
Set for hearing 5/08/24 – Assembly Appropriations Committee

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities (CalCities), the California Special Districts Association (CSDA), the Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD), the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts (CARPD), the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), the County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC), the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), the County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), the California School Boards Association (CSBA), the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC), the California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA), the Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH), the California Association of Joint Powers Authorities (CAJPA), the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), the American Institute of Architects (AIA), California Building Officials (CALBO), Transportation California, the Southern California Contractors Association (SCCA), the American Public Works Association (APWA), and the California Geotechnical Engineering Association (CalGeo), we write to inform you of our opposition to Assembly Bill 2557, Assembly Member Liz Ortega’s measure relating to contracting by local agencies. Like previous legislative efforts that attempted to curb local agency authority for contracting, our organizations

believe the proposal contained in AB 2557 is overly burdensome and inflexible, likely resulting in worse outcomes for vulnerable communities and diminished local services for our residents and students.

Broad application has costly implications. There are more than 4800 local agencies in the state, most of which rely – at least in part – on contractors to provide a variety of local programs and services that, given our current public sector workforce shortages, would be difficult to provide without their capable assistance. With the additional reporting obligations and requirements of AB 2557 – and its partner measure, AB 2489 (Ward) – for local agencies with represented workforces and for their contractors, we anticipate (1) fewer non-profit providers, community-based organizations, and other private service providers willing to engage with local agencies, (2) exacerbated already-demanding caseloads and workloads for our existing staff, and (3) increased costs for local agencies. Given the extensive application of the measure, we can easily anticipate costs associated with this measure in the hundreds of millions of dollars statewide, which includes Proposition 98 funds.

Further, there remains a chronic and sustained under-investment in funding local government programs and services in California. In fact, most of the new resources that local agencies have received from the state and federal governments over the past many years have been one-time in nature. As the state repeatedly acknowledges regarding its own budget, responsible budgeting means that one-time revenues should be spent on one-time expenditures.

Reporting requirements are burdensome, duplicative, and impractical. AB 2557 would require contractors to provide quarterly performance reports with a litany of required components, including personally identifiable information for its employees and subcontractors, that is then subject to the California Public Records Act. An entire local bureaucracy would have to be created at a considerable cost to comply with provisions that require these quarterly performance reports to be monitored to evaluate the quality of service.

In addition to the obligation of the contractor to provide quarterly performance reports every 90 days, AB 2557 requires a performance audit by an independent auditor (who would likely also be subject to the provisions of AB 2557) to determine whether performance standards are being met for contracts with terms exceeding two years, ostensibly *at the contractor's cost*. (AB 2557 provides that “a contractor shall not factor the costs of the audit into the contract costs with the board of supervisors”; however, achieving or enforcing this in practice seems implausible.) It is unclear to us what is intended to be learned from this performance audit as opposed to the quarterly performance reports. Four quarterly performance reports would be provided, then a performance audit would be started, while four additional quarterly performance reports would be provided presumably prior to completion of the performance audit. That is a total of *nine* reports over a period of 24 months. This provision fails to reflect an understanding of the practical logistics of actually achieving this reporting and review in a timely manner, not to mention the considerable burden placed on contractors, which would presumably be an additional deterrent to engaging with local agencies.

All of the above provisions also apply to temporary employees working under a contract for temporary help for local agencies, except that these contracts would be subject to *monthly* reporting for temporary employees in counties. Temporary employees working under a contract for temporary help are routinely used for important local services. An example that we have previously shared with the Legislature are public and district hospitals, which often operate both hospitals and clinics, that must ensure they are adequately staffed to care for patients and meet the requirements of state law. It is no secret that California is in a statewide health care provider shortage, and as providers adjust to surges in patient volumes and fluctuations in staffing levels, they must have the tools available to them to bring on additional staffing quickly to fill gaps.

Making private employee data subject to the California Public Records Act deters effective partnerships with the private sector. AB 2557 requires contractors to provide information about employees and to retain records. This private employee data would be accessible to any member of the public via the California Public Records Act; public employee data subject to the CPRA has resulted in data mining for profit, as well as subjecting employees to harassment and threats.

Local agencies are already subject to statutory limitations on contracting. It is important to note that local agencies are already subject to the statutory provisions of the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA), the Educational Employment Relations Act, and related provisions of state law. These laws establish that local agencies cannot contract out work currently being performed by bargaining unit employees simply to save money and most contracting-out decisions are already subject to meet-and-confer requirements. There are exceptions to the meet-and-confer requirement in cases of compelling necessity (like an emergency) or when there is an established past practice of contracting out particular work. AB 2557 does not incorporate either of these limitations. More broadly, any of the requirements of this bill, if desirable to local agency employees and their representatives, can be negotiated at the bargaining table. Our position is that all of these issues are better addressed at the bargaining table where local conditions can be appropriately considered.

AB 2557 represents a sweeping change to the fundamental work of local governments, but we are unaware of a specific, current problem that this measure would resolve or prevent. We are keenly aware, though, of the very real harm that could result from this measure. AB 2557 will not improve services, reduce costs, or protect employees. As a result, we are opposed to AB 2557. Should you have any questions about our position, please reach out directly.

Sincerely,



Jean Kinney Hurst
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California



Aaron Avery
Director of State Legislative Affairs
California Special Districts Association



Alyssa Silhi
Legislative Advocate
California Association of Recreation and Park Districts



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Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
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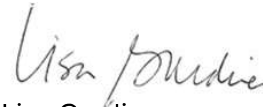
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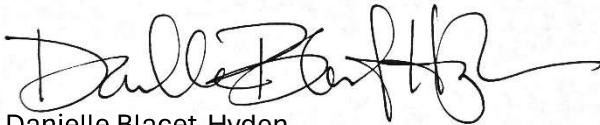
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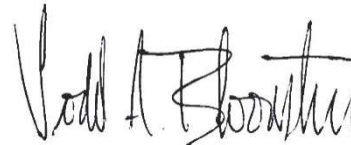
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APWA Region VIII



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cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Liz Ortega, California State Assembly
The Honorable Robert Rivas, Speaker, California State Assembly
The Honorable Juan Carrillo, Chair, Assembly Local Government Committee
The Honorable Chris Ward, California State Assembly
Mary Hernandez, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Katie Kolitsos, Consultant, Office of Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas
Tim Rainey, Consultant, Office of Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas

**OFFICERS****President**

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San Luis Obispo County

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Inyo County

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Susan Ellenberg
Santa Clara County

Past President

Chuck Washington
Riverside County

**CEO**

Graham Knaus

May 7, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2774 (Grayson): Childcare for Working Families Act.
As Amended April 17, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I am writing in support of Assembly Bill 2774 by Assembly Member Grayson. This measure would establish the Childcare for Working Families Task Force, convened by the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), with the purpose of establishing recommendations aimed at addressing challenges faced by working families in accessing childcare.

Counties have long supported efforts to help families obtain accessible and affordable childcare. Quality early care and education can have significant, positive lifelong impacts on a child, particularly during the critical early years of development. Effectively meeting the childcare needs of a community also promotes parental employment, family self-sufficiency, and overall economic development. While significant progress is being made through recent legislation and budget investments, access to affordable childcare remains challenging for many working and low-income families.

AB 2774 establishes a Childcare for Working Families Task force comprised of a comprehensive array of stakeholders and funded by nongovernmental sources to evaluate the various childcare programs throughout the state, analyze existing gaps and unmet needs, and set benchmarks to measure the state's progress toward closing these gaps. The inclusion of a county representative on the Task Force allows for important local input, as counties support and administer various early childhood programs throughout the state.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2774. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 698-5751 or jgarrett@counties.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Garrett
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Tim Grayson

Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee

**OFFICERS****President**

Bruce Gibson
San Luis Obispo County

1st Vice President

Jeff Griffiths
Inyo County

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Susan Ellenberg
Santa Clara County

Past President

Chuck Washington
Riverside County

**CEO**

Graham Knaus

May 10, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2813 (Aguiar-Curry) – Government Investment Act.
As Amended April 29, 2024 - SUPPORT
Set to be heard May 15, 2024 - Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing the 58 counties in California, I write in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 2813 by Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry. This measure would provide technical amendments and further specify the intent of your ACA 1, a measure that would empower our local communities to address their critical housing and infrastructure needs.

ACA 1 would achieve those goals by reducing the voter threshold for approval of bond and special tax measures that help fund critical infrastructure, affordable housing projects, and permanent supportive housing for individuals at risk of chronic homelessness.

The California Constitution currently requires a two-thirds vote at the local level for both general obligation bonds and special taxes, which serve as vital financial tools for local governments, regardless of the intended use for the funds by cities, counties, or special districts in service of their residents. However, local school districts can seek approval for bonded indebtedness with only a 55 percent vote threshold for the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or replacement of schools. The changes included in ACA 1 will create parity for cities, counties and special districts for voter approval thresholds already granted to school districts.

Markedly, ACA 1 would reduce the vote requirement for issues that are most pressing to the quality of life and well-being of all Californians, including increased local supplies of affordable housing. Addressing the challenges posed by our homelessness crisis demands a comprehensive, holistic approach encompassing the expansion of affordable housing stock and assistance for those consistently vulnerable to homelessness. Crucially, our local communities cannot fully address the affordable housing shortage without significant resources.

The goals of ACA 1 are aligned with the goals and policy recommendations found in CSAC's AT HOME plan, the county comprehensive plan to address homelessness. Developed through a lengthy all-county effort, the AT HOME plan (Accountability, Transparency, Housing, Outreach, Mitigation & Economic Opportunity) outlines clear responsibilities and accountability aligned to authority, resources, and flexibility for all levels of government within a comprehensive homelessness response system. It includes a full slate of policy recommendations to help build more housing, prevent individuals from becoming homeless, and better serve those individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness.

Absent ongoing state funding for local governments to address homelessness and the supply of affordable housing, which is a pillar of our AT HOME Plan, local governments have no choice but to seek funding from local sources to increase and maintain housing units across the spectrum of needs. ACA 1 provides an opportunity for communities to continue to do their fair share to support California's most vulnerable residents.

Increasing local capacity to procure and produce the necessary infrastructure to serve our unhoused neighbors is far from being the singular local benefit of ACA 1. This measure would also allow local voters to elect to increase their community's funding for parks and recreation, libraries, maintenance of streets and highways, protection against sea level rise, and more. The necessity for this measure is illustrated, notably, by the 2021 California Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment which reports that 55 out of 58 counties are considered at risk of, or presently have, poor pavements. Further, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency estimates that California communities, collectively, have water infrastructure needs of nearly \$64.7 billion. Now, more than ever, is the appropriate time to empower California residents to choose to fund solutions for their communities.

ACA 1 preserves the need for overwhelming voter support for a bond or special tax in order for it to be approved, thus protecting voters' control over how their tax dollars are spent. The bill also provides specific requirements for voter protection, public notice, and financial accountability. With these protections in place, communities should be able to decide the appropriate level of taxation to meet their local needs.

AB 2813 will provide clarity to ACA 1 and ensure that local governments are accountable for ACA 1 projects by further specifying how citizens' oversight committees will operate and refine the role of the California State Auditor in overseeing ACA 1 projects. AB 2813 will ensure that future ACA 1 measures are set up for success by guaranteeing the proceeds can be used to support meaningful progress in their communities, ensure accountability and transparency of ACA 1 projects, and will exist as a vehicle to make necessary technical adjustments to the provisions of ACA 1 before it is considered by voters.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2813 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at elawyer@counties.org.

Sincerely,



Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Cecilia Curry-Aguiar, California State Assembly
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Irene Ho, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

April 15, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Member, California State Assembly
1021 O. St, Room 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2922 (Garcia) Economic development: capital investment incentive programs.
Notice of SUPPORT (2/15/2024)

Dear Chair Wicks,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and California State Association of Counties (CSAC) are proud to **support AB 2922 (Garcia)**. This measure seeks to extend the authorization for capital investment incentive programs until January 1, 2035.

Under prior law, until January 1, 2024, counties, city and counties, and cities were authorized to establish these programs, which allowed them to offer incentives, such as tax breaks, to attract large manufacturing facilities to invest in their communities. These programs aimed to encourage industries like high technology, aerospace, automotive, biotechnology, software, and environmental sources to locate and invest in California.

By extending the authorization for capital investment incentive programs, this measure ensures that local governments can continue to drive economic growth, job creation, and community development across California. These programs have been effective in attracting investment from key industries, stimulating local economies, and enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.

For these reasons, Cal Cities and CSAC are pleased to **Support AB 2922**. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at bguertin@calcities.org.

Sincerely,



Brady Guertin
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities



Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Eduardo Garcia
Members, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Jennifer Swenson, Principal Consultant, Assembly Committee on Appropriations



Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

May 7, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2982 (Reyes): Prenatal-to-3 working group.
As Amended April 2, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I am writing in support of Assembly Bill 2982 by Assembly Member Reyes. This measure would establish a workgroup comprised of various early childhood stakeholders, including representatives from First 5 county commissions, tasked with reviewing California's early childhood systems and making recommendations to create a statewide, equity-focused prenatal-to-three system agenda.

The 58 First 5 county commissions across the state fund and administer vital health and learning programs for young children and their families that provide support, resources, and care during the most critical period of development. County Supervisors are members of local First 5 Commissions and have spearheaded a number of initiatives to support the early childhood needs of their communities. First 5 county commissions are funded through tobacco-tax revenue, which has steeply declined in recent years. As a result, local First 5 commissions must weigh cuts to services and programs that serve low-income and disadvantaged families. In addition, there are many other challenges facing the early childhood system including workforce recruitment and retention and access to affordable care.

AB 2982 is the first step in reevaluating how current early childhood systems meet the needs of California's infants, toddlers, and families. The 12-member workgroup established under the bill includes geographic diversity to ensure rural, suburban, and urban community needs are represented. The recommendations of the group will be rooted in equity and prioritize the needs of children and families facing the greatest systemic challenges, including children of color, low-income children, and children with complex care needs.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2982. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 698-5751 or jgarrett@counties.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Garrett
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes
Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee

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Graham Knaus

May 6, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 3134 (Chen) – Property taxation: refunds.
As Amended April 24, 2024 – SUPPORT
Awaiting to be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in California, I write in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 3134 by Assembly Member Chen. This measure is related to property tax refunding procedures.

Property tax refunding typically refers to the process where property owners receive a refund or adjustment on their property taxes. Refunds could happen for various reasons, such as overpayment of property taxes, incorrect assessment of property value, or eligibility for property tax exemptions or credits. Local tax authorities or government agencies responsible for property tax administration typically handle property tax refunds.

Existing law limits the maximum refund amount that can be issued to a taxpayer without prior receipt of an application for the refund to five thousand dollars. AB 3134 raises the threshold to ten thousand dollars. If the owed amount is below five thousand dollars, the county can proactively contact the taxpayer and issue a refund. This measure allows counties to initiate refunds of up to ten thousand dollars without the taxpayer filing a claim, leading to improved and expedited service for the public.

For these reasons, CSAC supports AB 3134, which improves government efficiency and benefits taxpayers and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at elawyer@counties.org.

Sincerely,

Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Phil Chen, California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Irene Ho, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



May 7, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7620
Sacramento CA 95814

**RE: SB 1057 (Menjivar) – Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council
As amended 4/25/2024 – OPPOSE
Set for hearing 5/13/2024 – Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Menjivar:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Urban Counties of California (UCC), and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we write to jointly express our respectful opposition to SB 1057, by Senator Caroline Menjivar.

Like several bills that have been put before the Legislature in recent years – including [AB 1007](#) (Jones-Sawyer, 2020), [SB 493](#) (Bradford, 2021) and [AB 702](#) (Jackson, 2023) – [SB 1057](#), as recently amended, proposes to make considerable changes to local Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils (JJCC), as well as the process for the JJCC's deployment of Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funds. These funds were realigned to counties in 2011 and serve as the bedrock of virtually all counties' juvenile justice systems. Notably, with the passage of [SB 823](#) in 2020, counties now bear full responsibility for the entire juvenile justice system at the local level.

More specifically, SB 1057 extensively recasts the composition of the JJCC by (1) requiring that the body be comprised of at least half community representatives and the remainder from governmental entities and (2) inappropriately removing the chief probation officer as the chair of the JJCC and instead specifying that the JJCC with its newly formulated composition shall elect two co-chairs, at least one of whom must be a community representative. Second, this measure confers authority to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) or other state entity with oversight over administration of these funds to determine remedial action or to withhold JJCPA funding if a county fails to establish a JJCC. Third, it establishes a new request for proposal (RFP) process for JJCPA funds under which a local agency other than a law enforcement related agency – with a stated preference for behavioral health-related local agencies – must administer the RFP.

This measure would impose specific meeting frequency for the JJCC; amend and expand the required elements of the comprehensive multiagency juvenile justice plan developed by the JJCC; expand requirements that programs and strategies funded with JJCPA funds must meet; and require new, detailed reporting to the state about JJCC membership and meeting dates. Each of these new responsibilities constitutes a higher level of service with respect to a realigned program. Under Proposition 30, Article XIII, Section 36(c)(4)(A) of the California Constitution provides that if the state enacts legislation after September 30, 2012 that increases local costs associated with programs or services realigned in 2011, then the state must provide funding to cover those costs; if no state funding is provided, counties have no obligation to deliver the higher levels of service.

To illustrate the extent of the new workload imposed upon counties, we highlight the following elements of the bill that would increase levels of service required of counties and therefore would be subject to the limitations detailed in the paragraph above.

<p>30061(b)(4)(A)</p> <p>▶ Revised and expanded elements of the comprehensive multiagency juvenile justice plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs associated with revised and expanded elements of comprehensive multiagency juvenile justice plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New requirement that assessment of existing services and resources prioritize soliciting direct feedback from various youth cohorts (including “at-promise youth,” as defined, up to age 25) regarding their satisfaction with existing services and resources. ○ New considerations detailed in (ii) describing community challenges and in (iii) reframing the continuum of services and care. ○ New description of the target population proposed for the strategies to be funded in the plan, including a description of the target population’s race, ethnicity, age, gender identity, and ZIP Code of residence. - Incorporation of input from youth and their families and required documentation of the effectiveness, specific objectives, and outcome measures associated with the programs and strategies to be funded.
<p>30061(b)(4)(B)</p> <p>▶ Revised and expanded requirements of programs and strategies to be funded by the comprehensive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs associated with revised and expanded requirements of programs and strategies to be funded by the comprehensive multiagency juvenile justice plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New requirements detailed in (i) regarding measurements of effectiveness and change in focus, including but not limited to modeling

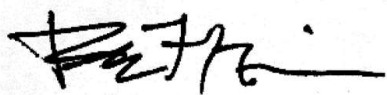
<p>multiagency juvenile justice plan</p>	<p>programs that are healing-centered, culturally competent, restorative, and trauma-informed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prioritizing collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs). ○ New requirements regarding participant confidentiality in prearrest and prebooking programs and prohibition against information sharing without written consent of youth, parents, or guardians.
<p>30061(b)(4)(C)</p> <p>▶ New Request for Proposal (RFP) process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs associated with administering an RFP process for deployment of JJCPA funds, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Procurement process; ○ Review and scoring procedures; ○ Engagement of stakeholders, as specified; ○ Other required considerations, as specified.
<p>30061(b)(4)(D)</p> <p>▶ Revised and expanded requirements for annual report to the BSCC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs associated with revised and expanded annual reporting requirements to the BSCC, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New requirement that descriptions of programs and strategy include evidence supporting the programs and strategies, including feedback from youth participants. ○ Provision of an updated list of JJCC members, with details as specified, along with dates for all council meetings in the preceding fiscal years; ○ Expansion of currently required countywide juvenile justice trend data to include for each of the eight required elements (and any optional elements the county includes beyond those) to include disaggregation by race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, and ZIP code of residence.
<p>30061(b)(4)(G)</p> <p>▶ Definition of “at-promise” youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs associated with incorporation of definition of “at-promise” youth meaning young people up to the age of 25 years who are vulnerable to system involvement for various reasons/community circumstances, as defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impact on required new responsibilities in (b)(4)(A) the comprehensive multiagency juvenile justice plan, as well as (b)(4)(C) engagement from the county agency overseeing the new RFP process.
<p>Welfare and Institutions Code 749.22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs associated with changes to composition of JJCC:

<p>► Redraft of 749.22, including changes to the scope, composition, and meeting frequency of the JJCC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Expansion of JJCC to include up to 22 members, depending on local application of new membership formulation.○ Implications of term limits, as specified.○ Reporting requirements to Board of Supervisors regarding participation of CBOs on JJCC.○ Mandated meeting frequency of no fewer than three times per year and associated meeting notice requirements.○ Requirement that JJCC meetings are accessible to public through remote participation and that selected meeting times optimize and encourage public participation.
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These changes may, on their surface, appear to merely enhance transparency and promote more community participation in the crucial work of the JJCC. However, upon closer inspection, SB 1057 would require considerable process changes, enhancements to case management systems to accommodate new data collection requirements, and additional staffing time to meet a variety of the new duties and responsibilities across the board. Lastly, it is important to highlight that if a county is unable to meet the new JJCC composition requirements under this bill – which is a real and challenging concern for many counties, especially in rural regions – the state would be authorized to withhold all JJCPA funds. This troubling provision only harms the youth and young adults in county care, in which case, counties would be further pressed to fill considerable funding gaps for the sustainable delivery of critical services and programs.

For these reasons, CSAC, UCC, and RCRC must therefore respectfully, but firmly oppose this measure. These proposed changes come at a time when neither the state nor the counties have sufficient resources to address their existing workload. Please feel free to contact Ryan Morimune at CSAC (rmorimune@counties.org), Elizabeth Espinosa at UCC (ehe@hbeadvocacy.com), or Sarah Dukett at RCRC (sdukett@rcrcnet.org) for any questions on our associations' perspectives. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Ryan Morimune
Legislative Representative
CSAC



Elizabeth Espinosa
Legislative Representative
UCC



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
RCRC

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee

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May 9, 2024

The Honorable Anna M. Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1144 (Skinner) Marketplaces: online marketplaces.
As Amended April 4, 2024 – SUPPORT
Suspense File – Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Caballero:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) writes in support of SB 1144, by Senator Nancy Skinner. This bill seeks to address a critical facet of the rapidly evolving world of retail theft by expanding existing provisions on online marketplaces and improving enforcement authority over illegitimate operations. SB 1144, which is part of President pro Tempore Mike McGuire and Senate leaders' bipartisan legislative package, *Working Together for a Safer California*. This is a key element within the Senate's comprehensive strategy to curtail rising concerns with retail theft.

The proliferation of stolen goods online, arguably boosted in part by the COVID-19 pandemic, has impacted daily lives in nearly every community across our state. SB 1144 builds upon both past legislative efforts to address this issue, such as SB 301 (Skinner, Ch. 857, 2022), as well as commitments made by retailers and the Attorney General's office to collaborate with law enforcement in combating retail theft. Specifically, this measure would modify current definitions to apply to a broader range of sellers and consumers; expand protections and transparency for consumers by requiring online marketplaces to disclose whether a high-volume third-party seller is in compliance with existing law; and ensures that online marketplaces create both a policy that prohibits the sale of stolen goods and a mechanism in which individuals may report the sale of stolen goods. Further, this bill requires that online marketplaces notify law enforcement of illegal transactions and extends the Attorney General's current authority to take civil action against those utilizing online marketplaces to sell stolen goods to district attorneys, county counsel, and city attorneys – thus enhancing the abilities of multiple law enforcement departments to hold bad actors accountable.

