

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



ITEM: 2.2
(ID # 24511)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, July 30, 2024

FROM : EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

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

ACTION: Consent

Carolina Salazar Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy

7/25/2024

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Gutierrez, seconded by Supervisor Perez 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: July 30, 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 (July 2024)

CSAC Letters (July 2024)

UCC Letters (July 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.

Regulatory Affairs & Funding

- Climate Resiliency Bond (Proposition)
Since the legislature and the Governor expressed their intentions to place a climate resiliency bond on the ballot, the County had been advocating for inclusion of several key County priorities. After months of advocacy and negotiations, SB 867, was passed and signed by the Governor. The County's letter of support which is attached, highlights the priorities which were ultimately included, and will now go before the voters.
- Santa Ana Water Board's Tentative Orders (TO) R8-2024-0001
The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region (Santa Ana Water Board) proposed region-wide Phase I MS4 Permit, which if adopted would regulate discharges of pollutants in stormwater and urban runoff from cities in Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties that are within the Santa Ana River watershed. This proposal would have major impacts to the County. The County submitted joint comments from the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Orange County Public Works, and the San Bernardino County Flood Control District, on behalf of the 60 municipal stormwater permittees as part of the Tri-County Group (TCG). To highlight the County's local concerns a comment letter on behalf of the County was submitted on 07/02/24 [Attached].
- California Public Utilities Commission: AT&T Carrier of Last Resort
The County continues to have concerns with AT&T's application to end its carrier of last resort obligation. Although the CPUC has denied the application, there was a legislative effort to undermine the CPUC's decision. The County is tracking this issue closely. [Per Letter sent on 05/22/24. Attached]

Outreach & Communications

- County Airport Manager Angela Jameson, met with staff members of the RivCo congressional delegation in Washington, DC to advocate for additional funding of our local airports on 06/27/24 as part of the U.S. Contract Tower Association Annual Conference.
- County Executive Office Jeff Van Wagenen presented the County's State Budget Priorities to the Inland Empire Legislative Caucus on 06/12/24. [Per Budget Priority Letter sent on 06/10/24. Attached]
- County leaders attended Assembly Member Dr. Corey Jackson's State Budget Listening Session on 05/31/24.

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.]
- 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 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 Sent 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 Letters Sent. Attached]

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 [Sent to the Governor Requesting Signature on 06/24/24. Attached]
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 2133 (Kalra-D) Veterinary medicine: registered veterinary technicians.** Authorizes registered veterinary technicians to perform neuter surgeries on male domestic cats under the direct supervision of a California-licensed veterinarian, provided they meet certain conditions.
Position: Support [Per BOS Agenda Item 3.8 on 05/21/24]
- **AB 2557 (Ortega-D) Local agencies: contracts for special services and temporary help: performance reports.** Would restrict county contracting and create onerous reporting requirements.
Position: Oppose [Per Letter Sent to Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement on 06/20/24. Attached]
- **AB 2561 (McKinnor-D) Local public employees: vacant positions.** Would require public agencies with high vacancy rates of more than 180, at the request of the recognized employee organization to meet and confer.
Position: Oppose [Per Letter Sent to Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement on 06/20/24]
- **AB 2866 (Pellerin-D) Pool safety: State Department of Social Services regulated facilities.** Would enhance required safety equipment for swimming pools on the premises of licensed child day care facilities and homebasedfamily day care sites.
Position: Support [Per Letter Sent to Senate Health Committee on 06/28/24. Attached]
- **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 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 2882 (McCarthy-D) California Community Corrections Performance Incentives.** Outlines specific goals for the local plans, which must be submitted annually to the Board of State and Community Corrections.
Position: Oppose [Per Letter Sent to Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement on 06/20/24. Attached]
- **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 Sent to Assembly Appropriations Committee on 04/26/24]

- **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 Letters Sent. Attached.]
- **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 Sent to Senate Local Government Committee on 06/24/24.]
- **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 [Sent to the Governor Requesting Signature on 06/18/24. Attached]
Impact: This bill idea was proposed by RivCo and the March JPA.
- **SB 1057 (Menjivar-D) Juvenile justice coordinating council.** Would reform the structure and function of county juvenile justice coordinating councils.
Position: Oppose [Per Letter Sent to Assembly Public Safety Committee 06/24/24. Attached]
- **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 Assembly Natural Resources Committee on 06/03/24. Attached]
- **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 Sent to the Governor Requesting Signature on 06/15/24.]
Impact: This bill idea was proposed by RivCo Facilities Management.
- **SB 1233 (Wilk-D) University of California: Western University of Health Sciences: veterinary medicine: spay and neuter techniques. Would expand elective coursework for veterinary medicine students and will also be available to California-licensed veterinarians and registered veterinary technicians**
- **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 Sent Assembly Appropriations Committee on 06/24/24.Attached]
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.
- **SB 2557 (Roth-D).** 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 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

July 2, 2024

Mr. Adam P. Fischer
Chief, Municipal Stormwater Unit
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQB)
3737 Main Street, Suite 500
Riverside, CA 92501

Submitted via email rb8stormwater.comments@waterboards.ca.gov

Re: Proposed Order No. R8-2024-0001

Dear Mr. Fischer:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, which also serves as the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Santa Ana Water Board's Tentative Orders (TO), proposed order R8-2024-0001.

The Board of Supervisors supports the joint comments submitted by the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Orange County Public Works, and the San Bernardino County Flood Control District, on behalf of the 60 municipal stormwater permittees as part of the Tri-County Group (TCG) and additionally wishes to make these summary policy level comments.

Our County is committed to paving the way for resilient, ready, and connected communities. **Our ask today, is to support a TO that gives us the flexibility to succeed and helps us deliver needed infrastructure improvements and housing for our residents.**

As the 4th largest County in California, and 10th largest County in the nation, we must address multiple state and federal mandates, including developing over 40,647 housing units in the unincorporated areas, building the infrastructure to serve our disadvantaged communities and allow for population growth, expanding mental health services, building resilience towards climate change, ensuring public safety, and much, much more. Over 40% of the Santa Ana Watershed contains disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities that require significant and challenging investments in infrastructure just to meet basic safety and quality of life needs for residents.

With limited funding and multiple, sometimes conflicting, mandates, our teams have become skilled at addressing as many mandates as possible with each available dollar. We work closely with our various departments to identify and focus on projects that can achieve multiple goals and provide real and powerful benefits whenever possible. We have the most success when regulations give us the flexibility to look long term, develop partnerships and find creative ways to solve problems. Here are a few examples of programs that are already underway in your region:

- Santa Ana River Bottom Collaborative – We have formed a multi-agency collaborative to address water quality protection, recreational, public access, educational usage, and wildlife habitat management within the river. This multi-million-dollar investment has put permanent rangers and social service teams in the Santa Ana River to eliminate prohibited activities, provide housing for unhoused river bottom campers, promote improved habitat quality, and reduce the risks of fires to our communities.
- Temescal Floodplain Buyout and Restoration Program – In a similar vein, we have invested over \$8 million, and committed an additional \$20 million, for the purchase, protection, and restoration of the Temescal Wash floodplain from Lake Elsinore to the City of Corona. This investment is not only preserving the floodplain, but also removing illegal dumping, structures, trash, and other pollutants that had historically impaired these waterway properties.
- Investments in Sanitary Sewers – In partnership with local sewer agencies, we are investing over \$30 million to deliver mainline sewer systems to the unincorporated communities of Woodcrest, Lakeland Village, Good Hope and Mead Valley. This first step will ultimately allow residents in these disadvantaged communities to convert troubled septic systems to sewers. This will not only benefit our disadvantaged community residents, but also help Goldenstar Creek, Canyon Lake, and other bacteria and nutrient-impaired waterbodies.
- Reclaimed Water Systems – We are investing over \$25 million in reclaimed water systems in the Cities of Eastvale, Norco and Corona to not only enhance the reliability of local water supplies, but to also promote the conversion of large public and commercial irrigation systems to reclaimed water irrigation programs that will help eliminate sources of irrigation runoff to municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s).

These are just some examples of the long term, meaningful, multiple-purpose investments that we are proudly making to improve our communities and water quality. These programs allow us to comply with multiple state and federal regulatory mandates in a manner that controls the overall cost of housing and services. We believe these efforts are also in the spirit of the Maximum Extent Practical standards that Congress envisioned for MS4 stormwater permits.

Unfortunately, we believe that some provisions in the current draft TO will force the County to redirect our limited resources from powerful multi-benefit programs to technical and administrative programs that, while they may increase reporting, cost, and complexity of compliance, do not provide real, measurable improvements to water quality. Permittee staff have estimated the costs of compliance with the TO at potentially billions across all three counties. Further, unless permittees can have a clear path to compliance, permittees would be exposed to subjective enforcement or costly third-party suits seeking civil penalties, large attorney’s fees, and injunctive relief. To this end, much work remains to be done.

We ask that the RWQCB staff take the following actions to ensure the next draft TO will allow Riverside County to both find success and manage the cost of living and housing for our residents.

- 1) **The TO should maintain the flexibility provided in the 2010 Permit for public works projects and provide exemptions for public safety projects.** The TO will significantly impact our ability to serve disadvantaged communities. These communities were often subdivided when the County was in its agricultural infancy, with no plan for paved streets, flood control, water and sewer. To this day, these communities have narrow unmaintained streets with no sidewalks, curbs or gutters, lack basic flood protection and are dependent on septic systems and water wells.

Delivery of basic infrastructure and public safety measures to these communities is a top priority of the Board of Supervisors, especially considering the many natural disasters our County has faced.

The TO does not fully recognize the challenges of these real-world communities we are trying to help. The expanded TO requirements will place the County in the untenable position of having to minimize or forego infrastructure and safety improvements or having to condemn property, possibly including homes, for water quality features. This could dislocate residents from the very disadvantaged communities we are trying to help. We need exemptions for basic safety projects (e.g., streetlights, sidewalks, flood control and roads). We also need to maintain the 2010 Permit Transportation Project Guideline provisions, which were drafted in recognition of these challenges.

- 2) **The TO must support our state mandated goals for affordable housing.** As noted above, the County is expected to deliver 40,647 units of housing pursuant to the state’s Regional Housing Needs Assessment, in order to improve housing affordability as a key statewide goal. Further, the state is promoting the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (second homes) and residential lot subdivisions to diversify housing opportunities as part of their affordable housing programs. The TO’s proposed revisions to the Water Quality Management Plan and hydromodification management, including removal of important exemptions (e.g. 1-acre exemption), which will make these low-income and affordable housing projects more complex and expensive counter to the state’s housing goals and without commensurate benefit. We ask the RWQCB maintain the provisions identified in the 2010 MS4 Permit for new development, or at minimum, to address the detailed comments on these programs provided in the TCG comments.

- 3) **The Watershed Management Plan (WMP) Reasonable Assurance Analysis (RAA) is too rigid and costly.** The RWQCB, has discretion to require alternatives to an RAA. The Permittees need the flexibility to propose programs that are cost effective, achievable, recognize the limits of current technology, and allow us to propose paths to compliance that leverage the type of multiple benefit programs described at the introduction of this letter. Such an approach will allow us to supplement the permit baseline programs described above with the type of creative, collaborative, multi-benefit programs that accelerate real environmental benefits to our communities while also controlling the costs of living and housing.

- 4) **The RWQCB must complete updates to the Lake Elsinore/Canyon Lake Nutrients TMDL (“LE/CL TMDL”) and the Middle Santa Ana Bacteria TMDL (“MSAR TMDL”) prior to adopting the TO.** The RWQCB has committed to make several critical updates to these TMDLs but has not adopted them. These updates are foundational to the new MS4 Permit, and if the TMDLs are not updated the TO will unnecessarily expose permittees to potential enforcement and lawsuits until the TMDLs are updated. The RWQCB must complete the process of updating the TMDLs before adopting the new TO.