Addressing the climbing rates of retail theft requires careful consideration and solutions that are comprehensive and multifaceted. Ultimately, SB 1144 is a narrowly targeted, cost-effective approach that helps prevent and eliminate the sale of stolen goods online, which is a critical outlet for those engaging in high-volume retail theft.

It is for these reasons that CSAC is in strong support of SB 1144 (Skinner). Should you have any questions regarding CSAC's position, please do not hesitate to contact Ryan Morimune at CSAC (rmorimune@counties.org). Thank you for your consideration.

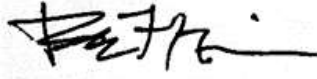
CSAC Letters

The Honorable Anna M. Caballero

May 9, 2024

Page 2 of 2

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Morimune". The signature is stylized with a prominent initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ryan Morimune

Legislative Advocate

CC: Senator Nancy Skinner
Members and Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee

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Graham Knaus

May 3, 2024

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7340
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1361 (Blakespear): California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): exemption: local agencies: contract for providing services for people experiencing homelessness. As Amended April 8, 2024 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Blakespear,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, I am pleased to share our support of your Senate Bill 1361. This bill would exempt actions taken by counties and cities to approve a contract for providing services for people experiencing homelessness from CEQA requirements.

In recent years, the Legislature has passed multiple CEQA exemptions and by-right approval processes to remove barriers to siting and building affordable housing and shelters that serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including low barrier navigation centers. The state has also made unprecedented investments into homelessness response and prevention, which has enabled counties, cities, and community-based organizations to quickly stand-up programs that help move thousands of people into safe and stable housing. Although actions taken by a local agency to site and permit low barrier navigation centers are not subject to CEQA under existing law, the action to approve a contract to provide services is not explicitly exempt from CEQA requirements. As a result, local governments face risk of exposure to frivolous lawsuits and unnecessary delays to get programs up and running.

Recognizing the growing humanitarian crisis of homelessness across the state, CSAC released the AT HOME plan (Accountability, Transparency, Housing, Outreach, Mitigation & Economic Opportunity) last year. This plan outlines clear responsibilities and accountability aligned to authority, resources, and flexibility for all levels of government within a comprehensive homelessness response system. It includes a full slate of policy recommendations to help build more housing, prevent individuals from becoming homeless, and better serve those individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness. SB 1361 aligns with policy recommendations included in the Housing pillar of AT HOME.

As counties work collaboratively with local, state, and federal partners to address the state's growing number of unhoused residents, it is critical to reduce barriers that hinder the delivery of coordinated and comprehensive services provided to unhoused community members. It is for these reasons that CSAC supports SB 1361. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at 916.591.2764 or mneuburger@counties.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Neuburger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate



*****ASSEMBLY FLOOR ALERT*****

AB 1827 (Papan): Low-Water User Protection Act- Support

We, the above coalition of associations and water suppliers, respectfully request your support and urge your “Yes” vote on AB 1827, which would ensure water suppliers can continue to use meter size and peaking factors to proportionally allocate the costs associated with providing water service among customers.

AB 1827 affirms existing law that allows water suppliers to use these reasonable and well-accepted methods of assessing the incremental costs associated with higher water usage demands to high water users. Because of lawsuits that threaten California water providers’ ability to use these well-accepted methods of cost allocation, this measure is critical to preventing these costs from being passed on to low-water users.

A water supplier must maintain and invest in a water system and water supplies capable of meeting the maximum possible demand on any given day to ensure customers have reliable water service when they turn on their tap. Water customers that use more water than other similarly situated customers increase a water supplier’s overall cost of providing water service

due to the higher costs associated with building, operating, and maintaining a larger water system that can meet those larger water demands.

Water agencies across the state are being sued to challenge the long-standing methods of cost allocation. The lawsuits essentially allege that appropriately charging customers that use more water for the additional cost of that higher use is prohibited by Article XIII D of the California Constitution (i.e. "Proposition 218"). However, Proposition 218's proportionality requirements allow water suppliers to charge customers with higher water usage to recoup legitimate costs attributable to those higher water users.

In our opinion, these lawsuits are without merit. Our property-related service charges are legitimate under existing law, but in order to avoid lengthy and expensive legal battles with costs that will be passed on to our customers, further clarification of existing law should be affirmed by the Legislature for the understanding of the courts and others.

Proposition 218 placed provisions into the California Constitution that limit local governments' authority to impose and increase taxes, fees, assessments, and charges. We faithfully abide by the requirements of Proposition 218 and are serious about our responsibility to provide services to our customers in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

While collectively, all customers pay for the costs associated with a community's water service, AB 1827 reinforces our authority under the law to impose fees or charges for property-related water services that include the incrementally higher costs of water service due to higher water usage demand, maximum potential water use, and projected peak water usage of parcels. AB 1827 does this by amending Proposition 218's implementing statute to confirm that the long-standing cost allocation methods used by water agencies can be used consistent with Proposition 218.

Our organizations respectfully request your "aye" vote on AB 1827.



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Assemblymember Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Room 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1878 (E. Garcia) Housing programs: tribal housing program.
As introduced on January 22, 2024 – Support
As referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, along with the American Planning Association California Chapter, are proud to support AB 1878, which would create the Tribal Housing Advisory Committee within the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency (BCSH), which upon appropriation by the Legislature, creates an advisory committee composed of tribal representatives with the knowledge, experience, and expertise in tribal housing, tribal land, tribal government, tribal policy, and tribal law to close the gap of inconsistencies and barriers for tribes to successfully access state-funded grant programs.

Counties and tribes have shared interests in promoting economic development and self-sufficiency for their overlapping constituencies, promoting the general health, safety, well-being of the entire community, and infrastructure that is beneficial to all. Additionally, counties continue to advocate for more federal and state support to build and maintain housing for low-income Californians and develop creative financing models to increase the feasibility for more projects. AB 1878 help tribes achieve sustainable, safe, and affordable homes while reconstituting on ancestral lands where they can prosper and preserve their cultural heritage.

To make meaningful progress in helping those who are unhoused, CSAC developed the '[AT HOME](#)' Plan. The six-pillar plan (Accountability, Transparency, Housing, Outreach, Mitigation, and Economic Opportunity) is designed to make true progress to effectively address homelessness at every level - state, local and federal. Through the AT-HOME Plan, CSAC is working to identify the policy changes needed to build a homelessness system that is effective and accountable including specific recommendations related to prevention, housing, the unsheltered response system, and sustainable funding. AB 1878 aligns with our AT HOME efforts, specifically as it relates to the Housing pillar.

Counties are committed to promoting and supporting the development of positive working relationships between counties and tribes to the mutual benefit of both parties and the communities they respectively serve. For these reasons, CSAC, UCC and RCRC are proud to support AB 1878. If you need additional information, please contact 916.591.2764 or mneuburger@counties.org.

Sincerely,



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Erik de Kok, AICP
Vice President Policy and Legislation
APA California

CC: The Honorable Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia
The Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Jennifer Swenson, Senior Consultant, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
William Weber, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Assemblymember Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Room 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1957 (Wilson) Public contracts: best value construction contracting for counties.
As amended on April 8, 2024 – Support
Set for Hearing – May 1, 2024 - Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, is proud to support AB 1957, which will extend best value contracting to allow all counties to attract a more qualified and stronger contractor bidding pool, reduce bad actors during the contractor selection process, and increase the percentage of skilled craftworkers on county construction projects while reducing the otherwise contentious relationships fostered under the traditional low-bid process; this gives counties the ability to select the contractor with skill sets directly applicable to the requirements of the project.

Best value contracting was established as a pilot program under SB 762 (Wolk – 2015) and expanded by SB 793 (Hill – 2017) and SB 128 (Beall – 2019). The authority allows counties to award contracts for construction projects in excess of \$1 million to the bidder representing the best value. The participating counties are Alameda, Los Angeles, Monterey, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Yuba. The current authority expires on January 1, 2025.

This bill would authorize any county of the state to utilize this program and would extend the operation of the program until January 1, 2030, and require the County Board of Supervisors to submit a report that contains specified information about the projects awarded using the BV procedures to the Legislature and the Joint Legislative Budget Committee before March 1, 2029.

For counties, the ability to participate in the best value process has provided substantial benefits, including improved project control and quality. These projects have started and finished more efficiently and on budget. Further, best value contracting proved to lessen administrative costs and time by increasing contract terms through renewal options, which also helps increase the capacity to deliver more projects in less time. This drives

more high-quality construction work into the statewide construction marketplace while reducing administrative burdens.

CSAC supports addressing significant barriers of well-intentioned tools and processes being used to block projects or create local challenges to growth. For these reasons, CSAC is proud to support AB 1957. If you need additional information, please contact 916.591.2764 or mneuburger@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Neuburger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being more prominent than the last name "Neuburger".

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Mark McKenzie, Staff Director, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
William Weber, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Assembly Bill 2051 (Bonta) PSYPACT – SUPPORT
As Amended April 17, 2024**

Dear Chair Wicks,

On behalf of Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and Urban Counties of California (UCC) we support Assembly Bill 2051, authored by Assembly Member Bonta, to add California to the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT). This measure will increase access to behavioral health services in California at a critical time when we are facing both a mental health crisis and a workforce shortage.

Counties provide vital mental health and substance use disorder services, primarily to California's low-income populations with serious mental illness and substance use disorders, through Medi-Cal and other programs.

Today, nearly one in six Californians is experiencing some form of mental illness, but access to care is devastatingly limited. According to a 2018 poll by the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF) and the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), only 23% of Californians received the mental health services they needed. This disparity between need and access to care is in large part due to the ever-worsening behavioral health workforce shortage. Attrition across the industry will exacerbate this shortage in the years to come. According to the Steinberg Institute, to meet the growing need for behavioral health services and attrition across the field, California will need to add nearly 375,000 behavioral health workers over the next decade. Specifically, California will need to add approximately 30,000 psychologists to its workforce over the next 10 years.

When Californians do find a psychologist, they cannot see them when they are traveling out of state or if they relocate to another state, disrupting their care. This is particularly important for young adults who move out of the state to attend college. The current psychology workforce and existing laws surrounding the practice of psychology do not adequately address or accurately reflect the needs of Californians.

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Bill 2051 (Bonta)
April 30, 2024
Page 2

Occupational licensure compacts are one way we can address the behavioral health workforce shortage and get Californians the care they need now. Through licensure compacts, states establish and agree upon uniform standards that enable multi-state practice. There are currently 15 Occupational Licensure Compacts recognized by the National Center for Interstate Compacts. PSYPACT, the occupational licensure compact for psychologists, was created by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASSPB) in 2014. To date, 40 states have enacted PSYPACT legislation, and joined the compact. By providing a means for psychologists to practice across state lines, PSYPACT increases access to care and allows for continuity of care when patients or providers relocate or travel. Because all compact states enact the same model legislation, PSYPACT promotes cooperation between states and provides a means for telepsychology regulation and consumer protection.

California can't afford not to join PSYPACT. We must use all tools at our disposal to address our behavioral health workforce shortage and ensure clients have access to care and continuity of care. For these reasons, RCRC, CSAC, and UCC are pleased to support AB 2051, and respectfully request your "Aye" vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California
sdukett@rcrcnet.org
916-447-4806



Kelly Brooks-Lindsey
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California
kbl@hbeadvocacy.com
916-753-0844



Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
jonodera@counties.org
916-591-5308

cc: The Honorable Mia Bonta, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Allegra Kim, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

May 2, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2060 (Soria): Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements: Exemptions
As Amended, April 16, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 California Counties, I write in support of AB 2060 (Soria) which would exempt from certain Lake and Streambed Alteration agreements some activities related to Flood-Managed Aquifer (groundwater) Recharge. This bill will reduce expenditures at the state and local level as we increase groundwater recharge in a safe manner.

In recent years, weather conditions have worsened and are becoming an increasing problem for California. Facing whiplash from drought, counties experienced historic flooding and record snowpack. Counties are on the front lines of support when water emergencies, drought and flood occur. Our communities are dependent upon reliable water supply, flood control planning and water distribution at the state and local level. While recent years have been marked by flooding and historic snowpack levels, it is clear that these types of wet years are unreliable, and California will need to adapt to extremes in future and drought years.

In March 2023, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order, authorizing water agencies with a set of reporting requirements and safety parameters, to divert excess flood flows on rivers and streams for the purpose of groundwater recharge, without the need to obtain a costly and time-consuming permit. The process established by this Executive Order was later codified in SB 122 (Committee on Budget, 2023) with additional requirements for diverters and to better protect groundwater quality and downstream water users.

CSAC supports projects and programs that invest in water supplies through a variety of means, from recycling to stormwater capture. Groundwater recharge during high flood flow events is one of the most effective ways to move water into long-term storage, and to bring over-drafted basins into balance. CSAC encourages legislation that focuses on movement to groundwater sustainability through the local implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, dedicated groundwater recharge, and expedited permitting for recharge events.

We agree with Assemblymember Soria that it is now more important than ever that we do everything in our power to capture water during wet years to be better positioned to endure the dry years. Our state must act now to address the challenges we know we face from climate change: wetter wet years and drier dry years. It is crucial that we provide every possible tool to water managers in our state, ensuring they can capture wet-year water and put it to beneficial use in dry years. SB 2060 is a common-sense approach that will support water managers – especially

groundwater sustainability agencies – by allowing them to divert identified near-flood and flood-stage water into groundwater recharge by spreading that water onto farm fields and other open land. This has tremendous potential to help local government entities meet their goals under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

AB 2060 carries forward the progress of the Executive Order and SB 122 by allowing more recharge projects to be completed in a safe and responsible manner. It is for these reasons CSAC is proud to support AB 2060 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 662-6400 or cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine Freeman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Catherine Freeman
Senior Legislative Advocate

Cc: Assembly Member Esmeralda Soria
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee

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**CEO**

Graham Knaus

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2079 (BENNETT) Groundwater extraction: large-diameter, high-capacity water wells: permits.
As amended, April 25, 2024 – Oppose Unless Amended**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 of California Counties, we respectfully oppose unless amended AB 2079 (Bennett) because the bill restricts the local control of groundwater previously guaranteed by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The proposed requirements in the bill would mandate ministerial permitting agencies deny all large-diameter, high-capacity wells within a quarter mile of a well used for supplying domestic water to one or more persons or to a community.

A Second Bite at the Apple? AB 2079 would attempt to fundamentally redirect groundwater management from the original intent of SGMA—to allow for flexible local control based on hydrologic conditions. At this point in time, all basins above a medium priority are required to be managed under a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) under Water Code Sec. 10720.7 (a)(2). Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) must annually report to the Department of Water Resources on progress towards sustainability (WC Sec. 10728). SGMA anticipated development of new locally-managed rules culminating with final approval and adoption of GSPs by 2025 in all required basins.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has already had an opportunity to review all GSPs and to make recommendations to approve and adopt, or to reject and move these basins to probationary hearings at the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The DWR will continue to review progress made towards these approved plans annually. This process is clearly set out within the SGMA legislation and subsequent guidance documents. Those basins that have moved to the SWRCB will move through the SGMA outlined probationary hearing process, will be afforded due process through a public hearing schedule. CSAC, along with partner GSAs and water agencies, is closely following these probationary hearings.

In addition, counties and GSAs have expended significant sums in their efforts to comply with SGMA and prepare paths forward toward sustainability. By essentially replacing the local control element of SGMA related to well interference and subsidence mitigation with a statewide, inflexible mandate, this bill makes these expenditures superfluous. Keeping the focus on a holistic approach to groundwater sustainability that is driven by local knowledge will maintain meaning behind the public funds already invested in SGMA and will ensure that locals can tailor their strategies to local conditions.

Hydrology and Geology Matter. The bill seems to be intended to address well spacing issues but does not respect varying hydrology and geology throughout the state of California. SGMA anticipates that the state will continue to support our thriving California farming and manufacturing communities. Water supply is critical to these economies. The legislation anticipates that if an individual or business has a domestic well, even in a developed area, or an area with an abundance of groundwater, a large-diameter, modern well will interfere with a domestic well. This includes water banks, groundwater recharge areas, and basin boundary areas. The legislation would exempt the same large diameter well to be developed in a rural residential area regardless of the amount of water withdrawn. The bill does not exclude well replacement or modernization of existing wells, nor does it consider the efficiency of new wells over time.

When SGMA was developed, the focus on achieving groundwater sustainability was rightfully on the relative use of groundwater: on how much water is used. It did not focus on how many wells are or may be in existence. This is because achieving sustainability depends on inputs and outputs overall, not how many locations that can extract groundwater.

While we understand the seriousness of subsidence, the issue remains an overall use question. A new well does not give a water user any entitlement to using a certain amount of water. The amount available to use is regulated by state law and the relevant groundwater sustainability plan developed pursuant to SGMA. Thus, this bill's pure focus on new wells is misplaced. Continued focus on sufficient GSPs and compliance with those GSPs is necessary to ensuring that SGMA's goals are reached and negative consequences like subsidence are reduced.

Notifications Cumbersome and Expensive. The notification process outlined in the legislation is cumbersome and expensive—and may be difficult to achieve. The notifications are overly complicated and unnecessary in some cases. Counties are often the lead agency but are not always the Local Enforcement Agency (LEA). The bill includes confusing notification language requiring a LEA to also notify all other LEAs administering well programs within a basin regardless of whether that LEA is within the jurisdiction of the LEA or not. The legislation requires LEA to notify by written US Postal Service all owners or agents of all parcels within a one-mile radius—including in areas where rural postal service is challenged by closed post offices and services. Failure to meet any of these multiple requirements would likely result in lawsuits.

Moving Forward. Counties are working with the Administration and will continue to increase communication and information sharing regarding SGMA, with our partners at the GSAs. CSAC supports a continued focus on groundwater, basin management and the implementation of local water policies with support from state and federal partners. We encourage legislation that focuses on movement to groundwater sustainability through the local implementation of SGMA, dedicated groundwater recharge, and expedited permitting for recharge events. We remain committed to establishing strong Groundwater Sustainability Plans, driven at the local level, and look forward to continuing to work with our county partners to achieve water sustainability statewide.

For these reasons we must respectfully oppose AB 2079. For more information, please contact Catherine Freeman at cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine Freeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Catherine Freeman
Senior Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)

Cc: Assembly Member Steve Bennett
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2104 (Soria) – SUPPORT
As Introduced February 5, 2024**

Dear Chair Wicks,

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and Urban Counties of California (UCC), we support Assembly Bill 2104 (Soria). This measure would direct the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to establish a pilot program to allow up to 15 community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

The shortage of health professionals in California, and particularly in rural areas of the state, has been a persistent concern for many years, and has become more acute in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the aging of the health care workforce. Rural areas with smaller populations that are farther from urban centers often have the lowest supply of health professionals per capita. Further, rural California does not have a high concentration of the four-year universities needed for graduate degree health professionals; however, often these communities have access to community college programs. However, problems are not isolated to rural areas. The Inland Empire and the Central Valley are two of the fastest growing regions in California, and they are the two areas that have the lowest per capita health workforce. It's also a challenge to recruit and retain people in the Central Valley and Inland Empire that reflect the diversity and language capabilities of these regions.

A recent [study](#) by the Healthforce Center at the University of California, San Francisco, which examines the healthcare workforce landscape in rural and the County Medical Services program (CMSP) counties, found that the Imperial Valley (Imperial), North Central region (Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Tehama), and the San Joaquin Valley (Kings, Madera, Merced, Tulare) sub-regions have the lowest ratios of RNs per capita in the state. Statewide estimates show California faces a shortage of about 36,000 licensed nurses.

California's current healthcare workforce development apparatus is not equipped to handle the growing nursing needs of the state, especially in disadvantaged

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Bill 2104 - SUPPORT
April 30, 2024
Page 2

communities and in rural parts of the state. While California's Community College system does offer associate degrees in nursing, the needs of the healthcare workforce more frequently demand a bachelor's degree. This level of degree is exclusive in California to private institutions that are prohibitively expensive, or to the University of California and the California State University systems which have limited capacity and difficulty serving areas of the state with the highest need.

In order to meet our nursing workforce needs and extend these career opportunities to Californians throughout the state, we must expand the role of our community college system. AB 2104 will take the first step in this process by allowing a limited number of community college districts to expand their nursing programs to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. This will expand the access and affordability of these degrees and will demonstrate how these offerings might be further expanded to additional community college districts.

For these reasons, our organizations are pleased to support AB 2104, and respectfully request your "Aye" vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California
sdukett@rcrcnet.org
916-447-4806



Kelly Brooks-Lindsey
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California
kbl@hbeadvocacy.com
916-753-0844



Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
jonodera@counties.org
916-591-5308

cc: The Honorable Esmeralda Soria, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Natasha Collins, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus



April 26, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2149 (Connolly) – Oppose Unless Amended
As Amended April 17, 2024**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) we must regrettably oppose your Assembly Bill 2149 unless amended. This measure creates a requirement for counties to be involved in the regulation and enforcement gates that meet the bills very broad definition.

Counties are responsible for providing a wide array of critical services including, treating individuals living with mental illness, managing solid waste, ensuring accurate weights and measures as well as maintaining local roads and bridges. Counties are providing many of these services in extremely constrained fiscal environments. Additionally, the process for counties to obtain funding through the states mandates process is lengthy and provides no guarantee of an adequate level of funding if successful. Moreover, the state has suspended mandate funding in past period of strained budgets and is likely to do so to solve current budget challenges. It is in this environment that counties raise our concerns with AB 2149.

AB 2149 creates an entirely new regulatory and enforcement burden on counties at a scale that is unworkable. As currently drafted, the bill's definition of a regulated gate covers a wide universe of barriers that would likely create enforcement duties over thousands of gates in each county. This would create the need to train existing and hire new county staff to perform the enforcement duties required by this bill. With the wide universe of gates involved and the industry incentive to compel the installation of the hardware required by this bill, it is likely that county staffing costs statewide could be range from the mid to high hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. Additionally, we are greatly concerned with the sponsors testimony in Assembly Judiciary indicating that counties would recover their enforcement costs from the fines authorized by the bill. The legislature has made clear in several public safety statutes that county governments

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The Honorable Damon Connolly
Assembly Bill 2149 (Connolly)
April 9, 2024
Page 2

should not utilize administrative penalties and fees to fund their operations. We believe the legislature's guidance provided in the public safety area apply equally to this bill and note that this would create costs implication on any future mandate claims made pursuant to this bill.

After discussions with the author's office, it seems clear that a local government role is a key part of this effort. However, we don't believe all of our members have uniform agreement that county involvement in this regulatory space is the most effective way to address the risks identified by this bill. With that in mind and to reduce the fiscal impacts, we suggest amending the bill to create a process where county regulatory and enforcement involvement only occurs when a county Board of Supervisors takes an affirmative step to enforce the county provisions of this bill.

We note that the current definition of regulated gate in the bill does not adequately focus attention on the type of gates that motivated the introduction of this bill. To further reduce the fiscal impacts of this measure, we suggest that the author's office focus the bill on the types of gates that pose the greatest risk to the populations they are seeking to protect. This would ensure that counties have a clear understanding of the scope and risk of the gates they are considering to regulate.

For these reasons, RCRC and CSAC are regrettably opposed to AB 2149 unless amended to address our concerns. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tracy Rhine (RCRC) trhine@rcrcnet.org, Mark Neuburger (CSAC) mneuburger@counties.org.