Further, we are specifically concerned that the TO ignores the Basin Plan and existing MS4 permit language that directs MS4 Permittees to address “controllable sources” of bacteria for the MSAR TMDL. The TO requires regulation of all sources of bacteria – which include natural sources of bacteria that heavily contribute to bacterial exceedances. This would require Permittees to eliminate all dry weather flows from MS4 outfalls to the river at great cost and possibly in direct opposition with state and federal Endangered Species Act requirements.

- 5) **The significant revamp of development, inspection and monitoring programs should be abandoned in favor of working with permittees to ensure that existing programs are implemented properly.** The TO includes significant expansions of baseline programs to address perceived deficiencies in implementation noted by RWQCB staff. However, the significant revisions do little to improve water quality. Further, the revisions complicate compliance and unnecessarily increase costs to the Permittees, our disadvantaged communities, and efforts to provide affordable housing. Revisions to the development, inspection and monitoring programs should be driven by the Permittees through the WMP process. This will also allow the Permittees to balance available resources between backstop safety net programs like inspection programs with opportunities to pursue multi-benefit collaborations that can truly achieve powerful environmental outcomes for our communities.

Thank you for considering these comments. The Board of Supervisors reserves the right to make additional comments in writing, or before the Santa Ana Water Board, on subsequent drafts of this important permit. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or cserrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

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May 22, 2024

The Honorable Alice Busching Reynolds, President
California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

**Re: Judge Glegola's Proposed Decision to Dismiss AT&T California's Application,
Relief of Carrier of Last Resort Obligations – Application (A.) 23-03-003**

Dear President Alice Busching Reynolds:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Riverside, I write in support of Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Glegola's Proposed Decision to dismiss AT&T California's (AT&T's) application for relief from their Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) obligations, submitted in Application (A.) 23-03-003 on May 10, 2024.

As a COLR, AT&T is required to provide "Plain Old Telephone Service" (POTS) landline phone service upon request to all residential and business customers within its service territory. These COLR obligations play a pivotal role in safeguarding the rights and safety of consumers. By designating a COLR, it ensures that all residents have access to essential communication services. If AT&T's application is approved, over 580,000 POTS customers could lose service within six months. Here in Riverside County, this will impact portions of Riverside, Jurupa Valley, Woodcrest, El Cerrito, Lake Matthews, Temescal Valley, Home Gardens, and Corona. While AT&T may have the resources to withdraw its wireline infrastructure, many POTS consumers will struggle to find an affordable and adequate alternative service. This poses several concerns that will disproportionately affect senior citizens, low-income households, and residents in rural areas.

For instance, many of our elderly residents—including low-income seniors—have commented that their landline is their sole method of communication with loved ones, medical providers, and assistance programs like the Riverside County Office of Aging's (OOA) home-delivered meals and transportation programs. These programs annually deliver over 800,000 meals to 13,184 residents and transported 255 residents. They ensure that Riverside County seniors can have adequate, reliable nutrition, and can attend their necessary doctor's appointments. Without landlines, our elderly residents may be totally isolated and lose access to such programs.

Moreover, during an emergency, landlines are linked to specific addresses, making it easier for first responders to locate the correct address. This is particularly crucial here in Riverside County, where we often face earthquakes, fires, and flooding. Unlike wireless connections, which can be unreliable, and cell phones, which can run out of battery, copper landlines maintain stronger reception during power outages. In rural areas, where other forms of connectivity may be unavailable, this reliability is essential.

All Californians must have reliable access to communication services, regardless of their geographic location or economic status—especially during emergencies. Dismissing AT&T's application for request from relief would prioritize the safety and interests of consumers. As a COLR in California, AT&T has a duty to provide landline services to those who need them and if such an obligation is terminated, then widespread alternatives should be implemented with uniform, technologically neutral minimum service quality standards. For these reasons, I respectfully ask the CPUC to accept ALJ Glegola's Proposed Decision to dismiss AT&T's application (A.23-03-003).

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



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June 10, 2024

The Honorable Mike McGuire
Senate President pro Tempore

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker, California State Assembly

The Honorable Scott D. Wiener
Chair, Senate Committee on Budget and
Fiscal Review

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee

The Honorable Roger W. Niello
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Budget and
Fiscal Review

The Honorable Heath Flora
Vice Chair, Assembly Budget Committee

**Re: 2024-25 Joint Legislative Budget Proposal:
County of Riverside Impacts and Input**

Dear Members of the State Legislature:

Our County recognizes the considerable fiscal challenges the state is facing, and we appreciate that the legislature kept those who are most vulnerable at the top of mind while negotiating this year's budget. We are thankful for many of the initiatives included in the joint legislative budget proposal. On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I would like to share the County's perspectives as you enter budget negotiations with the administration.

Homelessness and Housing

Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP)

We stand with the legislature in support of a Round 6 of HHAP, by providing \$1 billion in funding. HHAP resources are critical for maintaining and expanding housing solutions that are essential to addressing homelessness. Between 2021 and 2024, these resources have provided housing and other critical services to nearly 2,400 individuals who are experiencing homelessness in Riverside County, averaging 800 persons per year. In our County, these resources are also leveraged among other federal, state and local resources to increase housing production and were used to develop 72 permanent supportive housing units set aside for individuals and families who are homeless.

Housing Affordability

Tackling homelessness requires addressing housing affordability. The County supports the approval to fund the Low Income Housing Tax Credits, by providing \$500 million in funding. The legislature's rejection of the proposed cuts to Multifamily Housing, Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) 2.0, and Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program, show a commitment to funding affordable housing and will help accelerate the more than 10,000 units of affordable housing the County has in its pipeline. These resources are vital to ensuring that projects can continue.

Public Safety and Corrections

Accelerated Closure of Chuckawalla Valley State Prison

Over the next four months, the County looks forward to working with the Administration to focus on the economic recovery of the City of Blythe and Palo Verde Valley communities of Palo Verde, Mesa Verde, and Ripley, as the Chuckawalla Valley State Prison prepares to close on November 30, 2024.

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Funding

Federal VOCA funding fluctuates based on the number of criminal cases, the state's funding has allowed our County to provide services to victims of crime. The legislative proposal to backfill \$100 million in lost federal funds, shows the state's commitment to helping victims. The Governor's proposed 30% reduction would have resulted in over 6,000 victims not receiving critical services in our County.

Public Defense Pilot Program (PDPP)

The PDPP has been a great program and helpful in bringing justice to public defense clients lives as well as the lives of their families. In this way, our entire community has been well served and uplifted. Without the funding for the third year of the program, many people and our community will be negatively affected. This program has proven to be very cost-effective and a great help in eliminating recidivism. We urge the continuation and completion of this valuable program.

Health and Human Services

Child Support Services

We remain concerned with the legislative proposal to reduce the local child support agency (LCSA) funding by a total of \$29.4 million - \$10 million State General Fund and \$19.4 million in Federal Financial Participation (FFP). This program is an uncapped entitlement program meaning, for every \$1 that the State contributes, the Federal Government matches with an additional \$2. This cut is short sighted and leaves federal resources on the table that would otherwise go toward helping families in our community.

Public Health

We are thankful the legislature is committed to rejecting cuts in core public health that would return us to pre-pandemic staffing levels and infrastructure. The COVID 19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in our public health infrastructure and the impacts they had on response to our communities. Future of Public Health funding is a critical and flexible funding stream that allows our County to address gaps in core services and needs. The County developed an expanded disease surveillance team to enhance disease detection, built infrastructure in our public health lab, and hired staff to help focus on prevention and early detection. The cuts to public health proposed in the Governor's May Revise would have led to over 100 layoffs of staff including nurses, microbiologists, epidemiologists, communicable disease specialists, community health workers, health educators, accountants, and a public health economist.

CalWORKs

Our County supports the restoration of funding for Single Allocation and Family Stabilization programs, and the partial restorations for Expanded Subsidized Employment, mental health and substance abuse services, and the Home Visiting Program.

CalWORKs Single Allocation provides funding for overall program eligibility, as well as Employment Services. If funding is not restored, counties will have to shift funding from Employment Services, already proposed to be reduced, to fund mandated eligibility work. This significant reduction in services funding will affect counties' ability to not only re-engage existing CalWORKs parents, but also will hamper counties' ability to meet the CalWORKs 2.0 framework and CalOAR metrics.

We support the funding of programs like Family Stabilization which provides intensive case management and supportive services to families in crisis struggling to meaningfully participate in welfare-to-work activities. The elimination of this program would remove critical interventions that assist families in finding a pathway to stability. We also support the restoration of the Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Program which currently offers CalWORKs participants subsidized employment placement, providing crucial training, skills, and experiences essential for securing and maintaining permanent employment. This program currently impacts over 400 Riverside County families each fiscal year and has resulted in nearly 1,500 ESE placements since the program's inception. Elimination of the program would create a void in the continuum of employment-related services, and ultimately limit participants' opportunities to progress toward higher wages and the acquisition of needed skills.

Finally, the CalWORKs Home Visiting Program supports the positive health, development, and well-being outcomes for pregnant and parenting people, families, and infants born into poverty. Elimination of the program means the loss of high-quality, evidence-based, culturally competent services for this population, especially those at-risk family units. We are thankful to see that the legislature rejected cuts that would have decimated the existing CalWORKs services infrastructure.

Child Welfare Services

Our County supports restoration of funding for programs serving vulnerable youth and families in the child welfare system. Specifically, we urge the preservation of \$50 million for caregiver approvals. This funding supports state-mandated case management activities to perform timely approval of relative caregivers through the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process. In Riverside County, approximately 4,500 children have been removed from their families because of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. For children who cannot reunite with their biological parents, foster placement may be the first step towards adoption or guardianship; the RFA program consolidates and replaces existing approval requirements for families seeking to care for children and youth in foster care, serving as a key component to eventual foster placement.

We are also supportive of the proposed funding to the Family Urgent Response System (FURS) and Bringing Families Home (BFH) programs. Since its creation in 2019, FURS has responded to 5,000 calls from youth and caregivers a year, connecting them to ongoing mental health services and leading to a reduced likelihood of foster children and youth requiring residential treatment or experiencing psychiatric emergency. Most importantly, a call to FURS does not require advanced levels of screening, assessment, or referral—the typical processes required of other systems that acts as a deterrent to seeking assistance. FURS is also one of the few concrete supports provided to caregivers in the foster care system and supports county recruitment and retention of family-based caregivers, particularly kinship caregivers, which aligns with federal and state requirements and goals of increasing kinship care. Funding of these programs provides nuanced, culturally sensitive intervention with a focus on prevention.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

We are thankful to see the proposed restoration of funding for the APS program. Our County will be able to maintain 55 social workers and other staff with these funds. We will be able to provide 24/7 responses to the 19,319 reports of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation that our County receives annually, particularly as reports to our APS hotline continue to increase year over year, increasing by 25% in the last 3 years.

We hope that these summaries provide some perspective on what is at stake for us locally. We appreciate the opportunity to voice our concerns. While we recognize that difficult budget choices are ahead, we thank you for your consideration of the Riverside County perspective and the significant impacts we believe these specific actions could have in our community.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



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

June 24, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1948 (Rendon, Santiago, and Gipson): Homeless Multidisciplinary Personnel Teams - REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to respectfully request your signature on AB 1948 which would delete the January 1, 2025, sunset date of AB 728 (Chapter 337, Statutes of 2019) and allow our county, along with six others, 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.

As one of the AB 728 pilot counties, the authorized multidisciplinary personnel teams (MDTs) helped County employees focus on delivering services to unhoused residents across County departments. This model is in line with RivCo1, the County's Integrated Service Delivery model, which takes a 'no wrong door' approach to connecting residents with the full array of County services available to them. This streamlining of services focuses on prevention, early intervention, diversion, and collaboration.

As such, AB 1948 also aligns with the state's current emphasis on early action and providing necessary support by offering individualized assistance. The sharing of information among County agencies is key to creating appropriate, individualized assistance plans. A key challenge to integrating services can be balancing information and data sharing with privacy protections. AB 1948, however, will continue to have strong privacy protections—allowing for the sharing of personal information only under specific circumstances. For these reasons, the County of Riverside requests your signature on this important measure.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Office of Speaker Emeritus Anthony Rendon
Assembly Member Miguel Santiago
Assembly Member Mike Gipson
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

District 1	Kevin Jeffries 951-955-1010
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District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

May 29, 2024

The Honorable Marie Alvarado-Gil, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
1020 N Street, Room 521
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: AB 1948 (Rendon, Santiago, and Gipson): Homeless Multidisciplinary Personnel Teams
As amended 3/12/24 – SUPPORT
Set for hearing 6/3/24 – Senate Human Services Committee

Dear Senator Alvarado-Gil:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write in support of AB 1948 (Rendon, Santiago, and Gipson). This bill would delete the January 1, 2025, sunset date of AB 728 (Chapter 337, Statutes of 2019), which 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.

Our County is committed to delivering financially stable and results oriented service delivery. As one of the AB 728 pilot counties, the authorized multidisciplinary personnel teams (MDTs) helped County employees focus on delivering services to unhoused residents across County departments. This model is in line with RivCo1, the County's Integrated Service Delivery model, which takes a 'no wrong door' approach to connecting residents with the full array of County services available to them. This streamlining of services focuses on prevention, early intervention, diversion, and collaboration.

This bill is also in line with the state's current focus on acting early to get people the support they need, by setting them up with individualized support. The sharing of information among County agencies is key to creating appropriate individualized plans. A challenge to integrating services can be balancing information and data sharing with privacy protections. AB 1948 will continue to have strong privacy protections, allowing for the sharing of personal information only under specific circumstances.

For these reasons, the County of Riverside supports AB 1948 and urges your aye vote on this important measure. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Human Services Committee
Office of Speaker Emeritus Anthony Rendon
Assembly Member Miguel Santiago
Assembly Member Mike Gipson
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

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District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

June 24, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1957 (Wilson) Public contracts: Best Value Construction Contracting for Counties
REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to respectfully request your signature on AB 1957 which would authorize any county in the state to utilize the best-value contracting model and eliminate the statutory sunset on such authority.

The County of Riverside participated under the previous pilot and the use of best-value contracting has allowed for a selection of contractors based on qualifications and experience, not simply lowest bid prices. Agreements mandate that contractors employ a skilled and trained labor force, ensuring a high level of work performance. Contractors must then go through a two-step procurement process to provide evidence of licensing, insurance coverage, project experience, performance history, and other qualifications. Awarding Job Order Contracting (JOC) contracts and formal public projects in this manner results in improved performance and faster completion of complex projects, while also reducing costs by avoiding contractor errors, costly change orders, and redo of projects. As a result, best-value contracting has been a cost effective and time efficient method for completing several important projects.

For these reasons, the County of Riverside respectfully requests your signature on AB 1957. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,

Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Lori Wilson, Member, California State Assembly
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

District 1	Kevin Jeffries 951-955-1010
District 2	Karen Spiegel 951-955-1020
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District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

June 20, 2024

The Honorable Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas
Chair, Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee
1020 O Street, Room 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2557 (Ortega) Local Agencies: Contracts for Special Services and
Temporary Help: Performance Reports
As amended June 17, 2024 – OPPOSE**

Dear Senator Smallwood-Cuevas:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to inform you of our opposition to Assembly Bill 2557 which would significantly impede our county's ability to work with private, non-profit, and community-based organizations, by imposing onerous obligations and costs on local contracts.

Local agencies are already subject to statutory limitations on contracting through the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA), the Educational Employment Relations Act, and transparency requirements of the California Public Records Act. The efforts proposed in AB 2557 will drive up costs, increase administrative burdens, deter contracting, and delay essential services. This measure goes against the legislatures push to require local jurisdictions to work more closely with local providers to deliver services. As an example, local contracts help deliver culturally competent services to unhoused individuals via trusted messengers that have a proven track record of working in the communities they are contracted to serve.

Our County is committed to uplifting our nonprofit sector. The nonprofits in our region are scarce and often overlooked and underfunded, which is why our Board formed a nonprofit roundtable which among other things, provides funding for capacity building. Many of the nonprofits in our County have tight budgets and just a few staff members. Imposing the reporting requirements outlined in AB 2557, would only increase the cost of providing services, creating additional strain on an already overloaded sector.

These provisions fail to understand the practical logistics of achieving this detailed level of reporting and review which in total may deter private, nonprofit, or community-based organizations from engaging with local agencies. In the County of Riverside, we value our

partnerships with organizations such as the Galilee Center who provides clothing, meals, and resources to asylum seekers crossing our southern border or the Training Occupational Development Educating Communities (TODEC) Legal Center which provides wage and housing assistance programs for essential agricultural workers.

AB 2557 increases costs and creates additional administrative burdens at a time when local jurisdictions should be partnering more closely. As a result, we are opposed to AB 2557. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



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

June 28, 2024

The Honorable Richard Roth
Chair, Senate Health Committee
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2866 (Pellerin) – Pool safety: State Department of Social Services regulated facilities.– SUPPORT
Set for hearing 07/03/24 – Senate Health Committee**

Dear Senator Roth,

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to express support for AB 2866, Assembly Member Gail Pellerin’s measure that would enhance required safety equipment for swimming pools on the premises of licensed child day care facilities and home-based family day care sites.

The County of Riverside prioritizes water safety and drowning prevention. Through its Water Safety Coalition housed within the Riverside University Health System, the County brings together multiple county agencies to promote public education efforts and water safety resources to prevent accidental drownings.

Given the County’s focus on and prioritization of water safety, we are pleased to support AB 2866. This measure would increase safety requirements for licensed childcare facilities that have a swimming pool on the premises by requiring installation of at least two specified safety features. Additionally, the facility must assure that (1) specified safety equipment is easily and visibly accessible in the pool area and (2) a daily inspection is performed prior to the facility opening and a record of said inspections are logged and available for review during state inspections.

Drowning – which is preventable – is the leading cause of death for children aged 1 to 4 years old; it often happens quickly and silently. AB 2866 would put in place a common-sense two-step system that would enhance drowning prevention measures at childcare facilities across the state. It recognizes the need for bringing the pool safety standards that have been in place for nearly 30 years to day care facilities, which represents a sensible if long overdue drowning prevention standard.

AB 2866 (Pellerin)
County of Riverside – SUPPORT
Page 2

For these reasons, the County of Riverside is pleased to support AB 2866. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Health Committee
The Honorable Gail Pellerin, Member, California State Assembly
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



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

June 3, 2024

Senator Aisha Wahab
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7330
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2871 (Maienschein)- Overdose Fatality Review Teams
As amended 4/24/2024 – SUPPORT
Set for hearing 6/18/2024 – Senate Public Safety Committee**

Dear Senator Wahab:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write in support of AB 2871, Assembly Member Brian Maienschein’s measure that 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 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.

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=5e0ff2f698264ac6bd8795d6888e14a5>

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 cserrera@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, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members and Counsel, Senate Public Safety Committee
Honorable Brian Maienschein, Member of the Assembly
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



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

June 24, 2024

The Honorable Aisha Wahab
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2882 (McCarty) – Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council
As amended 5/16/2024 – OPPOSE
Set for hearing 07/02/24 – Senate Public Safety Committee**

Dear Senator Wahab,

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to express our respectful opposition to AB 2882, Assembly Member Kevin McCarty's measure that would make changes to counties' Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) and CCP Executive Committee as well as reprioritize an existing funding stream to an important yet more narrow purpose than what it was originally intended.

AB 2882 would add two new members to each county's CCP: (1) a representative of a community-based organization with experience in successfully providing behavioral health treatment services to persons who have been convicted of a criminal offense and (2) a representative of a Medi-Cal managed care plan that provides the Enhanced Care Management benefit. Additionally, the bill would expand the size of the CCP Executive Committee by requiring membership for each of three named county department heads rather than one of the three being selected to sit on the committee. The stated objective of these changes is to place a higher priority on behavioral health investments from the local Community Corrections Subaccount, established as part of 2011 Realignment to support the implementation of AB 109. This goal appears to overlook the broad needs of system-involved individuals, which indeed may include behavioral health treatment needs, but most certainly often includes housing, substance use services, employment, and education.

It is critical to address any misconceptions that behavioral health needs are being overlooked in current planning. In Riverside County, the CCP works collaboratively to ensure that behavioral health needs of justice-involved clients are met. Behavioral health needs have been a critical component and integrated into the multi-faceted approach of the CCP. Changing the CCP composition and narrowing its focus, as contemplated in AB 2882, does not represent an

integration of services but rather an inappropriate narrowing of focus and purpose. In our view, the current CCP and CCP Executive Committee composition promotes broad collaboration and cross-jurisdictional partnerships. By limiting the focus of the CCP to isolated aspects of responsibilities realigned in 2011 would not only disrupt the balanced approach currently employed but also potentially jeopardize the safety and well-being of our communities.

For these reasons, the County of Riverside respectfully opposes this measure. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Public Safety Committee
The Honorable Kevin McCarty, Member, California State Assembly
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

District 1	Kevin Jeffries 951-955-1010
District 2	Karen Spiegel 951-955-1020
District 3	Chuck Washington 951-955-1030
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District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

June 24, 2024

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

**Re: AB 3182 (Lackey) – Land Conservation: California Wildlife, Coastal, and Park
Land Conservation Act: County of San Bernardino
As amended 4/24/24 – SUPPORT
Set for Hearing 7/1/24 – Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write in support of AB 3182, an important bill that clarifies state law about the use of Prop 70 land sale proceeds in San Bernardino County. Passage of AB 3182 will allow the County to use these land sale proceeds to improve recreational facilities and conserve open space in our region.

In June 1988, California voters approved Proposition 70, a park bond that provided \$776 million for developing conservation lands throughout the state. Prop 70 gave \$20 million to San Bernardino County, which was used to purchase 366.55 acres on nine agricultural properties in the Chino Agricultural Preserve. However, because the lands are not adjacent to each other, the County could not use them to fulfill Prop 70's park and recreation purposes. In 2010, Prop 70's provisions were clarified by Senate Bill 1124 (Negrete-McLeod), which allowed San Bernardino County to sell or exchange its Prop 70 properties if replacement property was purchased for the use of wildlife habitat conservation, open space, or the preservation of the region's agricultural heritage.

This bill amends SB 1124 to clarify that San Bernardino County can use the proceeds from Prop 70 land sales for parks, recreational facilities, cultural venues, and infrastructure to expand access and improve amenities in the Chino Agricultural Preserve. These provisions apply solely to San Bernardino County's unique situation rather than all Prop 70 lands in the state.

By clarifying state law, AB 3182 will facilitate significant park and infrastructure improvements for Prado Regional Park and nearby communities, allowing San Bernardino

County to conserve open space and expand recreational opportunities in the Inland Empire. For these reasons, the County of Riverside supports AB 3182. 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, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Tom Lackey, Member, California State Assembly
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

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District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

May 30, 2024

The Honorable Dave Min, Chair
Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 3182 (Lackey) – Land Conservation: California Wildlife, Coastal, and Park
Land Conservation Act: County of San Bernardino
As amended April 24, 2024– SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member McGuire:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write in support of AB 3182, an important bill that clarifies state law about the use of Prop 70 land sale proceeds in San Bernardino County. Passage of AB 3182 will allow the County to use these land sale proceeds to improve recreational facilities and conserve open space in our region.

In June 1988, California voters approved Proposition 70, a park bond that provided \$776 million for developing conservation lands throughout the state. Prop 70 gave \$20 million to San Bernardino County, which was used to purchase 366.55 acres on nine agricultural properties in the Chino Agricultural Preserve. However, because the lands are not adjacent to each other, the County could not use them to fulfill Prop 70's park and recreation purposes. In 2010, Prop 70's provisions were clarified by Senate Bill 1124 (Negrete-McLeod), which allowed San Bernardino County to sell or exchange its Prop 70 properties if replacement property was purchased for the use of wildlife habitat conservation, open space, or the preservation of the region's agricultural heritage.