Sincerely,



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

Tracy Rhine
Senior Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California

cc: The Honorable Sharon Quirk Silva, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Local Government Committee
Angela Mapp, Consultant, Assembly Local Government Committee
William Weber, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2276 (Wood): Forestry: timber harvest plans: exemptions.
As Amended: April 17, 2024–SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 California Counties, I write in support of AB 2276 (Wood) which would extend various timber harvest exemptions scheduled to sunset on January 1, 2026 to January 1, 2031. These changes were created to decrease the risk of wildfire through strategic exemptions to the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 which prohibits a person from conducting timber operations without a timber harvesting plan (THP) approved by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Specifically, this bill would:

- (1) Repeal the Small Timberland Owner Exemption;
- (2) rename the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption as the Forest Resilience Exemption
- (3) revise the standards and criteria for qualifying for the Forest Resilience Exemption, and extend that and other exemptions until January 1, 2031.

Counties are on the front lines of wildfire emergencies and support measures that maximize California counties' ability to effectively mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural and man-made disasters. Increasing the amount of acreage with wildfire risk-reduced vegetation management, both on the ground and in tree canopies are critical for counties. It is for these reasons CSAC supports AB 2276 and respectfully requests your AYE vote.

Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 662-6400 or cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,

Catherine Freeman
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Assembly Member Jim Wood
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee

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Graham Knaus

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2469 (Committee on Emergency Management) Emergency Management Assistance Compact: California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program As Amended March 21, 2024 – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 California Counties, I write in support of AB 2469 (Committee on Emergency Management). This bill would permanently establish the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

The EMAC is a national interstate mutual aid agreement that enables states to share resources during times of disaster. Climate change and a multitude of other factors are having a monumental impact on states' resources – including both inside and outside of California. Reliance on emergency aid resources outside of a state's borders will only increase if current trends continue. The EMAC serves as an additional tool to assist local jurisdictions in case of an emergency.

CSAC supports legislative proposals that maximize California counties' ability to effectively mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural and man-made disasters. Emergency management and homeland security policies should be designed to permit maximum flexibility, so that services can best target individual community needs, hazards, threats, and capacities. As such, CSAC advocates for improved coordination between state and local offices of emergency services and state and local departments. AB 2469 accomplishes this by making the EMAC operative permanently.

Additionally, CSAC supports efforts around supplementing the state's response to mitigating the risks of fire as the California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program aims to do. Therefore, extending the program's repeal date to July 1, 2030 as the bill would require is imperative in achieving these goals. It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2469 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,

Catherine Freeman
Senior Legislative Advocate

Cc: Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee

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**CEO**

Graham Knaus

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Assemblymember Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Room 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2485 (J. Carrillo) Regional housing need: determination.
As amended on March 19, 2024 – Support
As Referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, is proud to support AB 2485, which would establish procedures for the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to publicize its data sources, analyses, and methodology before finalizing a region's regional determination and would require HCD to establish and convene a panel of experts to advise the department on its assumptions, data, and analyses before making its final determination on a region.

Given the potential for the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process to help alleviate the state's housing crisis, accompanied by the sheer magnitude of needed housing compared to what has been built in the past, there is severe risk to the credibility of the process if it is insufficiently transparent, credible, and robust. An accountable system to address homelessness requires transparency. Improved data systems are important to improve effectiveness of countywide systems.

Regional agencies in California play an important role in the allocation of regional housing need numbers, programming of Federal and State transportation dollars, in addressing air quality non-attainment problems, and climate change to name a few. Regional collaboration remains crucial to address issues associated with growth in California, such as revenue equity issues, service responsibilities, a seamless and efficient transportation network, reducing GHGs and tackling climate change, job creation, housing, agricultural and resource protection, and open space designation.

If a local Housing Element is based on an inaccurate RHNA determination, that could directly translate to housing units that are unaccounted for and thus remain unbuilt. This is made even more critical given that RHNA accounts for future growth as well as current need. In a March 2022 letter to the Legislature, the California State Auditor found that two of the three COG regions it studied had received underassessed housing needs. Therefore, it is imperative that the determinations provided to each region, and the housing allocation provided to each jurisdiction, be as accurate as possible, while ensuring that the communities using these numbers are confident in that accuracy.

To make meaningful progress in helping those who are unhoused, CSAC developed the '[AT HOME](#)' Plan. The six-pillar plan (Accountability, Transparency, Housing, Outreach, Mitigation, and Economic Opportunity) is designed to make true progress to effectively address homelessness at every level - state, local and federal. Through the AT-HOME Plan, CSAC is working to identify the policy changes needed to build a homelessness system that is effective and accountable including specific recommendations related to prevention, housing, the unsheltered response system, and sustainable funding. AB 2485 aligns with our AT HOME efforts, specifically as it relates to the Housing and Transparency pillars.

For these reasons, CSAC is proud to support AB 2485. If you need additional information, please contact 916.591.2764 or mneuburger@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Neuburger". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Mark McKenzie, Staff Director, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
William Weber, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

May 2, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2501 (Alvarez) Water quality control plans: donations and grants.
As Amended, March 11, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 California Counties, I write in support of AB 2501 (Alvarez) which would authorize the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to accept funding from public agencies and other partners for public benefit projects within the jurisdiction of the State Water Board and on behalf of a Regional Water Quality Control Board (regional water board).

Specifically, AB 2501 authorizes the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to accept moneys from specified entities for advancing public benefit projects. AB 2501 authorizes the State Water Board, on behalf of itself or a Regional Water Quality Control Board to accept moneys from donations, grants, or contributions, or through contractual agreements, from public agencies, foundations, or other nonprofit entities for the purpose of planning, permitting, or providing technical support for public benefit projects. The bill provides common sense measures for accountability related to non-state funding. The bill also requires the State Water Board, before accepting any moneys pursuant to this bill, to provide notice of its intent to accept those moneys and provide a description of the associated public benefit of those moneys.

Counties spend significant amounts of money to advance public interest projects. Counties support the advancement of critical climate adaptation and restoration projects that are often funded together with project proponents, state agencies, and local philanthropic organizations. At times, the state may hold up a project due to state administrative challenges. This bill provides a common sense, optional approach to supporting partners at all levels, to expedite critical projects—saving the state and local agencies money and time.

AB 2501 continues the work of counties to increase and expedite public benefit projects with careful consideration of accountability and transparency. For these reasons CSAC is proud to support AB 2501 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 662-6400 or cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine Freeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Catherine Freeman
Senior Legislative Advocate

Cc: Assemblymember David Alvarez
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee



April 24, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2564 (Boerner) Senior Citizens and Disabled Citizens Property Tax Postponement Fund.
Notice of SUPPORT (02/14/2024)

Dear Chair Wicks,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) are pleased to **support** AB 2564 by Assembly Member Boerner, which would reinstate General Fund support for the Senior Citizens and Disabled Citizens Property Tax Postponement Program (PTP), by requiring an annual transfer of General Fund moneys when the balance of the Senior Citizens and Disabled Citizens Property Tax Postponement Fund (Fund) is less than \$15 million.

Existing law establishes the PTP Program within the State Controller's Office (SCO), which allows homeowners who are seniors or have a disability (who meet specified criteria) to defer current-year property taxes on their principal residence. This deferred payment is secured by a lien against the property that is later repaid when the property is sold or refinanced, and the property taxes are paid by the SCO.

Due to numerous reasons, the PTP Program is in jeopardy of being unable to fund all eligible applicants. AB 2564 remedies this problem by providing ongoing General Fund support to the Fund by ensuring the Fund's balance is never below \$15 million at the start of the fiscal year. While we acknowledge there is a significant budget problem, AB 2564 would have negligible impacts on future budgets. AB 2564 is an incremental yet meaningful investment in preventing losses in homeownership among our most vulnerable residents. For these reasons, Cal Cities and CSAC supports AB 2564. If you have any questions, please contact us at btriffo@calcities.org or elawyer@counties.org.

Ben Triffo
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities

Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Cc: The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Irene Ho, Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Member, Republican Caucus



May 2, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2591 (Quirk-Silva) – Local government: youth commission
As Amended April 9, 2024 – OPPOSE**

Dear Chair Wicks:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Urban Counties of California (UCC), and the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), we regretfully oppose Assembly Bill 2591 (Quirk-Silva). This bill creates a new mandated local program by requiring cities and counties to establish a youth commission in response to petitions from high school pupils enrolled in their jurisdiction.

Counties and cities do not take issue with the policy of establishing local youth commissions. Local governments have the authority to create boards and commissions based on local needs, available funding, and staff resources. Local governments frequently use that authority to establish boards, commissions, and advisory bodies to ensure they are informed by the diverse perspectives of their communities. While we appreciate the bill's intent to expand access to civic engagement for youth, as currently drafted, the provisions would create a new mandate that will require significant investment in staff resources without a corresponding allocation of funds. Furthermore, the bill would override the structure of the existing ninety-nine local youth commissions that were developed based on local needs and conditions.

As Brown Act-governed bodies, commissions require financial resources to fund the staff time required to respond to the initial petition and create the body, fill vacancies, provide the venue, staff the meetings, and fulfill Brown Act requirements (e.g., agenda preparation, meeting minutes, coordination with commission members). In addition, local jurisdictions will likely incur costs related to liability insurance, travel, background checks mandated reporter training for staff, and Brown Act training for commission members.

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Bill 2591 – OPPOSE
May 2, 2024
Page 2

Given the serious fiscal challenges that exist at all levels of government, it is increasingly unlikely that counties and cities would have the necessary resources to meet this new requirement.

In addition to the real, direct costs imposed on local governments, the bill creates unnecessary opportunity costs for the time spent on a state-prescribed activity that could have been spent on issues of greater need for that community. Given the large backlog of unpaid state mandate claims, local jurisdictions are struggling to keep existing state-mandated programs operating. According to data obtained from the State Controller's Office, as of mid-February 2024, the state owes local agencies \$\$969 million including accrued interest for costs incurred to carry out the state's programs.

Establishing new meeting bodies, which would presumably be funded by redirecting local General Fund dollars from existing programs, must remain a local decision based on local conditions and needs. For the reasons outlined above, RCRC, CSAC, UCC, and Cal Cities respectfully oppose AB 2591 and request your "No" vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact our organizations.

Sincerely,



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
RCRC
sdukett@rcrcnet.org



Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate
CSAC
elawyer@counties.org



Jean Hurst
Legislative Advocate
UCC
jkh@hbeadvocacy.com



Johnnie Pina
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
Cal Cities
jpina@calcities.org

cc: The Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jennifer Swenson, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus

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May 1, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2594 (Committee on Emergency Management) Emergency services: mutual aid: gap analysis.
As Introduced February 14, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Rodriguez,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 California Counties, I write in support of AB 2594 (Committee on Emergency Management), requiring a biennial gap analysis of the state's mutual aid systems.

The risks of disasters impacting multi-county jurisdictions have increased throughout the years. From flooding to wildfires, climate change and a multitude of other factors are having a monumental impact on the state's resources. To effectively respond to an evolving landscape, it is appropriate for the state to evaluate gaps in its mutual aid system and develop strategies that would assist local government operations in their response capabilities.

CSAC supports proposals recognizing that the 58 California counties have unique characteristics, differing capacities, and diverse environments. Additionally, counties seek improved coordination between state and local offices of emergency services and state and local departments with health and safety-related responsibilities. AB 2594 addresses this by requiring a gap analysis in the mutual aid system, and thereby providing a foundation to improve resource levels and coordination throughout the state in preparation of major disasters.

CSAC is proud to support AB 2594 and we respectfully request your AYE vote. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 662-6400 or cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,

Catherine Freeman
Senior Legislative Advocate

Cc: Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee



April 26, 2024

The Honorable Isaac Bryan
Member of the Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5630
Sacramento CA 95814

**RE: AB 2625 (Bryan) – Courts Notification System
As amended 4/11/2024 – OPPOSE
Awaiting hearing – Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Bryan:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Urban Counties of California (UCC), and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we write to jointly express our respectful opposition to AB 2625, your measure that would require counties to develop a court reminder notification system to notify individuals of court appearances.

While our associations do not dispute the value and benefits of the underlying policy objective, counties must oppose this measure for fiscal and operational reasons. Importantly, the assignment of this responsibility to counties – when it is, in fact, the courts that possess the case-level data necessary to accurately and timely notify defendants of upcoming court hearings – creates additional complexities, resulting in higher costs.

▪ **Counties do not have access to real-time data necessary to effectuate this new mandate. Establishing connections to local court case management systems would be costly.**

Far-reaching reforms to create a single, statewide trial court system began in the late 1980s. Pursuant to multiple pieces of landmark legislation, including the Lockyer-Isenberg Trial Court Funding Act (AB 233, Escutia – Ch. 850, Statutes of 1997), counties and courts undertook a deliberate and painstaking process to identify and differentiate local court and county functions. While inextricable ties continue to link courts and counties at the local level, trial courts' local case management systems operate fully outside of county control and authority. AB 2625 would require courts and counties alike to establish new technological pathways to permit sharing of real-time case-level data necessary to allow counties to develop a court notification system statewide. Additionally, the provisions in the bill that would allow other public and non-

governmental entities to send text notifications contemplate additional and costly re-engineering.

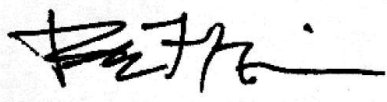
- **AB 2625 would impose a blanket mandate across all 58 counties, but the measure does not appear to contemplate accommodation of court hearing notification systems that are currently operational.**

Irrespective of the fact that numerous jurisdictions in the state currently operate court notification systems, it is our belief that the requirement in proposed Penal Code section 1425 that “each county shall develop a court reminder system” would require some counties to undertake redundant work to fulfill this new obligation.

Given the operational complexities identified above, counties believe that the costs to implement AB 2625 would exceed those identified with previous bills¹ that would have required the Judicial Council to create a statewide mechanism to send court hearing notifications. Ultimately, our associations believe that the assignment of this responsibility to counties seems misplaced, confusing, duplicative, and expensive to implement.

The considerable fiscal impacts contemplated by this measure come at a time when neither the state nor counties have sufficient resources to perform their existing responsibilities. For these reasons, CSAC, UCC, and RCRC must therefore respectfully oppose this measure. Please feel free to contact Ryan Morimune at CSAC (rmorimune@counties.org), Elizabeth Espinosa at UCC (ehe@hbeadvocacy.com), or Sarah Dukett at RCRC (sdukett@rcrcnet.org) for any questions on our associations’ perspectives. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Ryan Morimune
Legislative Representative
CSAC



Elizabeth Espinosa
Legislative Representative
UCC



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
RCRC

cc: Members and Counsel, Assembly Appropriations Committee

¹ SB 255 (Umberg, 2023) and SB 850 (Umberg, 2023).

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Graham Knaus

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2660 (Committee on Emergency Management) Office of Emergency Services:
federal grant funding.
As Introduced February 14, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 California Counties, I write in support of AB 2660 (Committee on Emergency Management), which would require the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to allocate the maximum local share of specified federal grant funding to local operational areas.

Counties typically serve as the lead agency of an operational area during a disaster. As such, CSAC supports legislative proposals that maximize California counties' ability to effectively prepare for and respond to natural and man-made disasters and public health emergencies. This includes supporting full funding for on-going emergency preparedness and all hazard planning at the state and local level.

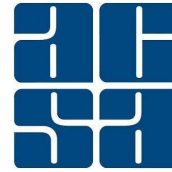
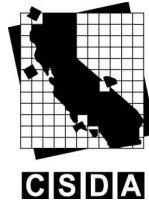
AB 2660 bolsters the capability of counties to respond to emergencies. The proposed measure maximizes the local share of grant programs that aim at sustaining core capabilities focused on prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery mission areas, including the evolving threats and risks associated with climate change.

It is for these reasons CSAC is proud to support AB 2660 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 662-6400 or cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,

Catherine Freeman
Senior Legislative Advocate

Cc: Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee



May 2, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks, Chair
 Assembly Appropriations Committee
 1021 O Street, Suite 8140
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 2751 (Haney): Employer communications during nonworking hours
 As amended 3/21/24 – OPPOSE
 Awaiting hearing – Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities (CalCities), the California Special Districts Association (CSDA), the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), and Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM), we write to express our opposition to your Assembly Bill 2751, a measure that would prohibit communication between employers and employees outside of an ambiguous definition of “emergency”. Even though the bill is clearly intended to apply to public agency employers, AB 2751 raises considerable concerns, questions, and potential unintended consequences for counties, cities, and special districts and our employees. As a result, the measure has the potential to create significant uncertainty regarding the delivery of important local programs and services.

As you know, the provision of government services is a 24-hour, 7-day per week obligation. Local agencies construct their employee work periods in a collaborative manner through the collective bargaining process with duly recognized employee organizations. Those negotiations result in collective bargaining agreements that outline the terms of employment, including pay, benefits, hours, leave, job health and safety policies, as well as ways to balance work and home obligations. Even though it exempts employees subject to a collective bargaining agreement, AB 2571 would likely require reopening such agreements to negotiate new provisions associated with establishing contact outside of work hours. Further, local agencies also have employees that are not subject to a collective bargaining agreement; often these individuals have management or director responsibilities that facilitate and direct departmental activities which are inherently different from the activities of other types of employees. Other agencies, particularly smaller agencies, may not have collective bargaining agreements, or have collective bargaining agreements covering a portion of employees, while still providing important services in their communities. Agreements with these non-represented employees would also have to be amended to accommodate the provisions of the measure. AB 2751’s blanket prohibition represents a “one size fits all” approach that may not be appropriate for the government sector as it creates burdensome challenges for ensuring suitable service levels around the clock, and has implications for represented and non-represented employees.

There are also a number of new definitions and references in AB 2751 that are vague and confusing. For example, we are unclear as to who is considered an “employer” and “employee” under the measure. Managers, directors, and other appointed and/or elected officials may run individual

agency departments, while the local governing body – who are clearly not employees – sets policy and direction for the local agency. Who is to assume responsibility for contacting which employees if contact is necessary after hours? The bill also does not appear to address “on-call” employees, who do not necessarily have assigned hours of work. The lack of clarity in the measure will undoubtedly create considerable challenges for public agency employers and, in doing so, potentially undermine the provision of public services.

In addition, pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, any person employed by a county, city, state agency, or school district or special district in California is a public employee and considered a disaster service worker. This means that all public employees may be required to serve as disaster service workers in support of government efforts for disaster response and recovery efforts. AB 2751 is sufficiently vague regarding such obligations as to raise questions about how disaster service workers would be contacted outside of their normal work period for this purpose. If employees must “disconnect,” how may they be reached in an emergency? How would local agencies ensure that they have access to sufficient personnel to respond to an emergency? Also, the definition of “emergency” is likely to result in a difference of opinion as to what constitutes an emergency, creating additional confusion at what will likely be the most inopportune time.

While we appreciate the goal of ensuring that employees are able to have time for themselves and their families, we respectfully suggest that the provisions of AB 2751 are problematic for local public agencies, their employees, and the communities we serve. As a result, we are opposed to AB 2751. If you have questions about our position, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Jean Kinney Hurst
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California



Aaron Avery
Director of State Legislative Affairs
California Special Districts Association



Dorothy Johnson
Legislative Advocate
Association of California School Administrators



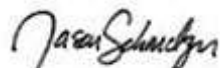
Johnnie Pina
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities



Kalyn Dean
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California



Jason Schmelzer
Legislative Advocate
PRISM

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Matt Haney, California State Assembly

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Graham Knaus

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Jim Wood
California State Assembly
1021 O St., Room 8320
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2902 (Wood): Organic waste: reduction regulations: exemptions.
As Amended April 10, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wood,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), which represents all 58 counties in California, I write in support of your AB 2902. One of CSAC's top Legislative Priorities in 2024 is addressing the issues that counties face in their efforts to meet the state's SB 1383 organic waste diversion goals. AB 2902 provides necessary flexibility for small and rural communities, where the regulations are especially difficult to comply with.

In passing SB 1383, the state established methane emission reduction targets statewide, with a goal of reducing methane producing organic waste in landfills by 50% by 2025. California counties are committed to doing their part in addressing methane emissions, but there is no one size fits all approach that will work in every community. By extending the existing rural exemption for counties with less than 70,000 residents, AB 2902 allows this progress to continue without laying undue burden on smaller, rural counties.

The rural exemption, which is set to expire in 2037, applies to 19 counties which collectively make up only around 1.5% of the state's total population. Counties with low populations totals have different organic waste profiles and management strategies compared to larger suburban and urban counties. AB 2902 creates a pathway for smaller counties to innovate and submit alternative organic waste management plans that are better suited to the realities of these smaller counties.

California is a diverse state both in identity and geography, AB 2902 takes this truth into consideration. Many California counties' entire populations reside in mountainous and high-altitude areas, where bear and human populations must coexist. The exemption process provided by this bill for jurisdictions in higher altitude areas remedies the threats posed to public health by organic waste bins due to bears.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2902. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at awaelder@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Ada W'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ada Waelder

April 15, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Member, California State Assembly
1021 O. St, Room 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2922 (Garcia) Economic development: capital investment incentive programs.
Notice of SUPPORT (2/15/2024)

Dear Chair Wicks,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and California State Association of Counties (CSAC) are proud to **support AB 2922 (Garcia)**. This measure seeks to extend the authorization for capital investment incentive programs until January 1, 2035.

Under prior law, until January 1, 2024, counties, city and counties, and cities were authorized to establish these programs, which allowed them to offer incentives, such as tax breaks, to attract large manufacturing facilities to invest in their communities. These programs aimed to encourage industries like high technology, aerospace, automotive, biotechnology, software, and environmental sources to locate and invest in California.

By extending the authorization for capital investment incentive programs, this measure ensures that local governments can continue to drive economic growth, job creation, and community development across California. These programs have been effective in attracting investment from key industries, stimulating local economies, and enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.

For these reasons, Cal Cities and CSAC are pleased to **Support AB 2922**. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at bguertin@calcities.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brady Guertin".

Brady Guertin
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric Lawyer".

Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Eduardo Garcia
Members, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Jennifer Swenson, Principal Consultant, Assembly Committee on Appropriations



Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 3023 (Papan): Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force: interagency funding strategy: state watershed restoration plans: forest resilience plans: grant program guidelines.
As Amended April 16, 2024—SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 California Counties, I write to support AB 3023 (Papan) relative to state watershed and wildfire plans and grant guidelines. AB 3023 would move the state further toward aligning watershed restoration plans and initiatives with forest resilience actions to achieve greater integration and benefits at the local level. The bill would further require the state to align grant guidelines of climate change, forest, fire, and watershed restoration programs to promote greater program coordination and integrate planning and outcomes.

Counties are on the front lines of water and wildfire disasters. Over the past several years, counties have experienced the brunt of increasingly volatile weather events, drought and flood whiplash, and wind-driven wildfire events. Throughout these changing times, counties have partnered with the state to increase wildfire and community resilience, drought preparedness, and decrease risks to all communities. CSAC also serves as a member of the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, which is making progress integrating local, state, and federal actions.

However, counties are still challenged by legacy integration and coordination issues in our state agency silos. Grants and state assistance programs vary by agency, board, and department. Even if a county has a grant coordinator, the reality is that application processes and reporting requirements can be a significant burden and a deterrent to success. Progress has been made in several departments, including with the Department of Water Resources' groundwater grants, where simplification of the process and reporting resulted in good or better outcomes for policy. Streamlining across state agencies, boards and departments makes sense for everyone.

On behalf of CSAC, we support AB 3023 and its policy goals to align and streamline the grant process, for these reasons we respectfully request your AYE vote. Should you have any questions about our position, please don't hesitate to contact me at cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,

Catherine Freeman
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: Assembly Member Diane Papan
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 895 (Roth) – SUPPORT
As Amended April 25, 2024**

Dear Chair Caballero,

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and Urban Counties of California (UCC) we support Senate Bill 895 (Roth). This measure would direct the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to establish a pilot program to allow up to 15 community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

The shortage of health professionals in California, and in particular the rural areas of the state, has been a persistent concern for many years, and has become more acute in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the aging of the health care workforce. Rural areas with smaller populations that are farther from urban centers often have the lowest supply of health professionals per capita. Further, rural California does not have a high concentration of the four-year universities needed for graduate degree health professionals; however, often these communities have access to community college programs. Health care workforce shortage problems are not isolated to rural areas. The Inland Empire and the Central Valley are two of the fastest growing regions in California, and they are the two areas that have the lowest per capita health workforce. It's also a challenge to recruit and retain people in the Central Valley and Inland Empire that reflect the diversity and language capabilities of these regions.

A recent [study](#) by the Healthforce Center at the University of California, San Francisco, which examines the healthcare workforce landscape in rural and the County Medical Services program (CMSP) counties, found that the Imperial Valley (Imperial), North Central region (Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Tehama), and the San Joaquin Valley (Kings, Madera, Merced, Tulare) sub-regions have the lowest ratios of RNs per capita in the state. Statewide estimates show California faces a shortage of about 36,000 licensed nurses.

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Senate Bill 895 - SUPPORT
April 30, 2024
Page 2

California's current healthcare workforce development apparatus is not equipped to handle the growing nursing needs of the state, especially in disadvantaged communities and in rural parts of the state. While California's Community College system does offer associate degrees in nursing, the needs of the healthcare workforce more frequently demand a bachelor's degree. This level of degree is exclusive in California to private institutions that are prohibitively expensive, or to the University of California and the California State University systems which have limited capacity and difficulty serving areas of the state with the highest need.

In order to meet our nursing workforce needs and extend these career opportunities to Californians throughout the state, we must expand the role of our community college system. SB 895 will take the first step in this process by allowing a limited number of community college districts to expand their nursing programs to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. This will expand the access and affordability of these degrees and will demonstrate how these offerings might be further expanded to additional community college districts.

For these reasons, our organizations are pleased to support SB 895, and respectfully request your "Aye" vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California
sdukett@rcrcnet.org
916-447-4806



Kelly Brooks-Lindsey
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California
kbl@hbeadvocacy.com
916-753-0844



Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
jonodera@counties.org
916-591-5308

CSAC Letters

The Honorable Anna Caballero

Senate Bill 895 - SUPPORT

April 30, 2024

Page 3

cc: The Honorable Richard Roth, Member of the California State Senate
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Lenin Del Castillo, Principal Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Kirk Feely, Fiscal Director, Senate Republican Caucus



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Anna M. Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 964 (Seyarto) – Property tax: tax-defaulted property sales.
As amended April 25, 2024 – OPPOSE
Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Caballero,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the Urban Counties of California (UCC), we write to share our regretful opposition to Senate Bill 964 by Senator Seyarto. This measure would substantially revise the longstanding process for certain sales of tax-defaulted properties by county governments and impose costly new requirements on a state agency without an appropriation to pay for them.

Under current law, residences with unpaid property taxes are prohibited from being sold by a county tax collector¹ until at least a period of five years has elapsed since the initial delinquency—or three years for residences subject to a nuisance abatement lien. Prior to selling the property at auction, the county must issue notices to the owners of the defaulted property and inform the individual of the intent to sell the property. Until the completion of a sale of a property, the owner of the tax-delinquent property can redeem the status of the property by paying any unpaid taxes, assessments, penalties, and fees. During a period of delinquency, tax collectors are required to conduct regular direct outreach to the property owner, notice the sale in a newspaper or public location, and a county board of supervisors must provide approval before a tax-defaulted property sale may occur.

Tax-defaulted properties must be sold to the highest bidder at or above the minimum bid price—determined by the amount of unpaid taxes, penalties, and assessments, in addition to some administrative fees. Upon completion of the sale, the former owner of the property is entitled to claim any excess proceeds resulting from the sale up to one year after the date of the sale. If the property owner does not claim their excess proceeds, the balance may be transferred to the county general fund after being used to reimburse the costs of the sale. This may only occur if a minimum of six years has elapsed since the initial default on a property tax payment – or four years for residences with nuisance abatement liens – during which time county tax collectors conduct regular direct outreach to the property owner.

Counties conduct tax-defaulted property sales through two different methods: a Chapter 7 sale through public auction or sealed bid, or a Chapter 8 sale by agreement, in which a nonprofit organization seeking

¹ In some counties, this role is conducted by the county auditor-controller. However, for the sake of simplicity, this letter refers to county tax collectors, as they represent the majority of county officers responsible for the task.

to rehabilitate substandard properties for low-income housing may object to a Chapter 7 sale and seek a direct sale by agreement with the entity.

SB 964 would impose unnecessary restrictions on how Chapter 8 tax-defaulted property sales may occur, limiting a tool used to build local affordable housing. The bill ignores the expertise of the local tax collector, who may determine that a Chapter 8 sale is more pragmatic, cost effective, and beneficial for their community. Instead, SB 964 would needlessly involve the Board of Equalization in the Chapter 8 sale process, imposing new requirements on a state agency that lacks the existing resources to conduct residential property valuations at the local level. To compound the problem, counties are provided no recourse to appeal valuations that do not comport with local realities.

The bill would require the Board of Equalization to complete property valuations within 45 days, a timeframe it is unlikely to consistently accommodate. While all parties involved would prefer expedition in conducting valuations, imposing such a rapid timeframe on a state agency unaccustomed to this work is likely to lead to rushed work, inviting errors in valuations, especially for distressed properties that are naturally complicated to value.

Counties are in the best position to determine the values of their local properties and conduct sales of tax-defaulted properties in a way that serves the needs of their communities. This bill ignores the input of vast and experienced local expertise in favor of a state agency lacking any direct experience in conducting local residential valuations. The bill undermines a tool used to improve affordable housing stock and values of neighborhoods statewide.

It is for these reasons that CSAC, RCRC, and UCC must regretfully oppose SB 964 and request your NO vote. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact us at the email addresses below.

Sincerely,



Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
elawyer@counties.org



Jean Kinney Hurst
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California
jkh@hbeadvocacy.com



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California
sdukett@rcrcnet.org

cc: The Honorable Kelly Seyarto, California State Senate
Members and Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Karen Lange, Legislative Advocate, California Association of Treasurers and Tax Collectors
Phonxay Keokham, President, California Association of County Treasurers and Tax Collectors

**OFFICERS****President**

Bruce Gibson
San Luis Obispo County

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Graham Knaus

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 983 (Wahab) Energy: gasoline stations and alternative fuel infrastructure.
As amended on March 21, 2024 – Support
Set for Hearing – May 6, 2024 – Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Caballero:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, is proud to support SB 983, which would require the California Energy Commission (CEC) to convene an Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Taskforce, and would require the task force to submit a report to the Legislature with recommendations for deploying alternative fuels infrastructure at existing gas stations. Specifically, the task force includes members from county government, which CSAC strongly supports.

Counties recognize that climate change will have a harmful effect on our environment, public health and economy. Although there remains uncertainty on the pace, distribution and magnitude of the effects of climate change, counties also recognize the need for immediate actions to mitigate the sources of greenhouse gases. In conjunction, counties recognize that adaptation and mitigation are necessary and complementary strategies for responding to climate change impacts. CSAC encourages the state to develop guidance materials for assessing climate impacts that includes adaptation options.

SB 983 seeks to conduct a study on policies to facilitate and accelerate the development of alternative fuels infrastructure at retail gasoline fueling stations, while identifying barriers to this goal and working to ensure compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. This information is critical for counties to better understand how shifting away from fossil fuels will impact our local communities.

For these reasons, CSAC is proud to support SB 983. If you need additional information, please contact 916.591.2764 or mneuburger@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mark Neuburger'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Mark' being particularly prominent.

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Mark McKenzie, Staff Director, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Ted Morley, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



April 29, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 1064 (Laird) – SUPPORT
As Amended April 16, 2024**

Dear Chair Caballero:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), League of California Cities (Cal Cities), and California State Association of Counties (CSAC), we are pleased to support Senate Bill 1064 (Laird), which aims to modernize the state licensing structure for cannabis. This measure represents a crucial step forward in achieving two primary objectives: to encourage economic growth and stability in the legal cannabis industry, and to incentivize local governments to permit commercial cannabis activity by establishing clear responsibilities and a streamlined process, thereby expanding much-needed access to legal retail.

SB 1064 addresses several key challenges faced by cannabis businesses operating in California. One of the most pressing issues is the complexity and inefficiency of the current licensing system, which requires businesses to obtain multiple licenses for different activities conducted at a single location. This not only creates unnecessary administrative burdens for businesses but also increases processing times and costs for both applicants and regulatory agencies.

By replacing the current system with a streamlined process that issues a single premises license for each location, SB 1064 will significantly reduce complexity and streamline the licensing process for cannabis businesses. This will not only make it easier for businesses to comply with regulatory requirements but also improve the efficiency of oversight and enforcement efforts by regulatory agencies.

Additionally, SB 1064 clarifies the roles of state and local governments in the licensing and oversight of cannabis businesses, ensuring that each level of government focuses on its respective areas of expertise. Under current law, state and local government roles in licensing and oversight of cannabis businesses are not well defined and distinguished; as a result, the licensing reviews conducted at the state often duplicate

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Senate Bill 1064 (Laird)
April 29, 2024
Page 2

the reviews conducted by the local government, particularly as it relates to land use and environmental review. As a result, businesses undergo environmental review twice – once at the local level and again at the state level – and each of the business’s owners are often required to complete criminal background checks twice – at both the local and state levels.

This bill would clarify state and local roles as it pertains to licensing of cannabis businesses by focusing state-level review on the operator and cannabis-specific activities performed and returning land use review to local governments. This leverages the state and local governments’ expertise: setting statewide market standards and determining “time, place and manner,” respectively.

Overall, this bill seeks to reduce unnecessary complexity and duplication within the cannabis regulatory environment which is impeding government’s ability to license businesses in a reasonable timeframe and complicating efforts to enforce the law. By doing so, it seeks to reduce challenges and barriers to basic compliance for businesses.

For the above reasons, our organizations are pleased to support SB 1064, and respectfully request your “Aye” vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



SARAH DUKETT
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California
sdukett@rcrcnet.org



JOLENA VOORHIS
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities
jvoorhis@calcities.org



ADA WAELDER
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
awaelder@counties.org

cc: The Honorable John Laird, Member of the California State Senate
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Janelle Miyashiro, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Kirk Feeley, Fiscal Director, Senate Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

April 29, 2024

The Honorable Senator Ben Allen
1021 O Street, Suite 6610
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1143 (Allen) Household hazardous waste: producer responsibility.
As Amended April 18, 2024 - SUPPORT

Senator Allen,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in California, I write in support of SB 1143, which will establish Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Household Hazardous Waste (HHW).

HHW is a broad category of many common products which require special handling and disposal. Improperly disposed HHW exposes recycling and waste workers to avoidable dangers and increases insurance costs to operators. California's HHW collection and management system hinges on the work of local governments who are drastically under-resourced for this monumental task.

Local governments are responsible for the operation of local household hazardous waste collection programs and provide drop off services, oftentimes free of cost, to residents. This is an important public service and prevents improper disposal of hazardous waste. The cost to manage some of the waste streams are significant and put serious financial pressure on the programs and local governments that operate them. This cost is not only burdensome for local governments, but increases the risk of improper disposal which puts the health of Californians at risk.

Extended producer responsibility programs for other HHW including thermostats, paint, medications, and batteries have already proven successful in California. SB 1143 will shift the costs from local jurisdictions, which have no control over what products are sold on the market, to the producers who choose to make them. This will not only support local governments, but also enhance consumer convenience and increase proper disposal. For these reasons, we support SB 1143 and appreciate all your work on this issue.

Sincerely,

Ada Waelder

Legislative Advocate
awaelder@counties.org

Cc: Honorable Members & Staff, Senate Appropriations Committee

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Graham Knaus

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1159: CEQA: Roadside Wildfire Risk Reduction Projects
As Amended, April 24, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Caballero,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 California Counties, I write in support of SB 1159 (Dodd) which would require the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to evaluate and for the Secretary for Natural Resources to consider, the inclusion of roadside wildfire risk reduction projects near municipalities for categorical California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption.

Specifically, SB 1159 would require the evaluation and consideration of projects no more than five road miles from a municipality or census-designated place, that would reduce wildfire risk, for a categorical CEQA exemption. As part of its evaluation, OPR would be required to review, in consultation with relevant state agencies (Department of Fish and Wildlife, CalFIRE, State Water Resources Control Board and others) appropriate eligibility for projects. The goal would be to evaluate with what criteria an exemption could be made while retaining reasonable protections for natural resources, threatened or endangered habitats and species, and other conservation lands.

CSAC concurs with our member counties that roadside wildfire risk reduction projects contribute to creating safer working conditions for firefighters by reducing fuel loads and improving access for firefighters to reach and respond to wildfires more effectively. This bill may have a positive impact on our ability to improve fire breaks and evacuation routes. Effective fire breaks and evacuation routes are critical to the process of mitigating the risk a wildfire poses to a community: residents need to have confidence that main roads will act effectively as fire breaks and that they can be efficiently evacuated from danger.

Counties strongly support this measure that will reduce wildfire risk and further prevent catastrophic wildfires that devastate our residents, communities and economies. For these reasons, CSAC respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 662-6400 or cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,

Catherine Freeman
Senior Legislative Advocate

Cc: Senator Bill Dodd
Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee

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Graham Knaus

April 22, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1187 (McGuire) Housing programs: Tribal Housing Reconstitution and Resiliency Act.

**As introduced on February 14, 2024 – Support
Senate Appropriations Committee – Suspense File**

Dear Senator Caballero:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, is proud to support SB 1187, which would create a new tribal housing program, the Tribal Housing Grant Program (THGP), in the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for the construction and rehabilitation of rental and for-sale housing.

Counties and tribes promote a full range of housing in all communities for shared interests in promoting economic development and self-sufficiency for their overlapping constituencies, promoting the general health, safety, well-being of the entire community, and infrastructure that is beneficial to all. Counties support identifying and generating a variety of permanent financing resources and subsidy mechanisms for affordable housing, including a statewide permanent source for affordable housing. Currently, tribal governments struggle to meet the requirements for housing grants because these programs are not set up to meet the needs of tribal communities. SB 1187 will advance funding for tribal housing and will help address the unique needs of California tribal governments.

To make meaningful progress in helping those who are unhoused, CSAC developed the '[AT HOME](#)' Plan. The six-pillar plan (Accountability, Transparency, Housing, Outreach, Mitigation, and Economic Opportunity) is designed to make true progress to effectively address homelessness at every level - state, local and federal. Through the AT-HOME Plan, CSAC is working to identify the policy changes needed to build a homelessness system that is effective and accountable including specific recommendations related to prevention, housing, the unsheltered response system, and sustainable funding. SB 1187 aligns with our AT HOME efforts, specifically as it relates to the Housing pillar.

Counties are committed to promoting and supporting the development of positive working relationships between counties and tribes to the mutual benefit of both parties

and the communities they respectively serve. For these reasons, CSAC is proud to support SB 1187. If you need additional information, please contact 916.591.2764 or mneuburger@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Neuburger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being more prominent.

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Senator Pro Tempore Mike McGuire
The Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Mark McKenzie, Staff Director, Senate Appropriations Committee
Kerry Yoshida, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus

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May 2, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
California State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1245 (Ochoa-Bogh): In-home supportive services: licensed health care professional certification.
As Introduced February 15, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I am writing to share our support for Senate Bill 1245 by Senator Ochoa Bogh. This measure streamlines the process for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) clients to receive paramedical services by expanding the types of health care providers authorized to sign paramedical forms and reducing unnecessary administrative burdens that currently delay access to services.

California's population of older adults aged 65 and older is projected to reach 25 percent of the population, or 8.6 million Californians, by 2030. IHSS is an important tool in meeting the goals of the Master Plan for Aging to enable this growing population to age with dignity and independence, as well as assisting adults with disabilities. Currently, nearly 600,000 IHSS providers deliver services to over 750,000 recipients in the state. This includes paramedical services, which are tasks necessary to help maintain the client's health. Types of paramedical services include administration of medications, wound care, or injections, among others.

While the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) allows any licensed healthcare professional to sign off on the initial form required for a client to obtain IHSS, the department only allows limited types of healthcare professionals to sign the additional form required to authorize paramedical services. Specifically, only physicians, surgeons, podiatrists, and dentists are authorized to sign this additional form.

The current requirements for authorizations of both the health care certification and paramedical forms can prevent timely delivery of services essential for the client's health. Counties cannot allow paramedical services without the second form, which can lead to significant delay for a client to obtain paramedical services from their IHSS provider. This delay can be exacerbated by overwhelmed healthcare systems.

SB 1245 allows the same licensed health care professionals who currently sign the IHSS health care certification form to also sign the paramedical form. This bill would also allow nurses and nurse practitioners working at the direction of the licensed health care practitioner to complete the forms. Aligning which licensed health care professionals may sign the paramedical and health care certification forms will reduce administrative barriers. By broadening the types of health care providers who are authorized to sign these forms, IHSS clients can have both forms signed at the same time by the same

provider, thereby reducing delays, improving health outcomes, and better fulfilling the goals of the IHSS program.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports Senate Bill 1245. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 698-5751 or jgarrett@counties.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Garrett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Justin Garrett
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh
Members and Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee
County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA)

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Riverside County

**CEO**

Graham Knaus

May 3, 2024

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7340
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1361 (Blakespear): California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): exemption: local agencies: contract for providing services for people experiencing homelessness. As Amended April 8, 2024 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Blakespear,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, I am pleased to share our support of your Senate Bill 1361. This bill would exempt actions taken by counties and cities to approve a contract for providing services for people experiencing homelessness from CEQA requirements.

In recent years, the Legislature has passed multiple CEQA exemptions and by-right approval processes to remove barriers to siting and building affordable housing and shelters that serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including low barrier navigation centers. The state has also made unprecedented investments into homelessness response and prevention, which has enabled counties, cities, and community-based organizations to quickly stand-up programs that help move thousands of people into safe and stable housing. Although actions taken by a local agency to site and permit low barrier navigation centers are not subject to CEQA under existing law, the action to approve a contract to provide services is not explicitly exempt from CEQA requirements. As a result, local governments face risk of exposure to frivolous lawsuits and unnecessary delays to get programs up and running.

Recognizing the growing humanitarian crisis of homelessness across the state, CSAC released the AT HOME plan (Accountability, Transparency, Housing, Outreach, Mitigation & Economic Opportunity) last year. This plan outlines clear responsibilities and accountability aligned to authority, resources, and flexibility for all levels of government within a comprehensive homelessness response system. It includes a full slate of policy recommendations to help build more housing, prevent individuals from becoming homeless, and better serve those individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness. SB 1361 aligns with policy recommendations included in the Housing pillar of AT HOME.

As counties work collaboratively with local, state, and federal partners to address the state's growing number of unhoused residents, it is critical to reduce barriers that hinder the delivery of coordinated and comprehensive services provided to unhoused community members. It is for these reasons that CSAC supports SB 1361. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at 916.591.2764 or mneuburger@counties.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Neuburger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Anna M. Caballero
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1387 (Newman): ZEV Pickup Truck Incentives
Notice of SUPPORT (4/25/2024)

Dear Chair Caballero,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and the California Association of Counties (CSAC), write to express our support measure SB 1387 (Newman), which would expand the Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP) to include medium-duty zero-emission pickup trucks and expand the list of those eligible to receive a voucher for the purchase of a zero-emission pickup.

The California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) Regulations requires local governments to ensure that 50% of their medium- and heavy-duty vehicle purchases are zero-emission, with that share progressively scaling up to 100% in 2027. Local agency fleet managers have indicated that the duty requirements their public fleet vehicles have to meet will prove difficult to electrify in the short and medium term due to a combination of range limitations as well as the current reality that the technological options available on the commercial market today are insufficient to meet their energy-intensive payload and towing needs. Local agency fleet managers have indicated that hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) offer substantial promise in meeting the transportation needs of hard-to decarbonize drivers, such as those utilizing pickup trucks as part of the necessary conduct of their work.

Hydrogen FCEVs allow users to rapidly refuel and tow without the range anxiety and charging delays associated with their battery-electric equivalents. Consequently, hydrogen fuel cell technology is particularly well suited to meet the needs of medium-duty pickup trucks in ways battery technology currently cannot.

For many local agencies zero-emission vehicles continue to remain prohibitively expensive to procure. This is especially the case for the many local agencies who are required to begin bringing their fleets in compliance with the ACF regulations, SB 1387's revisions to HVIP's recipient eligibility requirements are an essential update to ensure local agencies can attempt to obtain grant resources to assist their transition to a zero-emission vehicle fleet.

Further, by expanding HVIP to include medium-duty pickups, SB 1387 would provide for the very first-time incentives to transition Class 2b and Class 3 medium-duty pickup trucks. For local agency fleet managers, there are deep concerns that the zero-emission options available on the market today remain frustratingly unaffordable and insufficient in meeting their energy-intensive towing needs. By providing incentives to the medium-duty segment, which represents more than 52% of the entire American truck market, SB 1387 closes a glaring gap within the State's zero-emission transition strategy.

For these reasons, Cal Cities and CSAC **support SB 1387**. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Damon Conklin of Cal Cities at dconklin@calcities.org or Mark Neuburger of CSAC at mneuburger@counties.org

Sincerely,



Damon Conklin
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Josh Newman
Members, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Ashley Ames, Principal Consultant, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Heather Wood, Budget Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1390 (Caballero): Groundwater recharge: floodflows: diversion.
As Amended: April 24, 2024—SUPPORT
As referred to Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Caballero,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties, representing all 58 California Counties, I write to support SB 1390 (Caballero). This measure builds upon the progress made in the past year to enable California to divert flood flows for groundwater recharge by clarifying when these flows may be captured for the benefit of aquifers, what planning requirements are necessary for local agencies pursuing recharge, and expanding reporting requirements for diversions made under existing law.

In recent years, weather conditions have worsened and are becoming an increasing problem for California. Facing whiplash from drought, our counties experienced historic flooding, coastal erosion, and record snowpack. Counties are on the front lines of support when water emergencies, drought and flood occur. Our communities are dependent upon reliable water supply and flood control planning and distribution at the state and local level. While recent years have been marked by flooding and historic snowpack levels, it is clear that these types of wet years are unreliable, and California will need to adapt to extremes in future flood and drought cycles.

In March 2023, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order [N-4-23](#), authorizing water agencies, with a set of reporting requirements and safety parameters, to divert excess flood flows on rivers and streams for the purposes of groundwater recharge, without the need to obtain a costly and time-consuming permit. The process established by this Executive Order was later codified in SB 122 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Statutes of 2023), with additional requirements for diverters to better protect groundwater quality and downstream water users.