This bill amends SB 1124 to clarify that San Bernardino County can use the proceeds from Prop 70 land sales for parks, recreational facilities, cultural venues, and infrastructure to expand access and improve amenities in the Chino Agricultural Preserve. These provisions apply solely to San Bernardino County's unique situation rather than all Prop 70 lands in the state.

By clarifying state law, AB 3182 will facilitate significant park and infrastructure improvements for Prado Regional Park and nearby communities, allowing San Bernardino

County to conserve open space and expand recreational opportunities in the Inland Empire. For these reasons, the County of Riverside supports AB 3182. 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, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Members and Consultants, Natural Resources and Water Committee
Assembly Member Tom Lackey
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

District 1	Kevin Jeffries 951-955-1010
District 2	Karen Spiegel 951-955-1020
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District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

June 24, 2024

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

**Re: AB 3198 (Garcia) – Joint Powers Agreements: Retail Electric Services
As amended 4/16/24 – SUPPORT
Set for hearing 07/03/24 – Senate Local Government Committee**

Dear Senator Durazo,

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 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, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or cherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,

Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair

Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
Vice Chair

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Local Government Committee
The Honorable Eduardo Garcia, Member, California State Assembly
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

District 1	Kevin Jeffries 951-955-1010
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District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

June 20, 2024

Senator Ben Allen
Member of the State Senate
1020 O Street, Room 6610
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 867 (Allen) – Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024
As amended June 29, 2024 – SUPPORT
Awaiting hearing – Assembly Natural Resources Committee**

Dear Senator Allen:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to inform you of our support for SB 867, your measure to create the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024. Subject to voter approval, the bond act would authorize \$10 billion in general obligation bonds for various climate resiliency purposes, as specified.

Like other jurisdictions around the state, the County of Riverside continues to face the impacts of a changing climate. Floods, fires, and extreme temperatures have forced County departments to plan and adapt service delivery to the over 2.4 million residents that call Riverside County home. The diverse investments contemplated in SB 867 create an opportunity to help the communities most impacted by climate change plan for and build more resilient and ready neighborhoods.

It has been a full decade since the voters last approved a natural resources bond and during that time our state has seen an increase in the number and severity of drought events, floods, and wildfires. We are grateful for the Legislature's thoughtful approach in designing a multi-dimension resources bond that addresses the range of climate threats our state is facing. In particular, the County of Riverside appreciates the following investments that align with key local priorities:

- **Clean and Safe Drinking Water:** \$610 million to improve water quality and help provide clean, safe, and reliable drinking water, with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities and other vulnerable populations.

- **Salton Sea:** \$170 million to implement the Salton Sea Management Program 10-year plan, any subsequent revisions to that plan, and any future plans that offer air quality, public health, and habitat benefits. Notably, \$10 million of the funds dedicated to the Salton Sea Management Plan also will be available for either the creation of a Salton Sea Conservancy or the Salton Sea Authority.
- **Extreme heat mitigation:** \$450 million for various efforts to address extreme heat.
- **Wildfire prevention:** \$1.5 billion for various investments aimed at preventing wildfires.
- **Outdoor access and park creation:** \$700 million for expanding outdoor recreation opportunities and creating parks in park-poor communities.
- **Clean energy:** \$850 million for various investments, including clean energy transmission projects and grid support.

The County of Riverside believes that SB 867 represents diverse and necessary investments to mitigate and prepare for a more climate resilient future. We thank you and your colleagues for delineating a variety of interconnected expenditures that will support projects and funding opportunities to help some of the most severely impacted and at-risk communities in our state.

For these reasons, the County of Riverside is pleased to support SB 867. Should you have any questions about the County's position, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

Cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

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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

June 18, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 994 (Roth) Local government: joint powers authority: transfer of authority
REQUEST FOR SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to respectfully request your signature on SB 994, Senator Richard Roth's measure, that would assist in facilitating the successful transition of obligations from the March Joint Powers Authority (MJPA) to the County of Riverside.

The MJPA was established in 1993 to facilitate the reuse of the territory of the former March Air Force Base. The MJPA is comprised of the County of Riverside and the Cities of Moreno Valley, Perris, and Riverside. Now that MJPA's task of redeveloping the former March Air Force Base is nearing completion, the member agencies have voted to amend the joint powers agreement to eliminate the MJPA's land use authority effective July 1, 2025.

As a result, land use authority for the territory will return to the County of Riverside on that date. This bill will provide helpful statutory direction to allow the County to assume the obligations of the landscape and lighting maintenance district pursuant to the Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972 and the community facilities district established pursuant to the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982.

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

Sincerely,

Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Senator Richard D. Roth
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

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District 4	V. Manuel Perez 951-955-1040
District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

July 19, 2024

The Honorable Senator Susan Eggman
Member of the California State Senate
1020 O Street, Room 8530
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1025 (Eggman) Pretrial Diversion for Veterans
As amended March 21, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Eggman:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to inform you of our support for Senate Bill 1025, your measure that would expand eligibility for an existing military pretrial diversion program.

Under current law, active-duty members of the military and veterans who have been convicted of a misdemeanor are eligible to enter a pre-plea diversion program, which suspends criminal proceedings for a specified time and under certain conditions. SB 1025 would extend this pretrial military diversion opportunity to those who are charged with a felony for instances in which the defendant is suffering from a sexual trauma, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorder, or a mental health condition that has resulted from military service. The bill also enumerates several serious and violent felonies that would disqualify a veteran from participation in the diversion program. Taken together, these proposed refinements to the military diversion program would bring consistency and parity across other diversion programs in the state.

California is home to the largest concentration of veterans than any other state in the nation. Approximately 117,000 veterans¹ – and even more active-duty military personnel – reside in Riverside County; only two other counties in the state have a higher veteran population. In recognition of the importance of military service as well as the challenges many veterans experience as a direct result of their active duty, the County – through its Department of Mental Health Veterans Services Liaison – is dedicating resources and supports to address the need of those experiencing mental health difficulties. Those efforts prioritize support to veterans and their families with a goal toward ensuring the highest quality of life marked with the dignity and honor they deserve.

¹ California Veteran Population by County: <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/PublishingImages/Pages/Veteran-Demographics-/California%20Veteran%20Population%20by%20County.pdf>

SB 1025 would make a needed change to expand opportunities for veterans and active-duty members of the military to avoid serving jail time if they successfully complete treatment, education and any other requirements specified by the court. In turn, expanded eligibility for participating in pretrial diversion programs – which already exists in other diversion programs in the state – would offer our state’s veterans and active-duty members important rehabilitative opportunities and access to needed services.

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

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

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



Board of Supervisors

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District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

June 26, 2024

The Honorable Kevin McCarty
Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1057 (Menjivar) – Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council
As amended 5/16/2024 – OPPOSE
Set for hearing 07/02/24 – Assembly Public Safety Committee**

Dear Assemblymember McCarty,

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to express our respectful opposition to SB 1057, Senator Caroline Menjivar’s measure that proposes considerable changes to the composition of local Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils (JJCC) with respect to their local processes for planning for the deployment of Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funds.

More specifically, SB 1057 modifies Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 749.22 by (1) requiring the JJCC be comprised of at least half community representatives and the remainder from governmental entities and (2) requiring the chief probation officer to share responsibilities for chairing the JJCC by specifying that the JJCC in its newly formulated composition elect a co-chair. While we highly value the community perspective and participation, these changes would inappropriately diminish the leadership role for a local government planning council responsible for carrying out governmental functions. We would note that the County of Riverside’s JJCC already incorporates the vital community voice; of the 20-member body, 10 representatives are from non-county agencies.

AB 505 (Chapter 528, Statutes of 2023) – pursuant to changes enacted to WIC section 1995 – requires the seating of a cochair on the JJCC subcommittee established for purposes of planning for local Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant investments. To date, the County has been unsuccessful in seating a JJCC subcommittee cochair; no community member has come forth to express interest in assuming this role – in part because the role is unpaid and, perhaps more importantly, because individuals who work for organizations with an interest in applying for JJRBG grants face a conflict of interest under Government Code section 1090 that bars them from receiving such funds. The significance of this conflict of interest limitation cannot be

overstated in terms of a deterrent not only to seeking cochairs for the JJCC, but especially to meeting the 50-percent community representation requirement contemplated in SB 1057.

Under the leadership of our Chief Probation Officer, the County of Riverside has made strides to expand community participation and ensure funding is allocated to key community partners that help support our efforts to provide responsive and trauma-informed care to youth and young adults. Currently, our probation department has nine open contracts with community-based organizations (CBOs) that provide an array of services from case management, mentoring, life skills, trauma informed services, substance abuse counseling, among others. These services are available to all youth and families in Riverside County free of cost. A 2023 evaluation report found that, through JJCPA funding, Riverside County's JJCC served 5,313 youths as well as 64,621 individuals. Our JJCC plans to increase its reach by establishing a community-led diversion program as well as to add to our community providers to ensure access to quality services across the county, especially in areas with the greatest need. In sum, the JJCC model is sufficiently flexible to incorporate the community voice, resulting in collaborative and strategic program investments aimed at diverting individuals from the justice system where possible and facilitating positive community reentry. From a county perspective, SB 1057 would inappropriately minimize local authority over responsibilities that reside squarely in county authority.

Lastly, while we acknowledge that SB 1057 contains no provisions to expressly redirect any JJCPA funds, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the changes to the JJCC composition, at their core, ultimately seek to redirect this vital probation funding source to non-governmental agencies. While that aspect of the measure is troubling in and of itself, we must also point out the notable conflict between SB 1057 and a legislative effort being pursued in this year in AB 2557 (Ortega) that erects a variety of barriers to hamper counties' ability to contract out for services. It is difficult to reconcile the opposing forces contained in these two measures and would suggest that it will be all but impossible for counties to achieve the contradictory purposes.

For these reasons, the County of Riverside respectfully opposes this measure. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Public Safety Committee
The Honorable Caroline Menjivar, Member, California State Senate
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

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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

June 3, 2024

The Honorable Isaac Bryan
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 5630
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1175 (Ochoa Bogh) – Organic Waste Reduction
As amended 5/13/2024 – SUPPORT
Awaiting hearing – Assembly Natural Resources Committee

Dear Assembly Member Bryan:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write to express our support for SB 1175, Senator Rosalicie Ochoa Bogh's measure that seeks to facilitate local governments' implementation of SB 1383 (Chapter 395, Statutes of 2016). The latter measure was 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.

Despite local governments' diligence in working to implement SB 1383, the lack of statewide organic waste processing infrastructure has complicated full compliance as have other structural and practical challenges. To provide additional flexibility, the Legislature has authorized certain waivers and exemptions to SB 1383 collection processes. However, waivers are awarded based on delineations tied to census tracts rather than city or county boundaries, which can create less-than-optimal circumstances in which neighbors on different sides of the same street operate under different collection requirements. These dynamics pose considerable logistical challenges for waste haulers and diminish efforts to fully achieve the objectives of SB 1383.

SB 1175 would direct CalRecycle to consider alternatives in addition to census tracts when deciding on the boundaries of low-population and elevation waivers when it next updates and adopts its organic waste reduction regulations pursuant to SB 1383. The County of Riverside supports these provisions because allowing jurisdictions to rely on an alternative boundary besides the census tract would offer additional and needed flexibility to propose alternatives that facilitate implementation of the waiver. While the County now has a waiver, our waste

haulers are consistently challenged with creating workable, feasible, and economically sustainable routes.