CSAC supports projects and programs that invest in water supplies through a variety of means – from recycling to stormwater capture. Groundwater recharge during high flood flow events is one of the most effective ways to move water into long-term storage, and to bring over drafted basins into balance. CSAC encourages legislation that focuses on movement to groundwater sustainability through the local implementation of Sustainable Groundwater management Act, dedicated groundwater recharge, and expedited permitting for recharge events.

SB 1390 carries forward the progress of the Executive Order and SB 122 by allowing more recharge projects to be completed in a safe and responsible manner. For these reasons, CSAC is proud to support SB 1390 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions about our position, please don't hesitate to contact me at cfreeman@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine Freeman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Catherine Freeman
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee

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Graham Knaus

May 2, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
California State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1396 (Alvarado-Gil): CalWORKs: Home Visiting Program
As Amended April 8, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I am writing to share our support for Senate Bill 1396 by Senator Alvarado-Gil. This measure would extend the enrollment timeframe for the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program (HVP) from a child under 24 months to a child under 36 months and would extend the amount of time that families can participate in the program.

CalWORKs HVP is a voluntary program supervised by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and administered by participating counties. Currently, 41 out of 58 counties administer CalWORKs HVP, which matches trained professionals with expecting and new parents to assist with the early development of their children. HVPs follow evidence-based models that provide positive health development and well-being for low-income families that expand future educational, economic, and financial outcomes and improve the likelihood that they will exit poverty.

While HVP models managed by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) through the California Home Visiting Program (CHVP) allow families to remain in a program through an HVP's recommended duration, CalWORKs HVP can only be offered to families for 24 months or until a child reaches their second birthday. SB 1396 would align the CalWORKs HVP participation timeline with CHVP participation timelines and allow families participating in CalWORKs HVP models to participate in programs for the full duration, maximizing the health and development benefits for vulnerable families.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports Senate Bill 1396. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 698-5751 or jgarrett@counties.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Garrett".

Justin Garrett
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Marie Alvarado-Gil

Members and Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee
County Welfare Directors Association



LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA
CITIES



April 29, 2024

The Honorable Steve Padilla
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4
1021 O Street, Suite 6640
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **Item 9210: VLF Backfill**
Request Appropriation for Insufficient ERAF Amounts in Alpine, Mono, and San Mateo Counties

Dear Senator Padilla:

On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and the League of California Cities (CalCities), we write to respectfully urge your consideration for including an appropriation to backfill the insufficient ERAF amounts in the Counties of Alpine, Mono, and San Mateo. The Governor's proposed 2024-25 state budget, regrettably, does not include a backfill of these funds, which will significantly impact local programs and services.

Alpine County 2022-23 Amount:	\$175,215
Alpine County Past Years' Amount:	\$319,771
Mono County 2022-23 Amount:	\$2,313,845
San Mateo County 2022-23 Amount:	\$70,048,152
Total:	\$72,856,983

In 2004, a state budget compromise between the state and its counties and cities was struck to permanently reduce taxpayer's Vehicle License Fee (VLF) obligations by 67.5 percent. The VLF had served as an important general purpose funding source for county and city programs and services since its inception. In exchange for this revenue reduction, the state provided counties and cities with an annual in-lieu VLF amount (adjusted annually to grow with assessed valuation) to compensate for the permanent loss of VLF revenues with revenues from each county's Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF); this transaction became known colloquially as the "VLF Swap." The 2004 budget agreement made clear that excess ERAF funds – shifted property tax revenues that were not needed to fully fund K-14 schools – would not be used to fund the in-lieu VLF amount. Further, the Legislature and Administration agreed to a ballot measure – Proposition 1A – that amended the Constitution to ensure that future shifts or transfers of local agency

property tax revenues could not be used to pay for state obligations. That November, Proposition 1A was approved by 83.7 percent of voters.

Legislation to implement the VLF swap carefully and purposefully identified the sources of funds that were available to pay the state's in-lieu VLF obligation: ERAF distributions to non-basic aid schools and property tax revenues of non-basic aid schools. Proposition 98 ensures that state funds are provided to those schools to meet their constitutional funding guarantee, so they do not experience any financial loss. However, in those instances where there are too few non-basic aid schools in a county from which to transfer sufficient funds to pay the state's in-lieu VLF obligation, the state has historically provided annual appropriations to make up for the revenue shortfalls.

The Governor's 2024-25 proposed budget failed to include funds to ensure that these counties and cities were held harmless for losses associated with the VLF Swap. Without backfill, these counties and the cities therein – through no fault of their own – will endure a significant reduction in general purpose revenue that will directly affect the provision of local programs and services in their respective communities, at precisely the time when our respective members are being asked to do more. As a result, we respectfully urge you to consider appropriating funds for this purpose.

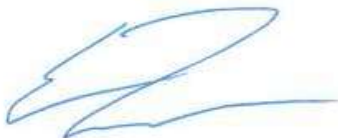
Sincerely,



Jean Kinney Hurst
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California



Mary-Ann Warmerdam
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs
Rural County Representatives of California



Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Ben Triffo
Legislative Advocate
League of California Cities

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4
Chris Hill, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance

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**CEO**

Graham Knaus

April 26, 2024

The Honorable Akilah Weber, M.D.

Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
1021 O Street, Suite 4130
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program Transition – CONCERNS
Hearing on April 29, 2024 – Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1**

Dear Assembly Member Weber:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I write to respectfully express concerns with the Department of Health Care Services' (DHCS) proposed transition of the Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program.

Enacted as part of the Budget Act of 2022, DHCS has been tasked with sunseting the CHDP Program as of July 1, 2024, or the date that DHCS certifies that specified transition activities have been completed and implemented, whichever is later. The enabling legislation required DHCS to engage stakeholders to develop a transition plan that meets the required elements, including how the Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care (HCPCFC) will be created as a standalone program and an analysis and plan to retain local health department staff. DHCS issued their final transition plan in March 2024, providing local health departments with little time to effectuate necessary administrative and programmatic changes to transition the programs. While counties have appreciated the engagement from DHCS on the transition, the following concerns remain:

HCPCFC Budget Allocation & Methodology

HCPCFC embeds public health nurses in local Child Welfare Departments to provide consultation, oversight, and management of the medical, dental, behavioral, and developmental needs of foster youth in out-of-home placement. The elimination of CHDP impacts the services to HCPCFC, which leverages CHDP staff and resources in the administration of the program.

As proposed in the Governor's January Budget, DHCS seeks to split the entire \$34 million CHDP budget between: 1) \$13.1 million for standalone HCPCFC; and 2) \$20.8 million for the DHCS California Children's Services (CCS) Monitoring & Oversight Initiative. Counties anticipate that more than \$13.1 million statewide will be needed to retain the administrative and medical support to HCPCFC to ensure foster children are provided with adequate health and social

services. **CSAC requests that the entire \$34 million CHDP budget be allocated to standalone HCPCFC to ensure adequate staffing and resources to support this vulnerable population.** Additionally, CSAC requests that DHCS allow local jurisdictions flexibility to use their allocations as needed locally for the most effective administration of the standalone program.

Delay CCS Monitoring & Oversight Indefinitely

The Administration continues to propose reallocating a disproportionate share of the CHDP budget to the CCS Monitoring & Oversight Initiative, a new and unrelated initiative that seeks to establish and implement a variety of performance, quality, and reporting standards for county CCS programs. While CSAC does not oppose this additional monitoring and oversight, we express concerns with longstanding budget and fiscal administrative issues with the core CCS program. Prior to establishing new requirements on top of the core CCS program, CSAC requests that DHCS work with the County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC) to improve the fiscal administration and operations of the program, as well as seek a separate funding source to resource the new CCS Monitoring & Oversight Initiative. **CSAC requests that the CCS Monitoring & Oversight Initiative be delayed indefinitely and that all CHDP funds are made fully available to establish standalone HCPCFC programs statewide.**

Counties remain committed to working with the Legislature and Administration to ensure a seamless transition of these programs while preserving local health department staff to support the health of children and families in their communities. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,



Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus
Eric Dietz, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Michelle Gibbons, Executive Director, County Health Executives Association of California

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Graham Knaus

May 3, 2024

The Honorable Senate President pro Tempore Mike McGuire
Chair, Senate Rules Committee
State Capitol, Room 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Confirmation of Tomiquia Moss as Secretary, Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency – SUPPORT

Dear President Pro Tempore McGuire,

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties of the state, writes in strong support of the confirmation of Tomiquia Moss as Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH).

The Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency is responsible for overseeing a broad range of departments and state programs, including those dedicated to expanding and preserving affordable housing, preventing and ending homelessness, consumer protection, and upholding civil rights laws. Counties are confident that Ms. Moss has the dynamic skillset necessary to lead this large and complex Agency, especially given her extensive leadership experience and background working to prevent and reduce homelessness.

Homelessness is California's most pressing humanitarian crisis. Thanks to the unprecedented investments made under the leadership of this Legislature and Administration, local communities have been able to rapidly expand their homelessness response systems, connect people to services and care, and move thousands of unsheltered families and individuals into safe and stable housing. Solving the homelessness crisis will require continued progress through sustained investments, cross-governmental collaboration, and dedicated leadership.

Ms. Moss has dedicated her career to improving the lives of others, with deep experience working in both the public and nonprofit sectors. Recognizing that solutions to preventing and ending homelessness requires regional, cross-sectoral planning and collaboration, Ms. Moss founded All Home in 2019 to work across the Bay Area to advance coordinated, innovative solutions to reduce poverty and homelessness. County leaders and CSAC have worked with Ms. Moss in our aligned efforts to strengthen the regional planning and coordination that is necessary to make meaningful progress in reducing homelessness. Ms. Moss was appointed to serve as a member of the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) in 2022, and as BCSH Secretary, now serves as co-chair of Cal ICH, where she will continue to lead statewide efforts to address homelessness.

For these reasons, CSAC strongly supports the appointment of Tomiquia Moss as Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, and we respectfully urge the Rules

Committee to confirm her appointment to this critical position. We are confident that Ms. Moss's experience, leadership, and collaborative approach will serve her well as Secretary and counties look forward to the opportunity to continue working with her.

Sincerely,



Graham Knaus
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Honorable Members and Consultants, Senate Rules Committee
The Honorable Robert Rivas, Speaker, California State Assembly
Dana Williamson, Chief of Staff, Office of Governor Newsom
Jason Elliott, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of Governor Newsom
Ann Patterson, Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom
Cathryn Rivera-Hernandez, Appointments Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom
Myles White, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom
Misa Lennox, Policy Consultant, Office of Senate Pro Tempore McGuire



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

April 23, 2024

The Honorable Assemblymember Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Room 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1878 (E. Garcia) Housing programs: tribal housing program.
As introduced on January 22, 2024 – Support
As referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, along with the American Planning Association California Chapter, are proud to support AB 1878, which would create the Tribal Housing Advisory Committee within the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency (BCSH), which upon appropriation by the Legislature, creates an advisory committee composed of tribal representatives with the knowledge, experience, and expertise in tribal housing, tribal land, tribal government, tribal policy, and tribal law to close the gap of inconsistencies and barriers for tribes to successfully access state-funded grant programs.

Counties and tribes have shared interests in promoting economic development and self-sufficiency for their overlapping constituencies, promoting the general health, safety, well-being of the entire community, and infrastructure that is beneficial to all. Additionally, counties continue to advocate for more federal and state support to build and maintain housing for low-income Californians and develop creative financing models to increase the feasibility for more projects. AB 1878 help tribes achieve sustainable, safe, and affordable homes while reconstituting on ancestral lands where they can prosper and preserve their cultural heritage.

To make meaningful progress in helping those who are unhoused, CSAC developed the '[AT HOME](#)' Plan. The six-pillar plan (Accountability, Transparency, Housing, Outreach, Mitigation, and Economic Opportunity) is designed to make true progress to effectively address homelessness at every level - state, local and federal. Through the AT-HOME Plan, CSAC is working to identify the policy changes needed to build a homelessness system that is effective and accountable including specific recommendations related to prevention, housing, the unsheltered response system, and sustainable funding. AB 1878 aligns with our AT HOME efforts, specifically as it relates to the Housing pillar.

Counties are committed to promoting and supporting the development of positive working relationships between counties and tribes to the mutual benefit of both parties and the communities they respectively serve. For these reasons, CSAC and the California Chapter of the American Planning Association are proud to support AB 1878. If you need additional information, please contact 916.591.2764 or mneuburger@counties.org.

Sincerely,



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Erik de Kok, AICP
Vice President Policy and Legislation
APA California

CC: The Honorable Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia
The Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Jennifer Swenson, Senior Consultant, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
William Weber, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

April 26, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2050 (Pellerin): Voter registration database: Electronic Registration Information Center
As Introduced February 1, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard in Assembly Appropriations Committee – May 1, 2024**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties, representing all 58 counties in California, I am pleased to support Assembly Bill (AB) 2050 by Assembly Member Pellerin. This measure would allow California to enroll in the voter registration database: Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).

California counties play a crucial role in voter registration by overseeing the processing of voter registration forms, updating voter rolls, and ensuring eligible residents are registered to vote. Additionally, counties amongst a myriad of other duties, administer elections, including managing polling places, distributing ballots, counting votes, and conducting voter outreach and education campaigns.

Existing law requires the Secretary of State to establish a statewide system to remove duplicate or prior voter registrations. This system aims to facilitate reporting election results and voter and candidate information and enhance election administration. As per the Secretary of State's determination, certain voter registration information should be provided to individuals for election, scholarly, journalistic, political, or governmental purposes.

This measure would authorize the Secretary of State to apply for ERIC membership, ensuring that counties maintain their ability to provide voters with the benefits of their services. If approved, the Secretary of State can execute a membership agreement with the Electronic Registration Information Center on behalf of the state. While membership in ERIC would require some upfront costs and annual dues, the costs are *de minimis* compared to the value of improving voter outreach and better-maintaining voter rolls.

AB 2050 would also require the Secretary of State to ensure the confidentiality of any information or data provided by another state. Moreover, the Secretary of State can securely transmit certain confidential information or data under that agreement. The bill will also allow the Secretary of State to develop regulations necessary to implement these provisions in consultation with the California Privacy Protection Agency.

For these reasons, CSAC supports AB 2050 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at elawyer@counties.org.

The Honorable Buffy Wicks

April 26, 2024

Page 2 of 2

Sincerely,



Eric Lawyer

Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Gail Pellerin, California State Assembly
Members and Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Riverside County

**CEO**

Graham Knaus

April 24, 2024

The Honorable Akilah Weber
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 4130
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2119 (Weber): Mental Health. – SUPPORT
As amended March 18, 2024**

Dear Dr. Weber,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, I am writing in support of your Assembly Bill 2119, which deletes outdated mental health terminology in existing law and replaces it with person-first terminology.

Research has shown that stigmatizing language is one barrier to people seeking treatment for mental health disorders. In addition, stigmatizing language can lead to intentional and unintentional discrimination against people living with mental health conditions as they seek to obtain housing, access to services, education, and employment. As California continues to prioritize access and treatment for behavioral health services, it is important to update the state's statutory language so as not to perpetuate harmful stigma that creates additional barriers for people living with mental health conditions.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2119. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 591-5308 or jonodera@counties.org. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jolie' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: Riana King, Principal Consultant, Assembly Health Committee
Justin Boman, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

April 23, 2024

The Honorable Juan Carrillo
Chair, Assembly Local Government Committee
1020 N Street, Room 157
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2257 (Wilson): Local government: property-related water and sewer fees and assessments: remedies. As Amended March 20, 2024 – SUPPORT Set to be heard in the Assembly Local Government Committee - May 1, 2024

Dear Assembly Member Carrillo,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties, representing all 58 counties in California, I am pleased to support Assembly Bill (AB) 2257 by Assembly Member Wilson. This measure would provide new opportunities for ratepayers to participate in property-related water and sewer assessments and help local agencies avoid costly lawsuits related to Proposition 218 disputes.

AB 2257 would accomplish these goals by creating an administrative remedy process for water or sewer fee assessments, allowing ratepayers to raise an objection to a proposed special assessment before it is established. The bill imposes several requirements on local agencies to conduct the exhaustion of remedies process, providing necessary clarity for ratepayers on the process for objecting to proposed fees or assessments. By establishing this process, the measure would further encourage well-informed administrative decisions, benefiting both local agencies and the communities they serve.

The bill would also help local agencies avoid costly and time-consuming litigation by providing an administrative process to require the exhaustion of all remedies, a well-established principle in administrative law. This bill would also encourage local agencies to establish the remedies process by allowing agencies to narrow the basis for an objection and limiting the court's review to the record of proceedings before the agency through the remedy process.

Access to a clean, reliable water source is necessary not just for communities to thrive, but to exist at all. Financing water management opportunities is vital to ensuring that California's communities have access to a reliable water supply and to maintain water quality for public and environmental health. AB 2257 bill would improve transparency and accountability of water management financing for local agencies.

For these reasons, CSAC supports AB 2257 in its current form and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at elawyer@counties.org.

Sincerely,



Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Lori Wilson, California State Assembly
Members and Consultant, Assembly Local Government Committee
William Weber, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Riverside County

**CEO**

Graham Knaus

April 24, 2024

The Honorable Juan Carrillo
Chair, Assembly Local Government Committee
1020 N Street, Room 157
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2257 (Wilson): Local government: property-related water and sewer fees and assessments: remedies. As Amended April 23, 2024 – SUPPORT Set to be heard in the Assembly Local Government Committee - May 1, 2024

Dear Assembly Member Carrillo,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties, representing all 58 counties in California, I am pleased to support Assembly Bill (AB) 2257 by Assembly Member Wilson. This measure would provide new opportunities for ratepayers to participate in property-related water and sewer assessments and help local agencies avoid costly lawsuits related to Proposition 218 disputes.

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The bill would also help local agencies avoid costly and time-consuming litigation by providing an administrative process to require the exhaustion of all remedies, a well-established principle in administrative law. This bill would also encourage local agencies to establish the remedies process by allowing agencies to narrow the basis for an objection and limiting the court's review to the record of proceedings before the agency through the remedy process.

Access to a clean, reliable water source is necessary not just for communities to thrive, but to exist at all. Financing water management opportunities is vital to ensuring that California's communities have access to a reliable water supply and to maintain water quality for public and environmental health. AB 2257 bill would improve transparency and accountability of water management financing for local agencies.

For these reasons, CSAC supports AB 2257 in its current form and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at elawyer@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Eric Lawyer", written in a cursive style.

Eric Lawyer

Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Lori Wilson, California State Assembly
Members and Consultant, Assembly Local Government Committee
William Weber, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



March 26, 2024

The Honorable Cottie Petrie-Norris
Member, California State Assembly
1021 O St., Room 4230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2266 (Petrie-Norris) California Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive.
Notice of SUPPORT (2/8/2024)

Dear Assembly Member Petrie-Norris,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and California Special Districts Association (CSDA) is pleased to **support** your measure **AB 2266**, which would expand the California Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP) to authorize vouchers for acquiring small commercial zero-emission vehicles, such as pickup trucks, to advance fleet electrification.

The push towards transitioning medium and heavy-duty (MHD) fleets to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) represents a critical aspect of modern environmental policy, particularly in densely populated urban areas with air quality concerns. In California, MHD vehicles account for just 7% of all registered vehicles but 32% of NOx Emissions, according to CARB's 2020 Mobile Source Strategy. With growing awareness of climate change and air pollution, there has been an effort by the state to transition away from fossil fuel-dependent transportation towards cleaner alternatives.

However, local agencies across California face significant challenges in transitioning their fleets to zero-emission vehicles. One of the primary obstacles is the higher upfront cost associated with ZEVs compared to traditional internal combustion engine vehicles. Municipal budgets often struggle to accommodate these expenses. Additionally, concerns about the reliability and range of ZEVs, especially for heavy-duty applications like trucks and buses, have contributed to hesitation in their adoption. Despite these challenges, local governments are working towards not only meeting their ZEV targets but going above and beyond expectations.

The California Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project, as outlined in AB 2266, seeks to address some of these challenges by providing financial incentives for the purchase of zero-emission commercial vehicles to “drive purchase decisions,” “support CARB regulatory programs,” and “support more equitable investments such as supporting small fleets.”

Hence, broadening the eligibility criteria to encompass a class of vehicles with commercial utility will prompt cities to make purchasing decisions, thereby fostering broader adoption among public fleets across various vehicle classes. These vehicles constitute a considerable portion of MHD fleets, however, there fails to be an incentive to support their transition to ZEV alternatives. Therefore, this legislation addresses a notable funding gap in MHD fleet electrification.

In essence, the success of initiatives like the California Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project is crucial for local agencies striving to transition to cleaner transportation options. By overcoming financial barriers and incentivizing the adoption of ZEVs, these programs play a vital role in advancing environmental goals and improving the quality of life for urban residents.

For these reasons, Cal Cities, CSAC and CSDA **supports AB 2266**. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Damon Conklin at dconklin@calcities.org, Mark Neuburger at mneuburger@counties.org and Anthony Tannehill at anthonyt@cdda.net.

Sincerely,



Damon Conklin
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Representative



Anthony Tannehill
Legislative Advocate



April 23, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8140
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: *AB 2337 (Dixon) - Workers' compensation: Electronic Signatures*
SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Wicks:

The undersigned organizations are proud to **SUPPORT** your **AB 2337** which seeks to address a critical issue concerning the use of electronic signatures in proceedings before the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board (WCAB). AB 2337 would authorize the use of certain electronic signatures in workers' compensation proceedings on a permanent basis, a practice that was temporarily permitted by Governor Newsom's emergency order during the COVID-19 state of emergency. This measure is vital as it will ensure efficiency and consistency in WCAB proceedings.

The current requirement under the Labor Code mandates a compromise and release of a workers' compensation claim to contain the "signature" of the employee or other beneficiary, attested by two disinterested witnesses, or acknowledged before a notary public. During the COVID-19 state of emergency, WCAB temporarily authorized the use of electronic signatures on compromise and release forms. Unfortunately, when the state of emergency was lifted by the Governor, WCAB automatically rescinded the authorization for electronic signatures.

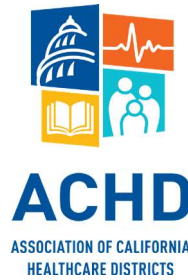
During the COVID-19 state of emergency, electronic signatures proved to be effective in workers' compensation proceedings. By making this practice permanent, AB 2337 improves the administrative efficiency of California's workers' compensation system.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT AB 2337** as a sensible step forward in streamlining processes in the workers' compensation system.

Sincerely,

Acclamation Insurance Management Services (AIMS)
Allied Managed Care (AMC)
American Property Casualty Insurance Association
Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD)
California Association of Joint Powers Authorities
California Chamber of Commerce
California Coalition on Workers' Compensation
California Joint Powers Insurance Authority
California Special Districts Association
California State Association of Counties
League of California Cities
Public Risk Innovation Solutions and Management
Urban Counties of California

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Committee on Appropriations



April 24, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2404 (Lee)
State and Local Public Employees: Labor Relations: Strikes.
OPPOSE – As Amended March 21, 2024**

Dear Chair Wicks,

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), League of California Cities (Cal Cities), California Association of Joint Powers Authorities (CAJPA), Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Public Risk Innovation Solutions, and Management (PRISM), Urban Counties of California (UCC), and California Special Districts Association (CSDA) respectfully oppose Assembly Bill 2404 (Lee). This measure is a re-introduction of last year's AB 504 (Reyes), which would declare the acts of sympathy striking and honoring a strike line a human right and, thereby, disallow provisions in public employer policies or collective bargaining agreements going forward that would limit or prevent an employee's right to sympathy strike.