For these reasons, the County of Riverside supports SB 1175. 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, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members and Consultants, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



Board of Supervisors

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District 5	Yxstian Gutierrez 951-955-1050

June 24, 2024

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

**Re: SB 1249 (Roth) – Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act
As amended 6/12/24 – SUPPORT
Awaiting hearing – Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

On behalf of the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, I write in support of SB 1249 by Senator Roth. This measure 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.

Building on the Master Plan for Aging, SB 1249 tasks the department to collect relevant robust data and develop strategies and approaches to maximize the impacts of aging programs and initiatives across communities. Specifically, the bill provides a county the option, effective January 1, 2025, to petition CDA to assume control of the area agency on aging that serves the local jurisdiction. The bill also requires on or before September 30, 2026, and in consultation with area agencies on aging and stakeholders, CDA to develop the core programs and services to be provided by all area agencies on aging.

Riverside County agrees that CDA plays a crucial role in weaving together local efforts into a cohesive system of support for seniors, by acting as a key coordinating body among various state/local agencies and organizations; and aligning resources, policies, and initiatives to ensure a comprehensive and seamless delivery of aging services.

SB 1249 charges the California Department of Aging to lead state and local alignment, so we can streamline resources, enhance collaboration between the state and communities, and ensure that services for older adults and people with disabilities are tailored to meet the unique requirements of each person.

For these reasons, the County of Riverside supports SB 1249 and urges your aye vote on this important measure. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Carolina Herrera, Director of Legislative Advocacy & Governmental Affairs at the County of Riverside Executive Office (951) 955-1180 or csherrera@rivco.org.

Sincerely,



Supervisor Chuck Washington
Chair, County of Riverside Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Richard Roth, Member, California State Senate
Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, County of Riverside Legislative Delegation



**California Special
Districts Association**
Districts Stronger Together

June 19, 2024

The Honorable Dave Cortese, Chair
Senate Transportation Committee
California State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 637 (Jackson)– **SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Allen:

We, the undersigned coalition, write to express support for AB 637, which would provide public and private fleets with additional options to meet the zero emission vehicle (ZEV) procurement requirements under the Advanced Clean Fleet (ACF) regulation, adopted by the CA Air Resources Board on April 28, 2023.

Unfortunately, the ACF regulation does not allow a fleet owner to claim compliance credit for renting a zero emission truck over its internal combustion counterpart. This oversight unreasonably restricts the options available to fleet owners, particularly those with less resources and limited budgets, that are looking for cost-effective ways to meet the ACF's ambitious goals.

As a matter of policy, we believe that public and private fleets should have a variety of options available when developing their compliance plans. **For public and private entities that rent ACF covered trucks to supplement their existing fleets, we strongly believe that the rental of zero emission trucks should count towards the total compliance obligation for those fleets.** The increased utilization of zero emission trucks would benefit local air quality, reduce the investment costs for public and private entities electing to utilize those trucks, and provide much needed flexibility that will allow public and private fleets to better serve the needs of the public.

The urgency to adopt this proposal as soon as possible is clear especially for public fleets who will be making procurement decisions in the early part of 2024 in order to meet their compliance obligations for the ACF rule by the first milestone deadline of January 1, 2025.

For the foregoing reasons, we support AB 637 and respectfully ask for an AYE vote.

Sincerely,

Damon Conklin
League of California Cities

Nicole Hutchinson
CALSTART

Mark Neuburger
California State Association of Counties

Ben Palmer
Enterprise Mobility, Inc.

Anthony J. Tannehill
California Special Districts Association



June 14, 2024

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

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

Dear Chair Durazo:

We, the undersigned coalition of water suppliers, are writing to express our support for AB 1827. This important measure 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 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, the law needs to be affirmed by the Legislature.

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.

For these reasons, we strongly support this bill and urge your colleagues to vote "Aye" on AB 1827. Please do not hesitate to contact Christine Compton with IRWD at (949) 453-5338, Cody Phillips with CCKA at (310) 339-3691, or IRWD's Sacramento advocate Pilar Oñate-Quintana at (916) 230-4470 or if you have questions regarding this measure.

Sincerely,

Kristopher M. Anderson, Esq.
Senior State Relations Advocate
Association of California Water Agencies

Marcus Detwiler
Legislative Representative
California Special Districts Association

Danielle Blacet
Deputy Executive Director
California Municipal Utilities Association

Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate – Government Finance
and Administration
California State Association of Counties

The Honorable María Elena Durazo Chair
Senate Local Government Committee
June 14, 2024
Page 3

Katie Valenzuela
Councilmember, District 4
Chair, Law and Legislation Committee
City of Sacramento

Harvey De La Torre
General Manager
Municipal Water District of Orange County

John Bosler, P.E.
General Manager
Cucamonga Valley Water District

Jose Martinez
General Manager
Otay Water District

Joe Mouawad, P.E.
General Manager
Eastern Municipal Water District

Lynda Noriega
Board President
San Gabriel Valley Water Association

Dave Youngblood
General Manager
East Orange County Water District

Charley Wilson
Executive Director
Southern California Water Coalition

Paul A. Cook
General Manager
Irvine Ranch Water District

Matthew Litchfield
General Manager
Three Valleys Municipal Water District

Jeremy Wolf
Legislative Program Manager
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

Fernando Paludi
General Manager
Trabuco Canyon Water District

Justin Scott-Coe
General Manager
Monte Vista Water District

Mark Toy, P.E. * BC.WRE
General Manager
Yorba Linda Water District
*Licensed in Arizona and Virginia

cc: The Honorable Members, Senate Local Government Committee
The Honorable Diane Papan, California State Assembly, 21st District
Jonathan Peterson, Consultant, Senate Local Government Committee
Ryan Eisberg, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

June 21, 2024

The Honorable Senator Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Housing Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3330
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1878 (E. Garcia) Housing programs: tribal housing program.
As amended on June 17, 2024 – Support
Set for Hearing – June 24, 2024 – Senate Housing Committee**

Dear Senator Skinner:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, along with the American Planning Association (APA) 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 federally recognized tribal governments 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.

The bill would also require HCD to take specified actions with respect to state housing programs that have ties to federal housing programs, create tribal set-asides within each funding program, defer loans made by HCD to tribal sponsors, and forgive loans made by HCD to tribal sponsors if all conditions for the loans have been satisfied. Further, the bill would require that tribally designated housing entities, as defined, be allowed to submit one competitive application per tribe within the same funding program when applying for HCD funds, as specified.

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 APA 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, Senate Housing Committee
Consultant, Senate Housing Committee
Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



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CEO

Graham Knaus

June 17, 2024

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

**Re: AB 1975 (Bonta): Medi-Cal: medically supportive food and nutrition interventions.
As Amended June 5, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set for Hearing on June 24, 2024**

Dear Senator Roth,

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, upon appropriation by the Legislature and 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.

No sooner than July 1, 2026, and upon an appropriation made by the Legislature for this purpose in the annual Budget Act, AB 1975 would add 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, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Mia Bonta, California State Assembly
Members and Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee
Kirk Feely, Fiscal Director, Senate Republican Caucus



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Santa Clara County

Past President

Chuck Washington
Riverside County



CEO

Graham Knaus

June 21, 2024

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

**Re: AB 2050 (Pellerin): Voter registration database: Electronic Registration Information Center
As Amended May 20, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee on July 2, 2024**

Dear Senator Umberg,

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 Assemblymember 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 Thomas Umberg

June 21, 2024

Page 2 of 2

Sincerely,



Eric Lawyer

Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Gail Pellerin, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Margie Estrada, Chief Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
Morgan Branch, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities



June 19, 2024

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Housing Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3330
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2199 (Berman) - CEQA Exemption: Residential or Mixed-Use Housing Projects
As amended on June 6, 2024 – Support
Set for hearing in Senate Housing – June 24, 2024**

Dear Chair Skinner:

On behalf of the American Planning Association California Chapter, the Associated General Contractors of California, the Bay Area Council, the California Apartment Association, the California State Association of Counties, the Council of Infill Builders, and the Urban Counties of California, we write in support of Assembly Bill 2199 by Assemblymember Berman. AB 2199 extends until 2032 the sunset date of a narrow exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for infill residential and mixed-use projects in the urbanized parts of California’s unincorporated counties.

Infill housing projects in cities have enjoyed a categorical exemption from CEQA for decades, but there was no similar exemption for projects in urbanized unincorporated areas until the passage of Assemblymember Berman’s AB 1804 in 2018. Since that time, this narrow exemption has been used to accelerate the environmental review and approval of nine multifamily residential and mixed-use projects consisting of 378 housing units. While the exemption has primarily been used in large urban counties, including Alameda, Orange, Sacramento, and San Diego counties, it has also benefitted two affordable multi-family infill housing projects within existing urbanized communities in unincorporated Santa Cruz and Lake counties.

To ensure that the exemption applies only to the most environmentally beneficial housing projects, AB 2199 includes all of the same protections as the categorical infill exemption for cities. It also goes beyond those requirements by including protections for tribal cultural resources, a clear definition for the requirement that developments be substantially surrounded by existing urban uses, and minimum residential density requirements. Moreover, AB 2199 continues to require counties to file


Notices of Exemption with the Office of Planning and Research so policymakers can monitor the use of the exemption during the sunset extension.

While most Californians live within cities, counties have the same responsibilities as cities to plan to accommodate housing needs at all income levels. AB 2199 creates an incentive for additional growth in unincorporated county infill areas, thereby supporting state and local climate, conservation, and housing production goals. For these reasons, we support AB 2199 and respectfully request your “aye” vote.

Sincerely,



Erik de Kok, AICP
APA California



Melanie Perron
Associated General Contractors of California



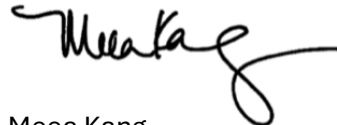
Louis Mirante
Bay Area Council



Debra Carlton
California Apartment Association



Mark Neuburger
California State Association of Counties



Meea Kang
Council of Infill Builders



Christopher Lee
Urban Counties of California

cc: The Honorable Marc Berman, California State Assembly
Honorable Members and Consultants, Senate Housing Committee
Kerry Yoshida, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 17, 2024

The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
California State Assembly
1021 O St., Room 8210
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), we write in support of your AB 2223. This bill would make important changes to regulate intoxicating hemp to protect the health and safety of our communities and prevent these untested, untaxed, and unregulated products from undercutting the licensed cannabis market.

In passing Proposition 64, voters made it clear that while adults should be able to partake in the intoxicating effects of cannabis, there must be strong regulations to ensure that the products are safe, only available to those over 21, do not appeal to children, and are properly taxed at the state and local level. We have seen intoxicating hemp undermine each of these principles, simply because the tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) compound is hemp-derived, which is the same compound found in intoxicating cannabis. This paradox creates a glaring disparity in the treatment of identical THC products.

Local governments have a stake in shaping the broader statewide landscape of cannabis regulation in California, as it has a significant impact on our operations and serves as an important economic driver in many communities. Our licensed operators are required to pay state and local taxes that fund critical programs including youth education, prevention, early intervention, and treatment; environmental protection and restoration; and public safety-related activities.

Enforcement efforts are already spread thin across a variety of state and local law enforcement agencies with insufficient resources and competing priorities. This is particularly true for local law enforcement and code enforcement agencies, which shoulder a significant amount of the burden for addressing illicit activity. These agencies depend on local taxes, as well as state dollars like the Public Health & Safety Grant Program, to keep their communities safe and bolster the licensed market. Allowing intoxicating products to circumvent the established taxation framework eats away at our already limited resources.

AB 2223 would make important changes to address these issues by establishing a lower total THC concentration for hemp products, requiring testing to ensure compliance with THC concentration, ensure compliance with tax laws and enhancing enforcement measures against those who violate established standards. It is for these reasons that we support AB 2223 and appreciate your work on this important

issue. Should you have on our position please to not hesitate to reach out to Ada Waelder (CSAC) at awaelder@counties.org, Sarah Dukett (RCRC) at sdukett@rcrcnet.org, or Jolena Voorhis (Cal Cities) at jvoorhis@calcities.org.