State laws governing collective bargaining are in place to ensure a fair process for both unions and public entities. AB 2404 would upend the current bargaining processes which allow striking only in specified limited circumstances. Specifically, this bill states it shall not be unlawful or a cause for discipline or other adverse action against a public employee for that public employee to refuse to do any of the following:

- Enter property that is the site of a primary strike;
- Perform work for an employer involved in a primary strike; or
- Go through or work behind any primary strike line.

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Bill 2404 (Lee) - OPPOSE
April 24, 2024
Page 2

This poses a serious problem for public agencies that are providing public services on a limited budget and in a time of workforce shortage. Allowing any public employee, with limited exception, to join a striking bargaining unit in which that employee is not a member could lead to a severe workforce stoppage. When a labor group prepares to engage in protected union activities, local agencies can plan for coverage and take steps to limit the impact on the community. This bill would remove an agency's ability to plan and provide services to the community in the event any bargaining unit decides to strike. A local agency cannot make contingency plans for an unknown number of public employees refusing to work.

In addition, when government services are co-located, employees from a non-struck agency could refuse to work at the shared campus if employees from a different agency are on strike, as it would be considered crossing the picket line. We offered the author amendments, similar to the private sector, that allow a separate entrance to ensure the picket line would not be crossed while allowing vital services from a non-struck agency to continue. For example, there are co-located county and court services at almost every court. A county strike could potentially shut down court activities because court employees could refuse to enter the premises as it would be considered crossing the picket line.

In rural communities, it is common to see co-location of government services to ensure remote areas are served. Disrupting the services of an innocent employer as part of a strike against another employer – known in labor law as “secondary pressure” – has long been held to be an unfair labor practice that this bill should not facilitate or legalize. Public employers that bargained in good faith and have approved MOU agreements should not be penalized for sharing a business space with another government employer.

Our organizations are not disputing the right of the employee organization to engage in the protected activity of striking. State law has created a framework for when unions can engage in protected strike activity that has been honored by local government and unions alike. **Unfortunately, this bill would allow those who have not gone through the negotiation process to now refuse to work simply because another bargaining unit is engaging in striking.**

Local agencies provide critical health and safety functions including: disaster response; emergency services; dispatch; utilities; mobile crisis response; health care; law enforcement; corrections; elections; and road maintenance. Local memorandums of understanding (MOUs) provisions around striking and sympathy striking ensure local governments can continue to provide critical services. In many circumstances, counties must meet minimum staff requirements, e.g., in jails and juvenile facilities, to ensure adequate safety requirements. No-strike provisions in local contracts have been agreed to by both parties in good faith often due to the critical nature of the employees' job duties. Under current law, both primary and sympathy strikes may be precluded by an

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Bill 2404 (Lee) - OPPOSE
April 24, 2024
Page 3

appropriate no-strike clause in the MOU, which this bill proposes to disallow following the expiration of a collective bargaining agreement that was entered into before January 1, 2025.

We appreciate AB 2404 including language from last year's AB 504 (Reyes) in connection with issues we raised regarding existing MOUs, peace officers, and certain [essential employees](#) of a local public agency. Without additional amendments to address co-located agencies our communities may be left without needed services. Shutting down government operations for sympathy strikes is an extreme approach that goes well beyond what is allowed for primary strikes and risks the public's health and safety.

Our concerns with AB 2404 are consistent with the issues raised in response to last year's AB 504 (Reyes) and reflected in the veto message of that measure. "Unfortunately, this bill is overly broad in scope and impact. The bill has the potential to seriously disrupt or even halt the delivery of critical public services, particularly in places where public services are co-located. This could have significant, negative impacts on a variety of government functions including academic operations for students, provision of services in rural communities where co-location of government agencies is common, and accessibility of a variety of safety net programs for millions of Californians." – Governor Gavin Newsom

It is also important to note these impacts could be amplified by another pending measure concerning unemployment benefits for striking workers (Senate Bill 1116 (Portantino)) and a recently enacted measure allowing for collective bargaining for temporary employees (Assembly Bill 1484 (Zbur, 2023)).

As local agencies, we have a statutory responsibility to provide services to our communities throughout the state. This bill jeopardizes the delivery of those services and undermines the collective bargaining process. For those reasons, RCRC, Cal Cities, CSAC, CAJPA, ACHD, PRISM, UCC, and CSDA must respectfully oppose AB 2404 (Lee). Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with your questions.

Sincerely,



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California
sdukett@rcrcnet.org



Johnnie Pina
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities
jpina@calcities.org

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Bill 2404 (Lee) - OPPOSE
April 24, 2024
Page 4



Kalyn Dean
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
kdean@counties.org



Jean Kinney Hurst
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California
jkh@hbeadvocacy.com



Aaron A. Avery
Director of State Legislative Affairs
California Special Districts Association
aaron@csda.net



Faith Borges
Legislative Advocate
California Association of Joint Power
Authorities
fborges@actumllc.com

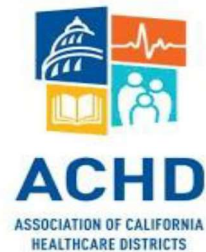


Sarah Bridge
Legislative Advocate
Association of California Healthcare Districts
sarah@deveauburrgroup.com



Michael Pott
Chief Legal Counsel
Public Risk Innovation Solutions, and
Management (PRISM)

cc: The Honorable Alex Lee, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Irene Ho, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Lauren Prichard, Assembly Republican Caucus



April 23, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O St. Ste. 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2421 (Low) Employer-Employee Relations: Confidential Communications.
OPPOSE (As Introduced 02/13/24)

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), California Special Districts Association (CSDA), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), Urban Counties of California (UCC), the Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD), Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM), California Association of Joint Powers Authorities (CAJPA), Community College League of California, the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts (CARPD), and the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), write to inform you of our respectful opposition to Assembly Bill (AB) 2421 (Low). This bill would restrict an employer's ability to conduct internal investigations to the detriment of employees' and the public's safety and well-being. The bill also states its intent to establish an employee-union representative privilege in the context of California public employment and to supersede *American Airlines, Inc. v. Superior Court*, 114 Cal.App.4th 881 (2003).

Previous Legislation and Previous Veto

Our concerns with AB 2421 are consistent with the issues raised in response to similar legislation (AB 418 (Kalra, 2019) and reflected in the veto message to AB 729 (Hernandez, 2013)). "I don't believe it is appropriate to put communications with a union agent on equal footing with communications with one's spouse, priest, physician or attorney. Moreover, this bill could compromise the ability of employers to conduct

investigations into workplace safety, harassment and other allegations.” – Governor Jerry Brown

Limit the Ability for Local Agencies to Conduct Thorough Internal Investigations

In order to conduct proper investigations, that uphold the public's trust and ensure the safety and well-being of both public employees and the public, it is critical that a public employer have the ability to interview all potential parties and witnesses to ascertain the facts and understand the matter fully. AB 2421 interferes with the ability to interview witnesses because it would prohibit public agencies from questioning any employee or employee representative regarding communications made between an employee and an employee representative. In doing so, this bill would permit the silencing of employees who wish to voluntarily report an incident or testify in front of necessary employer investigations into misconduct and could limit the ability of employers to conduct investigations into workplace safety, harassment, and other allegations.

Under this bill, the employee or the “employee representative” could at will decide to apply privilege over virtually any work-related communication. This could be problematic regarding workplace investigations for alleged harassment or other misconduct; as the employee representative could potentially prevent an employer from completing a comprehensive investigation. This is especially problematic because a union representative does not only represent one worker, but the bargaining unit as a whole. AB 2421 lacks guardrails to prevent potential conflicts of interest that could arise during employee conflicts.

Further, the bill may impede the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and correct instances of misconduct. The bill's findings and declarations state that although it does not apply to criminal investigations, it prohibits agencies from compelling disclosure. Ordering employees to testify in an internal investigation is a practice that has allowed law enforcement agencies to timely investigate misconduct that may have criminal implications, while protecting the employee against the use of such compelled statements in a criminal proceeding. Without the ability to compel disclosure, the unlawful conduct may be allowed to continue, unabated, in the workplace.

Expansion of New One-Sided Privilege Standard

The bill's comparison between the proposed employee-union representative privilege and the attorney-client privilege is misplaced. The attorney-client relationship is carefully defined by state law. Privilege is by design narrow in scope to protect the confidentiality and integrity of relationships, both professional and familiar in nature, where highly sensitive and deeply personal information is exchanged. AB 2421 fails to recognize this well-established threshold and instead would create a new, broad privilege for public employees, without limitation on how the privilege functions.

Additionally, the “privilege” under AB 2421 would apply to any employee, and anyone designated as the “employee representative,” a term that is not defined in the bill. This means that AB 2421 could be interpreted to not only apply to a union representative

but also to a coworker, friend, or family member in certain workplace investigations, administrative proceedings, and civil litigation.

Unlike other privileges that apply to both sides of the litigation or proceedings such as the attorney-client privilege, AB 2421 does not equally protect the management-employee communication, or communications between members of management regarding labor union disputes or grievance issues. Consequently, in labor related proceedings such as California Public Employment Relations Board hearings, an employer would be forced to disclose all related communications, while the employee representative or employee could pick and choose which communications they wanted to disclose which may result in unjust rulings or decisions made against the public agency regarding labor related proceedings.

Additionally, the bill would impede a public employer's ability to defend itself in litigation, and conduct fact-finding in other adversarial processes. It would create a significant advantage to employees in the context of disciplinary and grievance proceedings, significantly limiting an employer from investigating, prosecuting, or defending against such actions.

Workplace Safety and Government Operations

The bill would interfere with the public employer's responsibility to provide a safe workplace, free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, by impeding a public employer's ability to communicate with employees to learn about, investigate and respond to such concerns. AB 2421 could also decrease workplace safety if public employers are limited in their ability to investigate threats of violence within the workforce. Employers are legally required to promptly investigate complaints of unlawful discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and other types of unlawful workplace conduct. If the employer is limited in its communications with employees, it will make it much more difficult to comply with these legal obligations, which were imposed by the legislature to create safer workplaces, free from unlawful discrimination and harassment.


In the context of the recent pandemic, the bill could have also compromised the ability of public employers to investigate outbreaks and implement public health orders or regulations.

Given the overly broad nature of the bill, it could be read to prohibit employers from communicating with employees about anything from day-to-day activities to matters that are important for government operations. Employers may not even know they are violating the bill by communicating with staff, because only the employee or their representative would know or could decide when a communication was made "in confidence." Lastly, the bill could even decrease public agency transparency and accountability due to the potential increased difficulty in investigating accusations of public corruption, or misuse of public funds.

For the aforementioned reasons, the organizations listed below respectfully oppose AB 2421. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our organizations' representatives directly.

Sincerely,

 <p>Johnnie Piña Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist League of California Cities jpina@calcities.org</p>	 <p>Kalyn Dean Legislative Advocate California State Association of Counties kdean@counties.org</p>
 <p>Jean Hurst Legislative Representative Urban Counties of California jkh@hbeadvocacy.com</p>	 <p>Sarah Dukett Policy Advocate Rural County Representatives of California sdukett@rcrcnet.org</p>
 <p>Aaron Avery Director of State Legislative Affairs California Special Districts Association aarona@csla.net</p>	 <p>Faith Borges Legislative Representative California Association of Joint Powers Authorities FBorges@Actumllc.com</p>
 <p>Sarah Bridge Association of California Healthcare Districts sarah@deveauburrgroup.com</p>	 <p>Jason Schmelzer jason@SYASLpartners.com Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM),</p>
 <p>Dorothy Johnson Legislative Advocate Association of California School Administrators djohnson@acsa.org</p>	 <p>Andrew Martinez Senior Director of Government Relations Community College League of California amartinez@ccleague.org</p>

 <p>Alyssa Silhi Legislative Advocate California Association of Park and Recreation Districts asilhi@publicpolicygroup.com</p>	
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- cc. The Honorable Evan Low, California State Assembly
Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Mao Yang, Office of Assemblymember Low
Natasha Collins, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Lauren Prichard, Assembly Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

April 26, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2455 (Gabriel) – Whistleblower protection: state and local government procedures.
As Amended April 4, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard in Assembly Appropriations Committee – May 1, 2024**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) representing all 58 counties in California, I write in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 2455 by Assembly Member Gabriel. This measure would modernize the Whistleblower Protection Act and will help local agencies prevent the misuse of government resources by extending its protections to activities related to government contractors, among other changes.

Local government agencies increasingly depend on private contractors to aid in delivering services to their communities. To ensure the Whistleblower Protection Act can fulfill its mission to prevent the waste of government resources, it is crucial to safeguard whistleblowers, not only when exposing misconduct within government operations, but also for the companies they enlist as contractors.

In 2002, the California legislature passed the Whistleblower Protection Act to protect employees who report unlawful activities. This legislation inspired local governments to implement whistleblower hotlines that provide a location to file reports that disclose fraudulent and wasteful activity, in hopes of saving taxpayers money and making government operations more efficient. AB 2455 modernizes the law by providing clarity to ensure that whistleblowers know their activity is protected not just when reporting improper governmental activities by phone, but also when submitting complaints via online portals or email.

Finally, the bill improves governmental efficiency by allowing the designees of county auditors, controllers, and auditor-controllers to review and investigate whistleblower complaints.

As counties increasingly rely on private contractors, AB 2455 would modernize the current whistleblower laws to help protect local resources and improve accountability for governments and their contractors alike.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2455 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at elawyer@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric Lawyer", enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, California State Assembly
Members and Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



April 25, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1020 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2561 (McKinnor) Local public employees: vacant positions. – OPPOSE
(As Amended March 11, 2024)**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Urban Counties of California (UCC), California Special Districts Association (CSDA), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California Transit Association (CTA), County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC), County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM), Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD), and the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) respectfully oppose Assembly Bill (AB) 2561. This measure requires local agencies with bargaining unit vacancy rates exceeding 10% for more than 180 days (approximately 6 months) to produce, implement, and publish a plan to reduce their vacancy rates to 0% within the subsequent 180 days. The bill also requires the public agency to present this plan during a public hearing to the governing legislative body and to publish the plan on its internet website for public review for at least one year.

Sizable vacancy rates exist in the public sector – for the state and for local employers. While the bill notably omits the state, the vacancy rate for the State of California has consistently been above 10 percent statewide for at least the past 20 years. As of February 2024, the vacancy rate for state jobs in California is about 20 percent.¹

For counties, the issue of vacancies is particularly acute with the highest rates typically in behavioral health, the sheriff's department, corrections, and employment and social services. Local government decision-makers and public agency department heads

¹ <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4888>

recognize the impact that long-term vacancy rates have, both on current employees and those who receive services from those departments. Many specialty positions like nurses, licensed behavioral health professionals, social workers, police, teachers, and planners are experiencing nationwide workforce shortages and a dwindling pipeline for new entrants, driven by both an expansion of services and an aging workforce. To further complicate recruitment, local governments are competing with both the private sector and other government agencies. Local governments have been implementing innovative ways to try to boost recruitment and incentivize retention (e.g., sign-on bonuses, housing stipends, etc.).

In spite of these efforts, vacancies persist; driven by several distinct circumstances. The public sector workforce has changed. In a post-COVID era, there is a much higher demand for remote work, which is not a benefit that can be offered within public agencies across all departments or for all roles. Furthermore, newer entrants to the workforce have changed priorities when it comes to the benefits and conditions of their work. Public employees were on the front lines of the COVID response. While the state passed legislation and the Governor signed executive orders and set policy during those challenging months, public agency employees were the vessel of service delivery and the implementer of those policies. This work was arduous, nearly endless and seemingly thankless. In conjunction with delivering on the policies and priorities set by the state during the pandemic, counties specifically, have been burdened with several simultaneous overhauls of county service delivery, as mandated by the state. There is no doubt a correlation between the county programs dealing with the largest realignments of service delivery and structural overhaul as mandated in State law and those departments with the highest vacancy rates. Employees have experienced burn-out, harassment from the public, and a seemingly endless series of demands to transform systems of care or service delivery while simultaneously providing consistent and effective services, without adequate state support to meet state law. Obviously, it is difficult to retain staff in those conditions.

If the true intent of AB 2561 is to provide a path for public agencies to reduce staff vacancies, diverting staff away from core service delivery and mandating they spend time producing reports on their vacancy rates will not achieve that goal. The total impact of mandated realignments without adequate concurrent funding and flexibility has also contributed to these vacancy rates. Adding another unfunded mandate on public agencies will not solve the problem this bill has identified. It is just as likely to create even more burn-out from employees tasked with producing the very report the bill mandates.

Local agencies are committed to continuing the work happening now between all levels of government and employees to expand pipeline programs, build pathways into public sector jobs, modernize the hiring process, and offer competitive compensation. We cannot close the workforce shortages overnight; it will take investment from educational institutions, all levels of government, and the private sector to meet the workforce demands across the country. We must use our limited human resources staff to hire employees during this economically challenging time rather than diverting resources to additional reports that will tell what we already know. Local bargaining units have the

ability to address workforce concerns or develop hiring/retention strategies/incentives at the bargaining table within agreements and compensation studies. We welcome partnering on workforce strategies and believe there is a more productive and economical pathway than AB 2561.

For those reasons, CSAC, UCC, CSDA, RCRC, CTA, CHEAC, CBHDA, CWDA, PRISM, and Cal Cities respectfully oppose AB 2561 (McKinnor). Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with your questions.

Sincerely,



Kalyn Dean
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
kdean@counties.org



Aaron A. Avery
Director of State Legislative Affairs
California Special Districts Association
aarona@csgda.net



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
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Johnnie Pina
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Jean Kinney Hurst
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Eileen Cubanski
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Jason Schmelzer
Lobbyist
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Sarah Bridge
Vice President
Association of California Healthcare
Districts
sarah@deveauburrgroup.com

cc: Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jay Dickenson, Chief Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Malik Gover, Legislative Aide, Assembly Member McKinnor's Office



April 15, 2024

The Honorable Diane Papan
Chair, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee
1020 N Street, Room 160
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2643 (Wood) – SUPPORT
As Amended March 21, 2024**

Dear Chair Papan:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), and California Cannabis Industry Association (CCIA), we support Assembly Bill 2643 (Wood). This measure addresses the critical issue of illicit cannabis cultivation and its detrimental impacts on California's natural resources. Local jurisdictions are on the front lines dealing with environmental degradation from illicit cannabis operators who sidestep regulations and undermine the health and safety of residents and our regulated cannabis businesses. We believe that AB 2643 is an important tool to mitigate the environmental harm caused by illicit cannabis cultivation.

Illicit cannabis cultivation poses a significant threat to the California ecosystem, often leading to habitat destruction, water diversions, and the use of harmful pesticides and fertilizers. Despite efforts to detect and eradicate these cultivation sites, the process of site restoration has been slow. The lack of restoration progress not only perpetuates environmental degradation but also undermines the long-term health and resilience of our natural landscapes.

AB 2643 addresses the critical need for established implementation methods. By requiring the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to conduct a study and create a framework for cannabis site restoration, the bill aims to provide guidance for efforts, building on current eradication and reclamation operations. Additionally, AB 2643 mandates CDFW to facilitate biannual meetings—one at the commencement and one at the conclusion of the cultivation season—with stakeholders, including nonprofits, tribes, and local, state, and federal partners. These meetings will serve as forums to delineate the most effective strategies, frameworks, and workflows, including workforce and data sharing, for identifying, eradicating, reclaiming, and restoring affected lands.

Furthermore, the bill will enhance reconnaissance efforts by assessing the use of new technologies, such as remote sensing and comprehensive mapping capabilities, to

The Honorable Diane Papan
Assembly Bill 2643 (Wood) – SUPPORT
April 16, 2024
Page 2

identify illicit cultivation sites on public lands. Improving data collection and sharing will enable more targeted and efficient enforcement actions.

Recognizing existing budgetary challenges and the imperative need for environmental restoration, AB 2643 will be funded through the dedicated resources of the Environmental Restoration and Protection Account.

In summary, AB 2643 represents a crucial opportunity to address the environmental challenges posed by illicit cannabis cultivation and promote the restoration and conservation of California's natural resources. For these reasons, RCRC, CSAC, Cal Cities, and CCIA support AB 2643 and urge your "aye" vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact our organization.

Sincerely,



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
RCRC
sdukett@rcrcnet.org



Ada Waelder
Legislative Advocate
CSAC
awaelder@counties.org



Jolena Voorhis
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
Cal Cities
jvoorhis@calcities.org



Amy Jenkins
Legislative Advocate
CCIA
amy@precisionadvocacy.co

cc: The Honorable Jim Wood, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee
Pablo Garza, Chief Consultant, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee
Brent Finkel, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus

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April 24, 2024

The Honorable Corey Jackson
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 6120
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2995 (Jackson): Public health: alcohol and drug programs. – SUPPORT
As amended April 18, 2024**

Dear Dr. Jackson,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, I am writing in support of your Assembly Bill 2995, which deletes outdated substance use disorder terminology in existing law and replaces it with person-first terminology.

Research has shown that stigmatizing language is one barrier to people seeking treatment for substance use disorders. In addition, stigmatizing language can lead to intentional and unintentional discrimination against people living with substance use disorder conditions as they seek to obtain housing, access to services, education, and employment. As California continues to prioritize access and treatment for behavioral health services, it is important to update the state's statutory language so as not to perpetuate harmful stigma that creates additional barriers for people living with substance use disorder conditions.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2995. Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 591-5308 or jonodera@counties.org. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: Riana King, Principal Consultant, Assembly Health Committee
Justin Boman, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



Sustainability in Action

April 17, 2024

The Honorable Ben Allen
Chair, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 972 (Min) Methane emissions: organic waste: landfills.
Notice of SUPPORT

Dear Senator Allen,

On behalf of the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Californians Against Waste, StopWaste, and Republic Services, our organizations are pleased to **support SB 972 (Min)**, related to organic waste implementation.

In 2016, SB 1383 was chaptered into law which set forth the state's methane emission reduction goals of a 50% reduction in the level of the statewide disposal of organic waste from the 2014 level by 2020 and 75% reduction by 2025. Local governments are responsible for program efforts to reduce organic waste in landfills.

In 2023, the Little Hoover Commission (LHC) released a [report](#) on the state's organic waste program implementation. The LHC analyzed the progress of SB 1383 and called upon the Legislature and the Administration to completely pause the implementation of organic waste programs. The LHC clarified this would allow the state's leadership to re-evaluate how the program is structured. We are appreciative of the recommendations included in the report but strongly believe that implementation should continue forward, rather than be completely paused. Local jurisdictions can and should continue their efforts to reduce organic waste in landfills as a key climate initiative and to continue to build upon the investments they have already made in their local organic waste programs.

SB 972 would address four of the twelve recommendations included in the LHC report through two key components of the bill. First, the bill would bolster the existing technical assistance provided by CalRecycle to local jurisdictions implementing organic waste programs to meet the state's 1383 goals of reducing methane emissions from landfills. The bill would require CalRecycle to develop procedures on its website to allow local

jurisdictions to request support based on the local challenges their community is facing with implementation. This approach will help local governments express what their greatest concerns are and empower the CalRecycle to focus assistance on addressing those challenges. Further, CalRecycle could address challenge that multiple jurisdictions face and build local capacity if multiple jurisdictions have similar technical assistance needs. The bill would have CalRecycle consider addressing a technical assistance request prior to exercising enforcement authority, if a request is already submitted. Technical assistance could include data reporting, education programming, local program development, procurement target clarification support, and coordination of state policy goals that affect organic waste.

The second key component of SB 972 (Min) would require CalRecycle to develop two reports back to the California State Legislature to summarize progress that has occurred by 2028 and summarize accomplishments of the program and alignment with other state climate goals by 2031. This would allow CalRecycle to summarize how the state and local jurisdictions are progressing and the key accomplishments of the program in the coming years to ensure overall accountability in meeting these critical climate goals.

For these reasons, our organizations **support SB 972 (Min)** and respectfully request your aye vote when the bill is heard in the Senate Environmental Quality Committee. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Cal Cities Legislative Representative Melissa Sparks-Kranz as the bill sponsor at 916-658-8232 or msparkskranz@calcities.org.

Sincerely,



Melissa Sparks-Kranz
Legislative Representative
League of California Cities



Ada Waelder
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Nick Lapis
Director of Advocacy
Californians Against Waste



Timothy Burroughs
Executive Director
StopWaste



Michael Caprio
Director Government Affairs
Republic Services

CSAC Letters

cc: The Honorable Dave Min
Members, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Brynn Cook, Policy Consultant, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Scott Seekatz, Policy Consultant, Republican Caucus

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Graham Knaus

April 23, 2024

The Honorable Senator Dave Cortese
Chair, Senate Committee on Transportation
State Capitol, Room 405
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 983 (Wahab) Energy: gasoline stations and alternative fuel infrastructure.
As amended on March 21, 2024 – Support
Set for Hearing – April 17, 2024 – Senate Committee on Transportation**

Dear Senator Cortese:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, is proud to support SB 983, which would require the California Energy Commission (CEC) to convene an Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Taskforce, and would require the task force to submit a report to the Legislature with recommendations for deploying alternative fuels infrastructure at existing gas stations. Specifically, the task force includes members from county government, which CSAC strongly supports.

Counties recognize that climate change will have a harmful effect on our environment, public health and economy. Although there remains uncertainty on the pace, distribution and magnitude of the effects of climate change, counties also recognize the need for immediate actions to mitigate the sources of greenhouse gases. In conjunction, counties recognize that adaptation and mitigation are necessary and complementary strategies for responding to climate change impacts. CSAC encourages the state to develop guidance materials for assessing climate impacts that includes adaptation options.

SB 983 seeks to conduct a study on policies to facilitate and accelerate the development of alternative fuels infrastructure at retail gasoline fueling stations, while identifying barriers to this goal and working to ensure compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. This information is critical for counties to better understand how shifting away from fossil fuels will impact our local communities.

For these reasons, CSAC is proud to support SB 983. If you need additional information, please contact 916.591.2764 or mneuburger@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mark Neuburger'.

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Transportation
Benjamin O'Brien-Hokanson, Science Fellow, Senate Committee on Transportation
Ted Morley, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



April 26, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations
Committee
1021 O Street, Room 7620
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 1066 – SUPPORT
As Amended April 18, 2024**

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), we are pleased to support Senate Bill 1066, which creates a producer responsibility program for end-of-life management of marine flares.

Senate Bill 1066 requires manufacturers to create, fund, and implement a producer responsibility program for the end-of-life management of expired flares. Flares are important safety and emergency devices. The U.S. Coast Guard requires marine flares to be carried on recreational boats for use as visual distress signals. While flares are vital safety devices, they generally have expiration dates of less than four years and must be managed as explosive hazardous wastes. While flares can cost consumers from \$13-\$26 each, they generally cost local governments \$46 or more per flare for disposal.

Local governments are responsible for the collection, processing, recycling and disposal of solid waste, including the operation of local household hazardous waste collection programs. These local programs provide important public services and prevent improper disposal of hazardous wastes. Our local programs often offer residents free drop off of HHW; however, the cost to manage some of the waste streams are shocking and put serious financial pressure on the programs and local governments that operate them. Many products, including flares, are far more expensive to manage at the end-of-life than it cost consumers to purchase the product at the point-of-sale. Rather than forcing local governments (and taxpayers) to shoulder those costs, SB 1066 appropriately requires the manufacturers who introduce those goods into the stream of commerce to take charge of the collection, transportation, and management of their expired flares. We also hope that SB 1066 will create clearer and more convenient disposal opportunities for consumers to safely dispose of expired flares.

The Honorable Anna Caballero

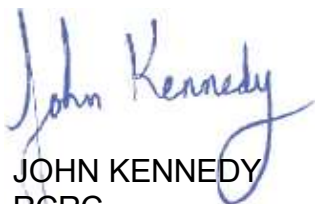
Senate Bill 1066

April 26, 2024

Page 2

We are pleased to support SB 1066 because it will increase convenience for consumer disposal of flares while reducing costs for local hazardous waste programs. We also look forward to working with you on minor clarifications to the bill to improve program operation and reduce ambiguity. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact John Kennedy (RCRC) at jkennedy@rcrcnet.org, Ada Waelder (CSAC) at awaelder@counties.org, or Melissa Sparks-Kranz (Cal Cities) at msparkskranz@calcities.org.

Sincerely,



JOHN KENNEDY
RCRC
Senior Policy Advocate



MELISSA SPARKS-KRANZ
Cal Cities
Legislative Representative



ADA WAELDER
CSAC
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Catherine Blakespear
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Ashley Ames, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Emilye Reeb, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



April 23, 2024

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Graham Knaus

The Honorable Steve Padilla
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 6640
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1072 (Padilla): Local government: Proposition 218: remedies.
As Introduced February 12, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Padilla,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties, representing all 58 counties in California, I write in support of Senate Bill (SB) 1072, your measure that would be declaratory of and clarify the existing law that a refund is not available for alleged "excess" water or wastewater service charges, and that, instead, a challenger's remedy would only be to have any allegedly "excess" charges used to offset future rates and charges.

At its core, the measure would help local agencies avoid upward cost pressures and help agencies avoid imposing costs imposed by class action litigation on future ratepayers. Instead, this measure would allow agencies to reduce future rates and avoid incurring liabilities for which they lack funding sources.

Retail water and wastewater agencies across California are encountering legal hurdles regarding their fee structures for water and wastewater services due to Proposition 218's stringent limitations, particularly concerning the cost of service and proportionality provisions. Frequently, challengers, often characterized as high-water users, argue that the charges levied are not proportional. Consequently, these high-water users often seek refunds through class action lawsuits.

Proposition 218 does not explicitly authorize refunds. Since its amendment to the California Constitution in 1996, courts have addressed violations through remedies such as writs of mandate, declaratory, and injunctive relief. These prospective remedies effectively address the violation by instructing the agency to revise its approach for the future. Any surplus revenues would be allocated towards offsetting future service costs.

In contrast, a refund remedy would function retroactively. Public water agencies rely solely on their rates and charges as revenue sources. Since these agencies set their charges to cover costs without generating profit, any refunds would necessitate future rate increases to fund them, affecting subsequent ratepayers. Such a scenario would lead to an escalating cycle of rising costs. Therefore, providing refunds to address Proposition 218 violations poses a threat to the financial stability of local public agencies. It exposes public water suppliers to liabilities for which they lack a funding source, potentially jeopardizing their solvency.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports SB 1072. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at elawyer@counties.org

Sincerely,

Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate



April 23, 2024

OFFICERS**President**Bruce Gibson
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The Honorable Maria Elena Durazo
Chair, Senate Local Government Committee
State Capitol, Room 407
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1072 (Padilla): Local government: Proposition 218: remedies.
As Introduced February 12, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard in the Senate Local Government Committee – May 1, 2024**

Dear Senator Durazo,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties, representing all 58 counties in California, I write in support of Senate Bill (SB) 1072 by Senator Padilla. This measure would be declaratory of and clarify the existing law that a refund is not available for alleged "excess" water or wastewater service charges, and that, instead, a challenger's remedy would only be to have any allegedly "excess" charges used to offset future rates and charges.

At its core, the measure would help local agencies avoid upward cost pressures and help agencies avoid imposing costs imposed by class action litigation on future ratepayers. Instead, this measure would allow agencies to reduce future rates and avoid incurring liabilities for which they lack funding sources.

Retail water and wastewater agencies across California are encountering legal hurdles regarding their fee structures for water and wastewater services due to Proposition 218's stringent limitations, particularly concerning the cost of service and proportionality provisions. Frequently, challengers, often characterized as high-water users, argue that the charges levied are not proportional. Consequently, these high-water users often seek refunds through class action lawsuits.

Proposition 218 does not explicitly authorize refunds. Since its amendment to the California Constitution in 1996, courts have addressed violations through remedies such as writs of mandate, declaratory, and injunctive relief. These prospective remedies effectively address the violation by instructing the agency to revise its approach for the future. Any surplus revenues would be allocated towards offsetting future service costs.

In contrast, a refund remedy would function retroactively. Public water agencies rely solely on their rates and charges as revenue sources. Since these agencies set their charges to cover costs without generating profit, any refunds would necessitate future rate increases to fund them, affecting subsequent ratepayers. Such a scenario would lead to an escalating cycle of rising costs. Therefore, providing refunds to address Proposition 218 violations poses a threat to the financial stability of local public agencies. It exposes public water suppliers to liabilities for which they lack a funding source, potentially jeopardizing their solvency.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports SB 1072 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at elawyer@counties.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric Lawyer".

Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Steve Padilla, California State Senate
Members and Consultant, Senate Local Government Committee
Ryan Eisenberg, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



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April 24, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1124 (Menjivar) – Deceptive practices: service members and veterans.
As Introduced February 13, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Caballero,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in California, I write in support of Senate Bill (SB) 1124 by Senator Menjivar. This measure would strengthen state law protections for veterans by prohibiting any person not accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from charging a veteran for help with a benefits claim, increases penalties for those who obtain unauthorized access to veterans’ data on VA computer systems, and prohibits the charging of fees that exceed what a VA-accredited attorney or claims agent could legally charge to assist a veteran with a benefits claim.

Veterans’ benefits are a crucial support system for those who have served this country in the armed forces. As with other government benefits, applicants may need assistance in applying for these critical benefits. California veterans who need assistance with filing a claim for disability benefits can get help at no charge from their VA-accredited county veteran service office (CVSO) or from nonprofit veterans service organizations (VSOs) like the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). CVSOs are county agencies established to assist veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services accrued through military service. In addition to CVSOs and nonprofit VSOs, which provide assistance free of charge, the VA also accredits attorneys and claims agents to represent veterans and assist with benefit claims. The VA accreditation program exists to ensure that veterans receive competent and fair representation on their VA benefits claims. Accredited attorneys and claims agents cannot charge money for assistance with an initial claim for veteran’s benefits, but, subject to limits set and enforced by the VA, they can charge for other services. Members of the public can apply to the VA for accreditation as a claims agent, and lawyers can apply for accreditation as an attorney.

Congress amended a federal law in 2006 that established a process for organizations, attorneys, and additional claims agents to become accredited to assist veterans in applying for, preparing, presenting, and prosecuting their claims for federal benefits. It eliminated important prohibitions that made it a crime to assist veterans with benefits claims without being accredited. This had the unintentional effect of driving the creation of an unregulated industry of businesses that charge veterans for assistance with benefits without being accredited.

Prohibiting unaccredited claims agents and lawyers from charging a veteran for help with an initial benefits claim not only protects veterans, but it also ensures that counties continue to play a crucial role in connecting their resident veterans with benefits and services available to them. County governments often collaborate with federal and state agencies, as well as local nonprofit organizations, to ensure that veterans are aware of and have access to the benefits they are

entitled to. By working with veterans and their families, counties can ensure that those who have served their country receive the support and assistance they deserve.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports SB 1124 and respectfully requests your "AYE" vote. Should you have any questions regarding our position please do not hesitate to contact me at kdean@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kalyn Dean".

Kalyn Dean
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Caroline Menjivar, California State Senate District 20
Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Lenin Del Castillo, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee



April 17, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Room 2200
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1164 (Newman) Property taxation: new construction exclusion: dwelling units
Notice of OPPOSE (04/11/2024)

Dear Chair Caballero,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) along with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) must respectfully **oppose** SB 1164 (Newman), which would negatively impact local government property tax revenue by exempting newly constructed accessory dwelling units (ADUs) from property tax assessment, if certain conditions are met, for fifteen years from the date of completion or until the property changes owners, whichever comes first.

Since 2018, there have been year over year increases in the number of newly permitted and constructed ADUs throughout the state. According to data from the UC Berkeley Center for Innovation, from 2018 to 2022, roughly 10,276 ADUs were built, while 28,547 units were permitted during that same period. It is clear there is a demand for ADUs that California cannot keep pace with.

This bill assumes property taxes are an impediment that disincentivize homeowners from building ADUs. However, the data show significant increases in the number of permits and constructed units in previous years, signaling that property tax adjustments have not exclusively halted or discouraged construction on new ADUs. Separate from property tax, the disproportionate share of accessory dwelling units that have been permitted, but not yet built, represents a supply and demand concern that is wholly divorced from property tax considerations.

Recent legislative efforts aimed at increasing the statewide housing stock, like SB 9 (Atkins, 2021), helped spur the construction of ADUs by allowing for by-right approval of an ADU in a single-family residential zone. However, increasing the housing stock triggers demand for service delivery that local governments are responsible for providing. By creating a property tax assessment exemption on newly constructed ADUs, SB 1164 will deprive local governments of the revenues needed to provide and expand services that are of communitywide benefit. Property taxes generate a critical revenue source local governments depend on to provide services, including public safety, education, parks, libraries, public health, and fire protection.



While Cal Cities, CSAC, and CSDA support the intent to increase the production of housing across the state, local governments can ill-afford any additional erosion of local tax revenues in the short- or long-term. The negative fiscal impacts of this measure would be exclusively borne by local governments. We applaud the intent of the measure but have ongoing concerns with proposals that erode the local government tax base.

For these reasons, Cal Cities, CSAC, and CSDA respectfully **oppose** SB 1164. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at btriffo@calcities.org.

Ben Triffo
Legislative Affairs Lobbyist, Cal Cities

Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate, CSAC

Marcus Detwiler
Legislative Representative, CSDA

cc: The Honorable Josh Newman
Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Robert Ingenito, Senate Appropriations Committee

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Graham Knaus

April 23, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1187 (McGuire) Housing programs: Tribal Housing Reconstitution and Resiliency Act.

**As introduced on February 14, 2024 – Support
Senate Appropriations Committee – Suspense File**

Dear Senator Caballero:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, is proud to support SB 1187, which would create a new tribal housing program, the Tribal Housing Grant Program (THGP), in the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for the construction and rehabilitation of rental and for-sale housing.

Counties and tribes promote a full range of housing in all communities for shared interests in promoting economic development and self-sufficiency for their overlapping constituencies, promoting the general health, safety, well-being of the entire community, and infrastructure that is beneficial to all. Counties support identifying and generating a variety of permanent financing resources and subsidy mechanisms for affordable housing, including a statewide permanent source for affordable housing. Currently, tribal governments struggle to meet the requirements for housing grants because these programs are not set up to meet the needs of tribal communities. SB 1187 will advance funding for tribal housing and will help address the unique needs of California tribal governments.

To make meaningful progress in helping those who are unhoused, CSAC developed the '[AT HOME](#)' Plan. The six-pillar plan (Accountability, Transparency, Housing, Outreach, Mitigation, and Economic Opportunity) is designed to make true progress to effectively address homelessness at every level - state, local and federal. Through the AT-HOME Plan, CSAC is working to identify the policy changes needed to build a homelessness system that is effective and accountable including specific recommendations related to prevention, housing, the unsheltered response system, and sustainable funding. SB 1187 aligns with our AT HOME efforts, specifically as it relates to the Housing pillar.

Counties are committed to promoting and supporting the development of positive working relationships between counties and tribes to the mutual benefit of both parties

and the communities they respectively serve. For these reasons, CSAC is proud to support SB 1187. If you need additional information, please contact 916.591.2764 or mneuburger@counties.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Neuburger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being more prominent.

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Senator Pro Tempore Mike McGuire
The Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Mark McKenzie, Staff Director, Senate Appropriations Committee
Kerry Yoshida, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



April 10, 2024

The Honorable Benjamin Allen
Chair, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 3230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1387 (Newman) ZEV Pickup Truck Incentives – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Allen,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) and the California Association of Counties (CSAC), write to express our support measure SB 1387 (Newman), which would expand the Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP) to include medium-duty zero-emission pickup trucks and expand the list of those eligible to receive a voucher for the purchase of a zero-emission pickup.

The California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) Regulations requires local governments to ensure that 50% of their medium- and heavy-duty vehicle purchases are zero-emission, with that share progressively scaling up to 100% in 2027. Local agency fleet managers have indicated that the duty requirements their public fleet vehicles have to meet will prove difficult to electrify in the short and medium term due to a combination of range limitations as well as the current reality that the technological options available on the commercial market today are insufficient to meet their energy-intensive payload and towing needs. Local agency fleet managers have indicated that hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) offer substantial promise in meeting the transportation needs of hard-to decarbonize drivers, such as those utilizing pickup trucks as part of the necessary conduct of their work.

Hydrogen FCEVs allow users to rapidly refuel and tow without the range anxiety and charging delays associated with their battery-electric equivalents. Consequently, hydrogen fuel cell technology is particularly well suited to meet the needs of medium-duty pickup trucks in ways battery technology currently cannot.

For many local agencies zero-emission vehicles continue to remain prohibitively expensive to procure. This is especially the case for the many local agencies who are required to begin bringing their fleets in compliance with the ACF regulations, SB 1387's revisions to HVIP's recipient eligibility requirements are an essential update to ensure local agencies can attempt to obtain grant resources to assist their transition to a zero-emission vehicle fleet.

Further, by expanding HVIP to include medium-duty pickups, SB 1387 would provide for the very first-time incentives to transition Class 2b and Class 3 medium-duty pickup trucks. For local agency fleet managers, there are deep concerns that the zero-emission options available on the market today remain frustratingly unaffordable and insufficient in meeting their energy-intensive towing needs. By providing incentives to the medium-duty segment, which represents more than 52% of the entire American truck market, SB 1387 closes a glaring gap within the State's zero-emission transition strategy.

For these reasons, Cal Cities and CSAC **support SB 1387**. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Damon Conklin of Cal Cities at dconklin@calcities.org or Mark Neuburger of CSAC at mneuburger@counties.org

Sincerely,



Damon Conklin
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Josh Newman
Members, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Gabrielle Meindl, Chief Consultant, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Scott Seekatz, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



April 17, 2024

The Honorable María Elena Durazo
Chair, Senate Local Government Committee
State Capitol, Room 407
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1426 (Blakespear) - Solid waste franchises - Oppose

Dear Chair Durazo:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our respectful opposition to SB 1426, which would limit local governments' ability to utilize exclusive solid waste franchises to meet the state's ambitious waste reduction policies.

As representatives of environmental organizations committed to sustainability and waste reduction, we deeply appreciate your advocacy for zero waste and your dedication to addressing the pressing environmental challenges facing our state. We take to heart the concerns you've raised about needing to act quickly to reduce the 40 million tons of garbage the state generates annually, and look forward to partnering with you on this important task.

Unfortunately, we believe that SB 1426 would actually inadvertently hinder these efforts. Solid waste franchises have emerged as one of the only tools available to local governments in their efforts to build the necessary infrastructure to meet California's recycling and composting targets, as outlined in SB 54 and SB 1383, among countless other policies adopted by the legislature. Since the passage of AB 939 in 1989, these franchises have proven to be the most effective means of establishing large-scale composting facilities and material recovery facilities, facilitating substantial investments totaling billions of dollars across California's jurisdictions. SB 1383 alone has led to hundreds of millions of dollars of new investment in composting and anaerobic digestion infrastructure, largely through the use of local franchises.

While we recognize the importance of ensuring accountability and efficiency in waste management practices, we believe that SB 1426 may actually inhibit progress toward our shared objectives of waste reduction and environmental protection. By constraining the flexibility of local governments to implement solid waste franchises tailored to their unique needs and circumstances, this bill could impede the development of innovative solutions and stall the momentum toward achieving our state's ambitious waste diversion goals.

We commend your commitment to advancing waste reduction initiatives, and we remain eager to collaborate with you on strategies that promote sustainable resource management and minimize the environmental impacts associated with waste disposal. It is our sincere hope that we can work together to find alternative approaches that preserve the effectiveness of solid waste franchises while addressing any legitimate concerns regarding their implementation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we welcome the opportunity to engage in further dialogue to explore constructive solutions that align with our shared vision of a healthier, more sustainable future for California.

Sincerely,



Neil Edgar
Executive Director
CCC



Ada Waelder
Legislative Advocate
CSAC



Nick Lapis
Director of Advocacy
CAW

CC: The Honorable Senator Catherine Blakespear
Members, Senate Local Government Committee

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Riverside County

**CEO**

Graham Knaus

April 26, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 1441 (Allen): Examination of petitions: time limitations and reimbursement of costs
As Amended April 4, 2024 – SUPPORT
Awaiting hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Caballero,

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in California, is pleased to support Senate Bill (SB) 1441 by Senator Allen. This measure would preserve local election resources by establishing reasonable timeframes for the examination of failed petitions. The bill would also protect those vital public resources by allowing local election officials to recover the costs of the examinations.

Existing law, [Government Code section 7924.110](#), states that a petition proponent has up to 21 days after certification of insufficiency to commence an examination of disqualified petition signatures. However, the statute does not provide proponents of a failed petition with a time limit for their review of the insufficient signatures. Also, the law is silent about cost recovery by the county for staff time and other public resources utilized during the examination process.

Election officers have been tasked with managing increasingly complex and expensive elections. In recent years, election officers have navigated rapidly changing election laws, conducted elections during a global pandemic, endured harassment by the public and direct threats to their safety, and have needed to counter the rampant spread of misinformation. Policies that are core to our democratic values, like the laws allowing the recall of public officials who have lost the faith of their constituents, are exploited by those who can consume local resources that deplete public resources that could otherwise be utilized to improve our communities.

Current law has enabled petition proponents in some jurisdictions to abuse this access to public resources through indefinite time for examination of failed petitions without any obligation to reimburse the county's costs. In one egregious case, the 14-month examination by proponents of a failed petition resulted in over \$1 million taxpayer dollars spent to hire additional staff.

SB 1441 is a fair and reasonable approach to address the abuses of the failed petition examination process. The bill builds off of established policies, like [Elections Code section 15624](#), which establishes cost recovery for voter-initiated recount efforts. Broadly, the bill helps local election officials preserve the resources necessary to conduct free and fair elections that are accessible to all voters. SB 1441 should provide long-term fiscal benefits for county election officers.

For these reasons, CSAC is proud to support SB 1441 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at elawyer@counties.org.

CSAC Letters

The Honorable Anna Caballero

April 26, 2024

Page 2 of 2

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric Lawyer". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Eric Lawyer

Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Ben Allen, California State Senate
Members and Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee



LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA
CITIES



April 29, 2024

The Honorable Steve Padilla
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4
1021 O Street, Suite 6640
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **Item 9210: VLF Backfill**
Request Appropriation for Insufficient ERAF Amounts in Alpine, Mono, and San Mateo Counties

Dear Senator Padilla:

On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and the League of California Cities (CalCities), we write to respectfully urge your consideration for including an appropriation to backfill the insufficient ERAF amounts in the Counties of Alpine, Mono, and San Mateo. The Governor's proposed 2024-25 state budget, regrettably, does not include a backfill of these funds, which will significantly impact local programs and services.