Sincerely,



Ada Waelder
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Jolena Voorhis
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California

Cc: Honorable Chair, Members, and Staff, Senate Business and Professions Committee
Kayla Williams, Senate Republican Caucus



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June 18, 2024

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

**Re: AB 2276 (Wood): Forestry: timber harvesting plans: exemptions.
As Amended: April 17, 2024–SUPPORT
Set for hearing June 24, 2024 - Senate Appropriations Committee**

Dear Senator Caballero,

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, Senate Appropriations Committee
Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee



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June 17, 2024

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

RE: AB 2289 (Low) - Vehicles: parking placards for disabled veterans and persons with disabilities.

As Amended June 13, 2024 – SUPPORT

To be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee 6/24/24

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in California, I am pleased to support Assembly Bill (AB) 2289 by Assemblymember Low. This measure clarifies the instances under which a physical therapist may sign the appropriate certification required before a placard or license plate can be issued to a disabled veteran or person with a disability. AB 2289 adds physical therapists to the list of those who can certify the condition and submit the paperwork, consistent with other provisions of existing law and procedures established by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the State of California made several emergency changes in healthcare service delivery to slow the spread of the illness while maintaining an adequate service structure. After the pandemic ended, statutes were changed to allow the continuation of such delivery systems beyond the non-emergency because of the realized efficiencies.

AB 2289 offers a similar efficiency. Instead of requiring that in every case, a patient in need of certification for a disability placard get a sign-off from a physician, a physical therapist who is working directly with the patient and has specific knowledge of the person's limitations in movement could, under conditions specified in the bill, complete the necessary form for submission to the DMV, creating efficiency for the patient and providers. AB 2289 meets the patient's needs while also recognizing the professional expertise of physical therapists in evaluating and treating disorders and limitations in movement.

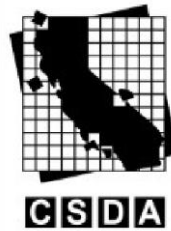
For these reasons, CSAC supports AB 2289 and respectfully requests your AYE vote. If you have any questions about our position, please contact me at kdean@counties.org.

Sincerely,

Kalyn Dean
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Evan Low, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Appropriations Committee

Robert Ingenito, Principal Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Ted Morley, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 18, 2024

The Honorable Lola Smallwood-Cuevas
Chair, Senate Committee on Labor, Public
Employment and Retirement
1021 O St. Ste. 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2421 (Low) Employer-Employee Relations: Confidential Communications.
OPPOSE (As Amended 06/17/24)

Dear Senator Smallwood-Cuevas,

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), the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), and the California School Boards Association (CSBA), 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.

Recent amendments to the bill removed prior language stating the **intent** to create an employee-union representative privilege in the context of California public employment, and now express an intention not to create an evidentiary privilege.

However, **the substantive provisions of the bill**, which were previously intended to create a privilege, remain largely unchanged.

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

Limits 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 has 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. It would also 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 shield 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.

Expansion of New One-Sided Standard

As noted above, while the prior intent language referencing a privilege has been removed, the substance of the bill remains largely the same. 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 shield for public employees, which was previously intended to be a privilege, without meaningful limitation on how it will function.

Additionally, the provisions of 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 privileges, which 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

AB 2421 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, our concerns with AB 2421 have not been meaningfully addressed, and the organizations listed below respectfully remain

opposed to the bill. 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@cdda.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>Dorothy Johnson Legislative Advocate Association of California School Administrators djohnson@acsa.org</p>

 <p>Jason Schmelzer Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM) jason@SYASLpartners.com</p>	 <p>Andrew Martinez Senior Director of Government Relations Community College League of California amartinez@cclleague.org</p>
 <p>Chris Reeve Legislative Director California School Boards Association creeve@csba.org</p>	 <p>Alyssa Silhi Legislative Advocate California Association of Park and Recreation Districts asilhi@publicpolicygroup.com</p>

CC:

The Honorable Evan Low
Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Labor,
Public Employment and Retirement
Glenn Miles, Consultant, Senate Committee on Labor, Public
Employment and Retirement
Corry Botts, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Mary Hernandez, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary,
Office of Governor Gavin Newsom



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June 19, 2024

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

**Re: AB 2455 (Gabriel) – Whistleblower protection: state and local government procedures.
As Amended June 13, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard on June 26, 2024 in the Senate Local Government Committee**

Dear Senator Durazo,

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 Assemblymember 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.

The Honorable Maria Elena Durazo

June 19, 2024

Page 2 of 2

Sincerely,



Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Local Government Committee
Anton Favorini-Csorba, Chief Consultant, Senate Local Government Committee
Ryan Eisberg, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



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June 18, 2024

The Honorable Bill Dodd
Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3220
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 Set to be heard June 25, 2024 – Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee

Dear Senator Min,

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

The Honorable Dave Min

June 18, 2024

Page 2 of 2

Cc: Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez
Honorable Members, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
Consultants, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee



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June 17, 2024

The Honorable Issac Bryan
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5630
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2484 (Bryan): Courts: juveniles: remote proceedings.
As Amended May 23, 2024 – SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Bryan,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I am pleased to write in support of your Assembly Bill 2484, which allows for the remote appearance of expert witnesses in juvenile dependency proceedings without the consent of all parties.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many courts shifted to remote proceedings to allow for the continued processing of cases without violating health and safety orders. A 2023 budget bill, SB 133 (Chapter No. 34, Statutes of 2023), created a separate statute for remote proceedings in juvenile justice, civil commitment, and competency proceedings, which will sunset on January 1, 2026. For juvenile dependency cases, any party may request to appear remotely, but witnesses may only provide testimony if all parties consent to the remote appearance. As a result, parties can force in-person witness testimony, increasing the costs of obtaining expert testimony and disproportionately impacting low-income families and those living in rural areas.

AB 2484 creates a narrow exception to current requirements by allowing a parent, child, nonminor dependent, or Indian Tribe to present expert witness testimony remotely without the consent of all parties. The measure maintains existing requirements that ensure remote testimony remains effective and that court records can be accurately maintained.

AB 2484 advances equity within juvenile dependency proceedings by ensuring that parties may secure witness testimony, regardless of their ability to pay for the travel costs and fees associated with in-person expert testimony. It is for these reasons that CSAC supports Assembly Bill 2484. 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



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June 21, 2024

The Honorable Senator Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Housing Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3330
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2485 (J. Carrillo) Regional housing need: determination.
As amended on June 17, 2024 – Support
Set for Hearing – July 2, 2024 – Senate Housing Committee**

Dear Senator Skinner:

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 important 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, Senate Housing Committee
Consultant, Senate Housing Committee
Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 19, 2024

The Honorable Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, Chair
 Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee
 1021 O Street, Suite 6740
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 2557 (Ortega): Local agencies: contracts for special services and temporary help: performance reports**
As amended 6/17/24 – OPPOSE
Set for hearing 7/03/24 – Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee

Dear Senator Smallwood-Cuevas:

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), California Fire Chiefs Association (CalChiefs), the Fire Districts Association of California (FDAC), Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM), the California Association for Local Economic Development (CALED), and the California and Nevada Civil Engineers and Land Surveyors (CELSA), National Society of Professional Engineers - California (NSPE-CA), California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (CAPH), California County Superintendents, Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), the California Association of County Veterans Services Officers (CACVSO), the Emergency Medical Services Administrators' Association of California (EMSAAC), the California Records' Association of California (CRAC), the California State Sheriffs' Association (CSSA), we write to inform you of our opposition to Assembly Bill 2557, Assembly Member Liz Ortega's measure relating to contracting by local agencies. Even after considerable amendments, our organizations believe the proposal contained in AB 2557 remains overly burdensome, costly, 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. Make no mistake: the provisions of AB 2557 will be costly to implement. At a time when the state and local agencies are facing significant fiscal challenges, it is difficult to fathom that the extensive reporting, posting, and contracting requirements of the bill are worth the investment of scarce public resources. With the new requirements of AB 2557 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 many millions of dollars statewide, which includes Proposition 98 funds.

AB 2557 continues to apply broadly to a wide range of local services, including, but not limited to, jail health care, forest and wildfire prevention and management, public works surveyors, family reunification services, 9-1-1 dispatching, permitting, engineering, outside counsel, accounting, payroll, IT/Cybersecurity, RFP consulting services, real estate consulting, scientific monitoring and research, special education assistants, school nurses, data collection, among others.

New requirements are burdensome, duplicative, and impractical. While recent amendments appear to remove the obligation for reporting by contractors directly, AB 2557 takes most of those same requirements and requires local agencies to put them in the contractual agreement. This means that contractors will continue to have to provide considerable information that may not be directly applicable to the work that they are contracted to do or may be duplicative of other mandated reporting requirements associated with their work. New amendments also remove a prior exemption for contracts between governmental entities, making the bill's new website posting, noticing, and contractual requirements applicable to those commonly used contracts, imposing considerable redundancy for both parties with no discernable benefit.

While internet posting is already occurring for most contracts per statutory requirements to post meeting materials under the Ralph M. Brown Act, AB 2557 would now require that contracts and any related documents be posted separately on local agencies' internet website. This is likely an expensive endeavor that would require considerable investment in IT infrastructure and staff for local agencies, a cost that may potentially be subject to an SB 90 mandate claim or included in the school block grant mandate reimbursement. The measure further fails to recognize that some special districts are not required to have websites pursuant to Senate Bill 929 (McGuire, 2018).

We remain concerned that the timeframes provided in the proposed amendments are impractical; as we have previously communicated, local agencies often are unaware of a need for a procurement process in a consistent timeframe. While the bill includes the requirement for a “reasonable” notification to the employee representative, we are unclear as to what exactly this requirement means. Arguably, parties naturally at odds on the general issue of contracting will disagree as to what is “reasonable,” making this requirement at best a subject of a dispute, and at worst, an infeasible obligation. Further, the emergency exemption provided in the bill appears to only apply to portions of the notice provisions. Please consider that local agencies are first responders to any public emergency, including very real-world examples of a natural disaster, a global pandemic, an unanticipated need to care for those crossing our southern border seeking asylum, to name a few, and need flexible and accessible means for contracting with clear understanding by all parties of what is required prior to doing so.

Finally, new language includes provisions that are sufficiently vague and introduce confusion into a process that is generally well-understood and executed by practitioners. For example, the language is unclear about what is meant by “beginning a procurement process.” It is also unclear how the bill applies to sole-source contracts, contracts under the threshold for a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, or contracts for on-call services. Amendments for noticing requirements would also expand the bill’s application to “functions, duties, responsibilities, or services” performed by that are currently performed or were in the previous five years performed by represented employees. This expansion will also create ambiguity with the bill’s provisions applicable to website posting and contractual requirements, both of which apply to “functions” performed by represented employees.

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. 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.

In addition, recent amendments would dramatically expand local agencies’ notice provisions. Under existing MMBA requirements, local agencies notify bargaining units of the intent to contract out for items within the scope of representation. The bill would expand those requirements for every contract even when it is clearly not in the scope of representation. The new requirement will increase the workload of staff and lengthen the amount of time it takes to enter a contract.

Finally, AB 2557 has already been amended a number of times throughout the legislative process; however, in no instance have these amendments addressed the significant concerns of the local agencies responsible for implementing the bill nor have they addressed any of the considerable challenges faced by local agencies in attracting and retaining a robust public sector workforce. Further, these additional burdens continue to undermine a collaborative and productive working relationship with private sector and non-profit partners, who local agencies regard as essential to meeting our statutory obligations and effectively serving our respective communities.

AB 2557 represents a sweeping change to the fundamental work of local governments, but we remain 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



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



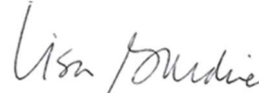
Sarah Bridge
Legislative Advocate
Association of California Healthcare Districts



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



Joseph Saenz
Deputy Director of Policy
County Health Executives Association of California



Lisa Gardiner
Director of Government Affairs
County Behavioral Health Directors Association



Eileen Cubanski
Executive Director
California Welfare Directors Association



Dorothy Johnson
Legislative Advocate
Association of California School Administrators



Chris Reefer
Legislative Director
California School Boards Association



Conlin Reis
President
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California

Danielle Blacet-Hyden
Deputy Executive Director
California Municipal Utility Association

Ian Padilla
Legislative Director
Coalition for Adequate School Housing

Faith Borges
Legislative Representative
California Association of Joint Powers Authorities

Tyler Munzing
Director of Government Affairs
American Council of Engineering Companies,
California

Scott Terrell
Director of Government Relations
American Institute of Architects, California

Andrew Mendoza
Director of Public Affairs
California Building Officials

Mark Watts
Legislative Advocate
Transportation California

Todd A. Bloomstine
Legislative Advocate
Southern California Contractors Association

Joubin Pakpour, P.E.
Director
APWA Region VIII

Michael Cazeneuve, P.E., CEG
President
CalGeo

Julee Malinowski Ball
Legislative Advocate
California Fire Chiefs Association
Fire Districts Association of California

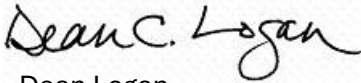
Gurbax Sahota, ACE
President & CEO
California Association for Local Economic
Development

Jason Schmelzer
Legislative Advocate
Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management

Cory M. Salzillo
Legislative Director
California State Sheriffs' Association

Eric Angstadt
Executive Secretary
California and Nevada Civil Engineers and Land
Surveyors

Katherine Rodriguez
Senior Director or Policy
California Association of Public Hospitals and
Health Systems



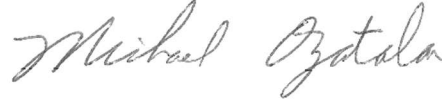
Dean Logan
President, County Recorders Association of California
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, Los Angeles County



David O. West II
President
California Association of County Veterans
Services Officers



Kristopher M. Anderson, Esq.
Senior State Relations Advocate
Association of California Water Agencies



Michael Ozatalar, P.E.
President
NSPE-California



Gayle Garbolino-Mojica
President
California County Superintendents



John Poland, Paramedic
EMSAAC Legislative Chair
Regional Executive Director, Sierra – Sacramento
Valley EMS Agency



Yazdan Emrani
Director
American Society of Civil Engineers - Region 9

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee
The Honorable Liz Ortega, California State Assembly
The Honorable Mike McGuire, Senate President pro Tempore
Mary Hernandez, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Cesar Diaz, Consultant, Office of Senate President pro Tempore Mike McGuire
Misa Lennox, Consultant, Office of Senate President pro Tempore Mike McGuire



June 17, 2024

The Honorable Lori Wilson
Member, California State Assembly
1021 O St., Room 8110
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2632 (Wilson) Planning and zoning: thrift retail stores.
OPPOSE as Amended April 22, 2024**

Dear Assemblymember Wilson,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and California State Association of Counties (CSAC) regrettably must **oppose** your measure **AB 2632**, which would prohibit local agencies from treating a thrift retail store differently from a non-thrift retail store engaged in the sale of new items for zoning, development standards, and permitting.

Thrift stores have gained popularity in recent years as the sale of secondhand goods provides residents more affordable options for clothing and other necessities. Local governments recognize the importance of having these retail operations available to residents, and the positive economic force they can be for jurisdictions. However, thrift stores, given their unique role in donation collection, can have more significant impacts on the area surrounding the business location, making consideration of each project on a case-by-case basis and compliance with local zoning and health and safety measures even more important.

Local governments are tasked with ensuring that businesses do not impede on the welfare of the community and must consider the impacts donation facilities have on traffic flow, public health, and noise, which differ from retail stores that do not receive, or have to dispose of, used goods. AB 2632 requires local jurisdiction to treat thrift retail stores in the same manner as retail stores in zoning, permitting and imposing development standards. This makes it impossible for local governments to considering the increased traffic, illegal dumping, and increased fire risk that may come with these types of facilities.

Our organizations believe thrift retail stores have a place in our communities but it is imperative that local governments retain the ability to weigh the factors, impacts and consequences of siting thrift stores, as we do with every other type of businesses in our communities. AB 2632 overrides the ability of local governments to ensure public health and safety through established permitting processes and therefore we must **oppose** your

bill. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Brady Guertin (Cal Cities) at bguertin@calcities.org, Mark Neuburger (CSAC) at mneuburger@counties.org, and Tracy Rhine (RCRC) at trhine@rcrcnet.org.

Sincerely,



Tracy Rhine
Senior Policy Advocate



Brady Guertin
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Maria Elena Durazo, Chair, Senate Local Government Committee
Members of the Senate Local Government Committee
Anton Favorini-Csorba, Chief Consultant, Senate Local Government Committee
Ted Morley, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 21, 2024

The Honorable Tom Umberg
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 6530
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 2715 (Boerner): Ralph M. Brown Act: closed sessions
As amended 4/24/24 – SUPPORT
Set for hearing 6/25/24 – Senate Judiciary Committee**

Dear Senator Umberg:

On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), we write in support of Assembly Bill 2715, Assembly Member Tasha Boerner's measure that would authorize local agency governing bodies to convene a closed session to consider or evaluate matters related to cybersecurity.

Local agencies are subject to a wide range of cybersecurity risks, from elections and patient data to critical infrastructure and emergency communications. The wide range of risks and the increasing sophistication of cyber-criminals makes us exceptionally vulnerable to a security breach. Existing law is unclear about whether current exemptions can be used to hold a closed session discussion about a local agency's cybersecurity risks and vulnerabilities when a cyber-attack is not imminent or underway. Therefore, local agencies do not currently have a method of privately discussing their cybersecurity, which increases local agencies' vulnerability to such attacks.

Our obligations to sustain reliable and effective services that protect the health and safety of the public are paramount. Allowing discussion of cybersecurity in closed session helps facilitate discussion of effective and safe mechanisms to ensure the safety of public information and infrastructure. As exists for current closed session items, any decision that results from such a closed session must be disclosed in an open session, ensuring the public is aware of the decision that has been made.

AB 2715 represents an important modernization of the Brown Act and, as such, we are supportive of the measure. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can offer additional assistance.

Sincerely,



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



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



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

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Tasha Boerner, California State Assembly



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Graham Knaus

June 17, 2024

The Honorable Bob Archuleta
Chair, Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee
1020 N Street, Room 251
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2736 (Carrillo, J) - Veterans: benefits.
As Introduced February 15, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard June 24, 2024 - Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee**

Dear Senator Archuleta,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties of California, I write in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 2736, which would improve access to higher education for family members of disabled veterans by allowing them to receive additional educational benefits at the same time as federal educational benefits or duplicate assistance from any other government source.

Improving access to higher education for family members of disabled veterans by allowing them to receive the California College Fee Waiver at the same time as Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) is important. California established the College Fee Waiver in 1935 to provide support for family members of disabled veterans who wanted to pursue higher education. Similarly, the DEA program was created by the federal government in 1956 and was meant to cover expenses outside the scope of tuition to help financially support the veteran's household. In 1972, a bill was passed that prohibited the acceptance of both benefits at the same time under College Fee Waiver Plan A, one of the four plans under which dependents may be eligible, despite the right to both forms of aid.

Spouses and children of disabled veterans with a 100% service-connected disability rating meet the eligibility requirements for both programs due to the severity of the veterans' injuries during their time of service. In acknowledgment of the valuable contributions and sacrifices made by veterans and their families, it is imperative to extend support to the spouses and children of disabled veterans. AB 2736 aims to rectify an outdated restriction that prevents beneficiaries covered under Plan A of the California College Fee Waiver from concurrently receiving monthly payments from the DEA program. By removing this prohibition, this bill seeks to improve accessibility to financial and educational assistance for these deserving individuals, thereby fostering greater opportunities for personal and professional advancement.

County Veteran Service Offices (CVSOs) frequently serve as the first point of contact in the community for veterans needing help in identifying federal, state, and local benefits accessible to them and their dependents. CVSOs assist with information regarding medical, pension, educational benefits, home loans, help with claims, advocacy, and more. CVSOs are critical to providing California's veterans with the support and assistance they need to be able to take advantage of programs like DEA.

The economic challenges posed by factors such as increasing living expenses, escalating tuition fees, and the profound impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly heightened financial vulnerabilities for individuals. These circumstances have exacerbated the pressing need for individuals to receive multiple support programs that they are already entitled to. For veterans and their families, these economic pressures can be particularly burdensome considering the additional costs associated with disabilities and the unique circumstances they face stemming from their time of service. California recognizes the substantial benefits that higher education programs offer to veterans and their families. Therefore, there is a compelling imperative to eliminate barriers that impede access to both of these programs simultaneously.

AB 2736 offers individuals the opportunity to pursue higher education goals by removing outdated language in Section 896.1 of the Military and Veterans Code, the provision that does not permit spouses and children of disabled veterans with a one hundred percent service-connected disability rating to receive monthly payments concurrently from the DEA under Plan A of the California College Fee Waiver.

For these reasons, CSAC supports AB 2736, and we respectfully request 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 M. Dean".

Kalyn M. Dean
Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Juan Carrillo, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee
Jenny Callison, Principal Consultant, Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee
Todd Moffitt, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 14, 2024

The Honorable Tina McKinnor
Member, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5520
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2797 – OPPOSE
As Amended 6/10/2024**

Dear Assembly Member McKinnor:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the Urban Counties of California (UCC), we regretfully oppose your Assembly Bill 2797, which would allow a Carrier of Last Resort provider to abandon those responsibilities and leave large swaths of the most vulnerable Californians without reliable and affordable access to basic telephone service.

Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) telephone service providers are located throughout the state, ensuring access to basic telephone service, many times to residents that lack dependable or affordable options for connectivity. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) oversees these service providers to ensure that important consumer protections, such as access to free 9-1-1 and discounted service rates through the Lifeline program, are implemented. Most importantly, COLR providers are required to provide service to anyone that requests it, and must have the ability to do so, in cases such as new housing developments or restoration of service after a major storm or natural disaster. Non-COLR service providers, including wireless companies, may currently have infrastructure and provide access in a given area – but they are not required to do so and can stop service at any time. Non-COLR providers are also not required to offer affordable service options to eligible residents.

AB 2797 relieves any provider of its COLR obligations when it sends notice to the CPUC stating that it currently has no customers or population in a census block and concludes it is no longer a COLR provider for that area. Additionally, a COLR provider is also relieved of its responsibilities under the law in census blocks that the provider states are served by two other alternative voice services, if affordable, as defined by the COLR provider. The mere notification by the COLR provider that it meets these requirements relieves it of the designation and rate requirements. This bill establishes a process wholly outside any oversight and approval framework, gifting for-profit companies with financial incentives to make self-interested findings to be the sole arbiters to the truth and accuracy of that information. The CPUC's core function is to balance procedures and safeguards

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

to “protect consumers and ensure the provision of safe, reliable utility and infrastructure at reasonable rates¹....” AB 2797 puts the industry’s interests ahead of the needs of some of the most disadvantaged Californians and will interfere with the ability to reach emergency services, receive evacuation notices, or simply call a friend or family member for help.

Lastly, the COLR providers also define what an affordable alternative voice service is in “urban” census blocks. The bill states that a service is affordable if it costs no more than 25 percent higher than the company’s current *nondiscounted* basic telephone service. For those customers currently utilizing the Lifeline program, which provides up to \$19.00 toward service, this cost increase could be exponential as the baseline is already higher than what they are required to pay under the COLR service. Further, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and wireless products are often provided in bundles, so customers that are accustomed to a bill for only basic telephone service must now pay more for the bundled services - products they don’t necessarily want - just to get basic voice service.