Alpine County 2022-23 Amount:	\$175,215
Alpine County Past Years' Amount:	\$319,771
Mono County 2022-23 Amount:	\$2,313,845
San Mateo County 2022-23 Amount:	\$70,048,152
Total:	\$72,856,983

In 2004, a state budget compromise between the state and its counties and cities was struck to permanently reduce taxpayer's Vehicle License Fee (VLF) obligations by 67.5 percent. The VLF had served as an important general purpose funding source for county and city programs and services since its inception. In exchange for this revenue reduction, the state provided counties and cities with an annual in-lieu VLF amount (adjusted annually to grow with assessed valuation) to compensate for the permanent loss of VLF revenues with revenues from each county's Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF); this transaction became known colloquially as the "VLF Swap." The 2004 budget agreement made clear that excess ERAF funds – shifted property tax revenues that were not needed to fully fund K-14 schools – would not be used to fund the in-lieu VLF amount. Further, the Legislature and Administration agreed to a ballot measure – Proposition 1A – that amended the Constitution to ensure that future shifts or transfers of local agency

property tax revenues could not be used to pay for state obligations. That November, Proposition 1A was approved by 83.7 percent of voters.

Legislation to implement the VLF swap carefully and purposefully identified the sources of funds that were available to pay the state's in-lieu VLF obligation: ERAF distributions to non-basic aid schools and property tax revenues of non-basic aid schools. Proposition 98 ensures that state funds are provided to those schools to meet their constitutional funding guarantee, so they do not experience any financial loss. However, in those instances where there are too few non-basic aid schools in a county from which to transfer sufficient funds to pay the state's in-lieu VLF obligation, the state has historically provided annual appropriations to make up for the revenue shortfalls.

The Governor's 2024-25 proposed budget failed to include funds to ensure that these counties and cities were held harmless for losses associated with the VLF Swap. Without backfill, these counties and the cities therein – through no fault of their own – will endure a significant reduction in general purpose revenue that will directly affect the provision of local programs and services in their respective communities, at precisely the time when our respective members are being asked to do more. As a result, we respectfully urge you to consider appropriating funds for this purpose.

Sincerely,



Jean Kinney Hurst
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California



Mary-Ann Warmerdam
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs
Rural County Representatives of California



Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Ben Triffo
Legislative Advocate
League of California Cities

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4
Chris Hill, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Assembly Bill 2051 (Bonta) PSYPACT – SUPPORT
As Amended April 17, 2024**

Dear Chair Wicks,

On behalf of Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and Urban Counties of California (UCC) we support Assembly Bill 2051, authored by Assembly Member Bonta, to add California to the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT). This measure will increase access to behavioral health services in California at a critical time when we are facing both a mental health crisis and a workforce shortage.

Counties provide vital mental health and substance use disorder services, primarily to California's low-income populations with serious mental illness and substance use disorders, through Medi-Cal and other programs.

Today, nearly one in six Californians is experiencing some form of mental illness, but access to care is devastatingly limited. According to a 2018 poll by the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF) and the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), only 23% of Californians received the mental health services they needed. This disparity between need and access to care is in large part due to the ever-worsening behavioral health workforce shortage. Attrition across the industry will exacerbate this shortage in the years to come. According to the Steinberg Institute, to meet the growing need for behavioral health services and attrition across the field, California will need to add nearly 375,000 behavioral health workers over the next decade. Specifically, California will need to add approximately 30,000 psychologists to its workforce over the next 10 years.

When Californians do find a psychologist, they cannot see them when they are traveling out of state or if they relocate to another state, disrupting their care. This is particularly important for young adults who move out of the state to attend college. The current psychology workforce and existing laws surrounding the practice of psychology do not adequately address or accurately reflect the needs of Californians.

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Bill 2051 (Bonta)
April 30, 2024
Page 2

Occupational licensure compacts are one way we can address the behavioral health workforce shortage and get Californians the care they need now. Through licensure compacts, states establish and agree upon uniform standards that enable multi-state practice. There are currently 15 Occupational Licensure Compacts recognized by the National Center for Interstate Compacts. PSYPACT, the occupational licensure compact for psychologists, was created by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASSPB) in 2014. To date, 40 states have enacted PSYPACT legislation, and joined the compact. By providing a means for psychologists to practice across state lines, PSYPACT increases access to care and allows for continuity of care when patients or providers relocate or travel. Because all compact states enact the same model legislation, PSYPACT promotes cooperation between states and provides a means for telepsychology regulation and consumer protection.

California can't afford not to join PSYPACT. We must use all tools at our disposal to address our behavioral health workforce shortage and ensure clients have access to care and continuity of care. For these reasons, RCRC, CSAC, and UCC are pleased to support AB 2051, and respectfully request your "Aye" vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California
sdukett@rcrcnet.org
916-447-4806



Kelly Brooks-Lindsey
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California
kbl@hbeadvocacy.com
916-753-0844



Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
jonodera@counties.org
916-591-5308

cc: The Honorable Mia Bonta, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Allegra Kim, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2104 (Soria) – SUPPORT
As Introduced February 5, 2024**

Dear Chair Wicks,

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and Urban Counties of California (UCC), we support Assembly Bill 2104 (Soria). This measure would direct the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to establish a pilot program to allow up to 15 community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

The shortage of health professionals in California, and particularly in rural areas of the state, has been a persistent concern for many years, and has become more acute in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the aging of the health care workforce. Rural areas with smaller populations that are farther from urban centers often have the lowest supply of health professionals per capita. Further, rural California does not have a high concentration of the four-year universities needed for graduate degree health professionals; however, often these communities have access to community college programs. However, problems are not isolated to rural areas. The Inland Empire and the Central Valley are two of the fastest growing regions in California, and they are the two areas that have the lowest per capita health workforce. It's also a challenge to recruit and retain people in the Central Valley and Inland Empire that reflect the diversity and language capabilities of these regions.

A recent [study](#) by the Healthforce Center at the University of California, San Francisco, which examines the healthcare workforce landscape in rural and the County Medical Services program (CMSP) counties, found that the Imperial Valley (Imperial), North Central region (Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Tehama), and the San Joaquin Valley (Kings, Madera, Merced, Tulare) sub-regions have the lowest ratios of RNs per capita in the state. Statewide estimates show California faces a shortage of about 36,000 licensed nurses.

California's current healthcare workforce development apparatus is not equipped to handle the growing nursing needs of the state, especially in disadvantaged

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Bill 2104 - SUPPORT
April 30, 2024
Page 2

communities and in rural parts of the state. While California's Community College system does offer associate degrees in nursing, the needs of the healthcare workforce more frequently demand a bachelor's degree. This level of degree is exclusive in California to private institutions that are prohibitively expensive, or to the University of California and the California State University systems which have limited capacity and difficulty serving areas of the state with the highest need.

In order to meet our nursing workforce needs and extend these career opportunities to Californians throughout the state, we must expand the role of our community college system. AB 2104 will take the first step in this process by allowing a limited number of community college districts to expand their nursing programs to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. This will expand the access and affordability of these degrees and will demonstrate how these offerings might be further expanded to additional community college districts.

For these reasons, our organizations are pleased to support AB 2104, and respectfully request your "Aye" vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California
sdukett@rcrcnet.org
916-447-4806



Kelly Brooks-Lindsey
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California
kbl@hbeadvocacy.com
916-753-0844



Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
jonodera@counties.org
916-591-5308

cc: The Honorable Esmeralda Soria, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Natasha Collins, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus



May 2, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2591 (Quirk-Silva) – Local government: youth commission
As Amended April 9, 2024 – OPPOSE**

Dear Chair Wicks:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Urban Counties of California (UCC), and the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), we regretfully oppose Assembly Bill 2591 (Quirk-Silva). This bill creates a new mandated local program by requiring cities and counties to establish a youth commission in response to petitions from high school pupils enrolled in their jurisdiction.

Counties and cities do not take issue with the policy of establishing local youth commissions. Local governments have the authority to create boards and commissions based on local needs, available funding, and staff resources. Local governments frequently use that authority to establish boards, commissions, and advisory bodies to ensure they are informed by the diverse perspectives of their communities. While we appreciate the bill's intent to expand access to civic engagement for youth, as currently drafted, the provisions would create a new mandate that will require significant investment in staff resources without a corresponding allocation of funds. Furthermore, the bill would override the structure of the existing ninety-nine local youth commissions that were developed based on local needs and conditions.

As Brown Act-governed bodies, commissions require financial resources to fund the staff time required to respond to the initial petition and create the body, fill vacancies, provide the venue, staff the meetings, and fulfill Brown Act requirements (e.g., agenda preparation, meeting minutes, coordination with commission members). In addition, local jurisdictions will likely incur costs related to liability insurance, travel, background checks mandated reporter training for staff, and Brown Act training for commission members.

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Given the serious fiscal challenges that exist at all levels of government, it is increasingly unlikely that counties and cities would have the necessary resources to meet this new requirement.

In addition to the real, direct costs imposed on local governments, the bill creates unnecessary opportunity costs for the time spent on a state-prescribed activity that could have been spent on issues of greater need for that community. Given the large backlog of unpaid state mandate claims, local jurisdictions are struggling to keep existing state-mandated programs operating. According to data obtained from the State Controller's Office, as of mid-February 2024, the state owes local agencies \$\$969 million including accrued interest for costs incurred to carry out the state's programs.

Establishing new meeting bodies, which would presumably be funded by redirecting local General Fund dollars from existing programs, must remain a local decision based on local conditions and needs. For the reasons outlined above, RCRC, CSAC, UCC, and Cal Cities respectfully oppose AB 2591 and request your "No" vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact our organizations.

Sincerely,



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cc: The Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Jennifer Swenson, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Caucus



April 10, 2024

The Honorable Matt Haney
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5740
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 2751 (Haney): Employer communications during nonworking hours
As amended 3/21/24 – OPPOSE
Set for hearing 4/17/24 – Assembly Labor and Employment Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Haney:

On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities (CalCities), the California Special Districts Association (CSDA), and the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), we write to express our opposition to your Assembly Bill 2751, a measure that would prohibit communication between employers and employees outside of an ambiguous definition of “emergency”. Even though the bill is clearly intended to apply to public agency employers, AB 2751 raises considerable concerns, questions, and potential unintended consequences for counties, cities, and special districts and our employees. As a result, the measure has the potential to create significant uncertainty regarding the delivery of important local programs and services.

As you know, the provision of government services is a 24-hour, 7-day per week obligation. Local agencies construct their employee work periods in a collaborative manner through the collective bargaining process with duly recognized employee organizations. Those negotiations result in collective bargaining agreements that outline the terms of employment, including pay, benefits, hours, leave, job health and safety policies, as well as ways to balance work and home obligations. Even though it exempts employees subject to a collective bargaining agreement, AB 2571 would likely require reopening such agreements to negotiate new provisions associated with establishing contact outside of work hours. Further, local agencies also have employees that are not subject to a collective bargaining agreement; often these individuals have management or director responsibilities that facilitate and direct departmental activities which are inherently different from the activities of other types of employees. Other agencies, particularly smaller agencies, may not have collective bargaining agreements, or have collective bargaining agreements covering a portion of employees, while still providing important services in their communities. Agreements with these non-represented employees would also have to be amended to accommodate the provisions of the measure. AB 2751’s blanket prohibition puts a “one size fits all” approach that may not be appropriate for the government sector as it creates burdensome challenges for ensuring suitable service levels around the clock, and has implications for represented and non-represented employees.

There are also a number of new definitions and references in AB 2751 that are vague and confusing. For example, we are unclear as to who is considered an “employer” and “employee” under the measure. Managers, directors, and other appointed and/or elected officials may run individual

agency departments, while the local governing body – who are clearly not employees – sets policy and direction for the local agency. Who is to assume responsibility for contacting which employees if contact is necessary after hours? The bill also does not appear to address “on-call” employees, who do not necessarily have assigned hours of work. The lack of clarity in the measure will undoubtedly create considerable challenges for public agency employers and, in doing so, potentially undermine the provision of public services.

In addition, pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, any person employed by a county, city, state agency, or school district or special district in California is a public employee and considered a disaster service worker. This means that all public employees may be required to serve as disaster service workers in support of government efforts for disaster response and recovery efforts. AB 2751 is sufficiently vague regarding such obligations as to raise questions about how disaster service workers would be contacted outside of their normal work period for this purpose. If employees must “disconnect,” how may they be reached in an emergency? How would local agencies ensure that they have access to sufficient personnel to respond to an emergency? Also, the definition of “emergency” is likely to result in a difference of opinion as to what constitutes an emergency, creating additional confusion at what will likely be the most inopportune time.

While we appreciate the goal of ensuring that employees are able to have time for themselves and their families, we respectfully suggest that the provisions of AB 2751 are problematic for local public agencies, their employees, and the communities we serve. As a result, we are opposed to AB 2751. If you have questions about our position, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Jean Kinney Hurst
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California



Aaron Avery
Director of State Legislative Affairs
California Special Districts Association



Dorothy Johnson
Legislative Advocate
Association of California School Administrators



Johnnie Pina
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities



Kalyn Dean
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California

cc: The Honorable Liz Ortega, Chair, Assembly Labor and Employment Committee
Members and Consultants, Assembly Labor and Employment Committee



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 895 (Roth) – SUPPORT
As Amended April 25, 2024**

Dear Chair Caballero,

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and Urban Counties of California (UCC) we support Senate Bill 895 (Roth). This measure would direct the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to establish a pilot program to allow up to 15 community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

The shortage of health professionals in California, and in particular the rural areas of the state, has been a persistent concern for many years, and has become more acute in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the aging of the health care workforce. Rural areas with smaller populations that are farther from urban centers often have the lowest supply of health professionals per capita. Further, rural California does not have a high concentration of the four-year universities needed for graduate degree health professionals; however, often these communities have access to community college programs. Health care workforce shortage problems are not isolated to rural areas. The Inland Empire and the Central Valley are two of the fastest growing regions in California, and they are the two areas that have the lowest per capita health workforce. It's also a challenge to recruit and retain people in the Central Valley and Inland Empire that reflect the diversity and language capabilities of these regions.

A recent [study](#) by the Healthforce Center at the University of California, San Francisco, which examines the healthcare workforce landscape in rural and the County Medical Services program (CMSP) counties, found that the Imperial Valley (Imperial), North Central region (Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Tehama), and the San Joaquin Valley (Kings, Madera, Merced, Tulare) sub-regions have the lowest ratios of RNs per capita in the state. Statewide estimates show California faces a shortage of about 36,000 licensed nurses.

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California's current healthcare workforce development apparatus is not equipped to handle the growing nursing needs of the state, especially in disadvantaged communities and in rural parts of the state. While California's Community College system does offer associate degrees in nursing, the needs of the healthcare workforce more frequently demand a bachelor's degree. This level of degree is exclusive in California to private institutions that are prohibitively expensive, or to the University of California and the California State University systems which have limited capacity and difficulty serving areas of the state with the highest need.

In order to meet our nursing workforce needs and extend these career opportunities to Californians throughout the state, we must expand the role of our community college system. SB 895 will take the first step in this process by allowing a limited number of community college districts to expand their nursing programs to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. This will expand the access and affordability of these degrees and will demonstrate how these offerings might be further expanded to additional community college districts.

For these reasons, our organizations are pleased to support SB 895, and respectfully request your "Aye" vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



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UCC Letters

The Honorable Anna Caballero

Senate Bill 895 - SUPPORT

April 30, 2024

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cc: The Honorable Richard Roth, Member of the California State Senate
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Lenin Del Castillo, Principal Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Kirk Feely, Fiscal Director, Senate Republican Caucus



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Anna M. Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 964 (Seyarto) – Property tax: tax-defaulted property sales.
As amended April 25, 2024 – OPPOSE
Referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Caballero,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the Urban Counties of California (UCC), we write to share our regretful opposition to Senate Bill 964 by Senator Seyarto. This measure would substantially revise the longstanding process for certain sales of tax-defaulted properties by county governments and impose costly new requirements on a state agency without an appropriation to pay for them.

Under current law, residences with unpaid property taxes are prohibited from being sold by a county tax collector¹ until at least a period of five years has elapsed since the initial delinquency—or three years for residences subject to a nuisance abatement lien. Prior to selling the property at auction, the county must issue notices to the owners of the defaulted property and inform the individual of the intent to sell the property. Until the completion of a sale of a property, the owner of the tax-delinquent property can redeem the status of the property by paying any unpaid taxes, assessments, penalties, and fees. During a period of delinquency, tax collectors are required to conduct regular direct outreach to the property owner, notice the sale in a newspaper or public location, and a county board of supervisors must provide approval before a tax-defaulted property sale may occur.

Tax-defaulted properties must be sold to the highest bidder at or above the minimum bid price—determined by the amount of unpaid taxes, penalties, and assessments, in addition to some administrative fees. Upon completion of the sale, the former owner of the property is entitled to claim any excess proceeds resulting from the sale up to one year after the date of the sale. If the property owner does not claim their excess proceeds, the balance may be transferred to the county general fund after being used to reimburse the costs of the sale. This may only occur if a minimum of six years has elapsed since the initial default on a property tax payment – or four years for residences with nuisance abatement liens – during which time county tax collectors conduct regular direct outreach to the property owner.

Counties conduct tax-defaulted property sales through two different methods: a Chapter 7 sale through public auction or sealed bid, or a Chapter 8 sale by agreement, in which a nonprofit organization seeking

¹ In some counties, this role is conducted by the county auditor-controller. However, for the sake of simplicity, this letter refers to county tax collectors, as they represent the majority of county officers responsible for the task.

to rehabilitate substandard properties for low-income housing may object to a Chapter 7 sale and seek a direct sale by agreement with the entity.

SB 964 would impose unnecessary restrictions on how Chapter 8 tax-defaulted property sales may occur, limiting a tool used to build local affordable housing. The bill ignores the expertise of the local tax collector, who may determine that a Chapter 8 sale is more pragmatic, cost effective, and beneficial for their community. Instead, SB 964 would needlessly involve the Board of Equalization in the Chapter 8 sale process, imposing new requirements on a state agency that lacks the existing resources to conduct residential property valuations at the local level. To compound the problem, counties are provided no recourse to appeal valuations that do not comport with local realities.

The bill would require the Board of Equalization to complete property valuations within 45 days, a timeframe it is unlikely to consistently accommodate. While all parties involved would prefer expedition in conducting valuations, imposing such a rapid timeframe on a state agency unaccustomed to this work is likely to lead to rushed work, inviting errors in valuations, especially for distressed properties that are naturally complicated to value.

Counties are in the best position to determine the values of their local properties and conduct sales of tax-defaulted properties in a way that serves the needs of their communities. This bill ignores the input of vast and experienced local expertise in favor of a state agency lacking any direct experience in conducting local residential valuations. The bill undermines a tool used to improve affordable housing stock and values of neighborhoods statewide.

It is for these reasons that CSAC, RCRC, and UCC must regretfully oppose SB 964 and request your NO vote. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact us at the email addresses below.

Sincerely,



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Sarah Dukett
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cc: The Honorable Kelly Seyarto, California State Senate
Members and Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Karen Lange, Legislative Advocate, California Association of Treasurers and Tax Collectors
Phonxay Keokham, President, California Association of County Treasurers and Tax Collectors



May 1, 2024

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 1116 (Portantino) Unemployment Insurance: Trade Disputes: Eligibility for Benefits. – OPPOSE (As Introduced February 13, 2024)

Dear Senator Caballero,

The undersigned organizations respectfully oppose Senate Bill 1116, which would provide employees who remain on strike for more than two weeks with Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits, thus requiring employers (via UI) to fund ongoing labor disputes. Local government, school, and public university revenues are incredibly restrictive and funding sources are limited; as cost pressures continue to increase for local governments and schools, it is critical that we have a fiscally solvent UI system in order for these agencies to continue to provide services to the public and provide competitive benefits to our active and retired employees.

Under existing law, UI payments are intended to assist employees who, through no fault of their own, are forced to leave their employment. Participating agencies fund these payments via an Unemployment Insurance Reserve Account (UI Account) with the Employment Development Department (EDD). SB 1116 makes a significant change to this approach by providing unemployment to workers who are currently employed, and not seeking other employment, but have chosen as a labor negotiating tactic to go on strike. In the event of a strike that lasts over two weeks, SB 1116 would allow all striking workers to claim UI benefits for up to 26 weeks. In this situation, a local government or other agency would experience simultaneous claims that would significantly increase UI costs. These costs would impact public employers, such as cities, counties, special districts, joint powers authorities, and public universities. It would also

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impact K-12 schools, as school districts directly pay a portion of employee wages to the State fund through the School Employee Fund, coordinated through their County Office of Education.

In addition to its considerable costs to employers, SB 1116 will likely further harm the already insolvent UI fund and threaten benefits to unemployed Californians in future recessions. California's UI Fund was exhausted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and is projected to have an outstanding balance of \$20.8 billion at the end of 2024, owed to the Federal government.¹ This is nearly double the amount of funds that California borrowed the last time California's UI funds were exhausted during the 2008 recession. Beginning in 2008, California accumulated more than \$10 billion in debt which was not repaid until 2018 – a decade later. This UI deficit had significant fiscal effects on employers and the general fund. California's UI insolvency resulted in significant federal tax increases ranging from the hundreds of millions to over \$2 billion per year between 2012-2018. With California's UI Fund becoming insolvent less than two years after repaying federal UI from the Great Recession, California cannot afford to further leverage and strain an already burdened system.

This measure follows an identical measure, SB 799 (Portantino, 2023), which was vetoed by Governor Gavin Newsom. The Governor's veto message stated in part: "[T]he state is responsible for the interest payments on the federal UI loan and to date has paid \$362.7 million in interest with another \$302 million due this month. Now is not the time to increase costs or incur this sizable debt." The State Department of Finance has also stated that a prior unsuccessful predecessor to this bill, Assembly Bill 1066 (Gonzalez, Lorena, 2019), would have resulted in, "... Increased cost pressures on the UI Fund, exacerbating the condition of the Fund and hindering the ability to build a reserve to respond to variations in the economy." With the State already grappling with a multi-billion dollar budget deficit that will negatively impact local agencies, and public universities, it would be counter-productive to simultaneously increase cost pressures on the State's UI fund.

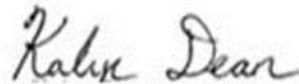
It is also important to note that this measure will further erode good faith negotiations at the bargaining table for local government, schools, and university employers. Local governments and schools work hard to engage in good faith bargaining. If SB 1116 were to become law, we anticipate longer lengths of impasse, higher costs associated with protracted Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) proceedings and a decline in quality of public services. These impacts could be amplified by a pending measure concerning sympathy strikes (Assembly Bill 2404 (Lee)) and, as to local governments, a recently-enacted measure allowing for collective bargaining for temporary employees (Assembly Bill 1484 (Zbur, 2023)).

For these reasons, we must respectfully oppose SB 1116. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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¹ <https://edd.ca.gov/siteassets/files/unemployment/pdf/edduiforecastjan24.pdf>

UCC Letters

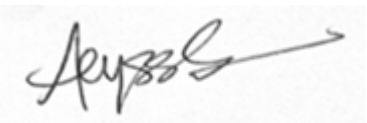
Senate Bill 1116 (Portantino)



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UCC Letters

Senate Bill 1116 (Portantino)



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cc: The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Committee Members, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Robert Ingenito, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Heather Wood, Budget Consultant, Republican Caucus