We support the evolution to more advanced technologies that provide reliability, redundancy and ubiquitous access to connectivity, for both internet and voice service. However, AB 2797 does not provide a transition process for these communities to receive these modern telecommunications. Rather, it is a process for companies to abandon essential services, at the cost of public safety and consumer safeguards. As we embark on another wildfire season, those in fire prone areas continue to have the ability to receive evacuation notices and safety instructions, even when power is lost, through their plain old telephone lines. Shifting to modern technologies must be done through a collaborative effort with communities and the state to ensure that companies are held accountable and California residents never lose the ability to connect with the outside world. The CPUC is set to vote on a new proceeding on June 20, 2024 that will create a public, transparent process for reviewing COLR policies and what changes are needed to the current structure to reflect to the progression of the industry over the last thirty years.

For these reasons, we must oppose your AB 2797. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tracy Rhine (RCRC) at trhine@rcrcnet.org, Kalyn Dean (CSAC) at kdean@counties.org, or Jean Hurst (UCC) at jkh@hbeadvocacy.com.

Sincerely,



Tracy Rhine, RCRC
Senior Policy Advocate



Kalyn Dean, CSAC
Legislative Representative



Jean Hurst
Legislative Representative

¹ CPUC website

The Honorable Tina McKinnor
Assembly Bill 2797 - Oppose
June 14, 2024
Page 3

cc: The Honorable Steven Bradford, Chair, Senate Energy, Utilities, and
Communications Committee
Members of the Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications Committee
Nidia Baustista, Chief Consultant, Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications
Committee
Kerry Yoshida, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 18, 2024

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

**RE: AB 3025 (Valencia): County employees' retirement: disallowed compensation: benefit adjustments.
As Amended May 2, 2024 – OPPOSE
Set for Hearing June 25, 2024 – Senate Judiciary Committee**

Dear Senator Umberg,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), California Special Districts Association (CSDA), Urban Counties of California (UCC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and League of California Cities (Cal Cities), we regret to inform you of our opposition to Assembly Bill (AB) 3025, which would place a significant financial burden on member agencies of county retirement systems by requiring member agencies, including counties, cities, and special districts, to pay substantial penalties for decisions they did not make and over which they had no authority.

Following the passage of the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA), county retirement systems took varying approaches to comply with the provisions of PEPRA related to which types of compensation may be included in retirement benefit calculations. On July 30, 2020, the California Supreme Court issued a decision in the case *Alameda County Deputy Sheriff's Assn. v Alameda County Employees' Retirement Assn.*, otherwise known as the "*Alameda decision*," in which the Court upheld provisions PEPRA related to disallowed forms of compensation for retirement calculations. Over the last four years, the impacted '37 Act systems have been working to comply with *Alameda* and recalculate retirement benefits for members who retired after January 1, 2013.

AB 3025 unfairly places the financial consequences of the Court's decision on counties and other agencies by requiring '37 Act system employers to pay a "penalty" equal to 20 percent of the current actuarial value of retiree benefits deemed unlawful. The penalty, which will result in affected agencies owing millions of unbudgeted dollars to retirees for what the Court found to be an illegal benefit, implies those agencies made the decision to misapply the law. In reality, they simply complied with the pension agreements established between employees, employers, and retirement systems.

For the reasons stated above, we must oppose AB 3025. The fiscal impact on affected agencies will place a significant strain on general fund dollars, resulting in reductions to critical programs including public safety, transportation, and behavioral health. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions about our position.

Respectfully,



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



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



Jean Kinney Hurst
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Sarah Duckett
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Rural County Representatives of California
sduckett@rccrcnet.org



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

cc: The Honorable Avelino Valencia, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Margie Estrada, Chief Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
Morgan Branch, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



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June 21, 2024

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

**RE: AB 3233 (Addis) Oil and gas: operations: restrictions: local authority.
As Amended June 19, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set for hearing July 3, 2024 – Senate Local Government Committee**

Dear Senator Durazo,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) representing all 58 counties in the state, we are pleased to support AB 3233, which would enhance local control over land use and zoning issues, with regards to oil and gas operations.

In California, most land use decisions are delegated to local governments to ensure the best possible decisions are made for each individual community. In addition, local governments have extensive authority under their general police power to adopt regulations preserving public health, safety, and welfare. As such, counties have a vested interest in maintaining their clear authority to govern oil and gas-related land uses throughout their jurisdictions. To this end, CSAC filed as amicus curiae¹ in *Chevron U.S.A. Inc. v. County of Monterey (2023)*, which challenged “Measure Z,” a local ordinance which aimed to restrict oil and gas development within the county.

AB 3233 would clarify in statute that these local powers apply to the regulation of oil and gas production facilities. This bill will ensure that counties have the authority to balance their unique local needs and tradeoffs that arise in the context of oil and gas development. Counties are responsible for weighing aesthetic, environmental, economic, and safety concerns within their communities. To do this, local governments should have authority to govern where and whether specific activities occur.

It is for these reasons that we support AB 3233, and respectfully request your “AYE” vote. If you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Ada Waelder
awaelder@counties.org

¹ https://www.counties.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/chevron_v_co_of_monterey_csac_calcities_la_county_amicus_brief.pdf?1667505886

The Honorable Maria Elena Durazo

June 21, 2024

Page 2 of 2

California State Association of Counties

Cc: The Honorable Dawn Addis, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Local Government Committee
Consultants, Senate Local Government Committee



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Graham Knaus

June 17, 2024

The Honorable Senator Angelique Ashby
Chair, Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3320
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 3253 (Committee on Business and Professions) Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists: licensees.

As amended on June 13, 2024 – Support with Suggested Amendments

Set for Hearing – July 1, 2024 – Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee

Dear Senator Ashby:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, has a support in concept position on AB 3253, which extends the authority for the Board of Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists (Board) to license and regulate professions established under the Professional Engineers Act, the Professional Land Surveyors' Act, and the Geologist and Geophysicist Act, respectively, to January 1, 2029, and expands the Board's authority to enforce against certain unlicensed activities.

In October of 2023, at the California Engineers Association of Counties (CEAC) Fall Policy Conference, CEAC members expressed that they were experiencing exceptionally long wait times for a decision by the Board to be licensed as a civil engineer, stating that applicants have to wait 8-12 months before being officially licensed by the state.

CSAC spoke with the Board to discuss these issues and we want to thank the Board for taking the time to explain the reason for the backlog and their priority to review applications on a quicker scale. With that said, the Board has indicated that the current process to license applications is still 6-7 months, and if the application has any issues, it could be easily extended to 12 months.

Counties are finding it difficult to hire and retain the skilled workers they need for infrastructure work in their communities due to budget constraints. Further, counties are already continuously challenged by the national labor shortage due to a limited supply of potential engineers.

CSAC also spoke with the Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee and the Assembly Business and Professions Committee, who reiterated that the large influx of applications and limited staffing was most likely the issue for the problem. **We respectfully request that AB 3253 be amended to require the Board to develop a strategy and a working plan to reduce the timeline to process applications.**

CSAC is pleased to support SB 3253, and respectfully urges you to consider our suggested policy as the bill moves through the process. 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, Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development
Committee
Consultant, Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee
Development
Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**



**California Special
Districts Association**

Districts Stronger Together



ACHD
ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA
HEALTHCARE DISTRICTS



RCRC
RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA



June 18, 2024

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

RE: SB 399 (Wahab) Employer Communications: Intimidation.
Oppose (As Amended 5/2/2023)

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities), California Special Districts Association (CSDA), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Urban Counties of California (UCC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California Association of Recreation and Park Districts (CARPD), and the Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD) must respectfully **oppose SB 399**, which would prohibit an employer from subjecting, or threatening to subject, an employee to any adverse action because the employee declines to attend an employer-sponsored meeting or affirmatively declines to participate in, receive, or listen to any communications with the employer, the purpose of which is to communicate the employer's opinion about religious or political matters.

SB 399 applies to all employers, including private employers as well as public employers such as local governments and the State of California. Public employers do not appear to be the primary focus of SB 399. However, cities, counties, special districts, and all other local government employers are swept up in the bill's provisions.

Senate Bill 399 is Inconsistent with Routine Government Operations

SB 399 is overly broad and could pose serious concerns for local jurisdictions. The bill defines “Political matters” as matters relating to elections for political office, political parties, legislation, regulation, and the decision to join or support any political party or political or labor organization. By this definition, it could be reasonably argued that many of the issues before a city council or a special district board would fall under “legislation” or “regulation.”

The bill's provisions are incompatible with the proper and legitimate functioning of government. Government entities are required to make and implement policies for the benefit of their communities. This may come in the form of internal deliberations, analysis, and vetting of local rules, ordinances or other policies adopted by local legislative bodies, or the consideration of state and federal legislation, local government positions on such legislation, and implementation of state and federal laws applicable to local governments. If enacted, SB 399 would treat many routine government functions as political matters and interfere with government operations. SB 399 may apply to employees required to be present where legislation or regulations/ordinances are debated, such as a city council or board meetings, and even to such mundane tasks as seeking input or analysis from employees as to the implementation of proposed or enacted legislation. Because governments develop and implement policy, any activity could potentially be argued to be political, leading to costly disputes.

Existing Law Already Restricts Local Governments' Communications with Employees

We are not aware of a widespread problem involving local agencies forcing their religious or political beliefs on their employees. Additionally, SB 399 is not appropriately applied to local government because existing law already provides significant protections for public employees. For example, Government Code Section 3550 provides that a public employer shall not deter or discourage public employees or applicants to be public employees from becoming or remaining members of an employee organization. Section 3551.5 imposes significant penalties for violations of Section 3550 and grants employee organizations standing to bring the claims.

Senate Bill 399 Does Not Contain Exemptions Sufficient to Cover the Breadth of Government Operations

The exceptions and definitions in the bill are vague. The bill says that it does not prohibit:

- *An employer from communicating to its employees any information that the employer is required by law to communicate, but only to the extent of that legal requirement.*
- *An employer from communicating to its employees any information that is necessary for those employees to perform their job duties.*

It is difficult to say who would fall under the exemption and who would be the arbiter of whether certain communications are necessary to do an employee's job, and this exemption likely would not cover the breadth of circumstances discussed in this letter. There is no clarity in the bill about what it means to require an employee to attend an “employer-sponsored” meeting. For example, even if an employer explicitly says that employees are not required to attend a meeting, an employee could claim that they

still felt required to attend because others were attending, or some sort of benefit was being provided.

Senate Bill 399 Exposes Local Governments to Risk of Significant Litigation Expenses

The uncertainty created because of the vague and overly broad provisions of this bill would make it incredibly difficult to comply with and would certainly be litigated. SB 399 would also create a private right of action in court for damages caused by adverse actions on account of the employee's refusal to attend an employer sponsored meeting.

From the perspective of local governments, SB 399 is a solution in search of a problem. For these reasons, Cal Cities, CSDA, UCC, RCRC, CARPD, ACHD and CSAC have an OPPOSE position on Senate Bill 399. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



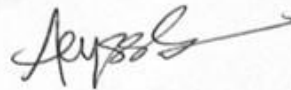
Johnnie Pina
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities
Jpina@calcities.org



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



Aaron A. Avery
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Alyssa Silhi
California Association of Recreation and
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Jean Kinney Hurst
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Kalyn Dean
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
kdean@counties.org



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

CC: The Honorable Aisha Wahab
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Irene Ho, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Policy Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Mary Hernandez, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom



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June 17, 2024

The Honorable Cottie Petrie-Norris
Chair, Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy
1020 N Street, Room 408A
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 983 (Wahab) Energy: gasoline stations and alternative fuel infrastructure.
As amended on March 21, 2024 – Support
Set for Hearing – June 19, 2024 – Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy**

Dear Assembly Petrie-Norris:

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,

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy
Consultant, Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy
Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



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June 20, 2024

The Honorable Chris Ward
Chair, Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
1020 N Street, Room 156
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1077 (Blakespear) Coastal resources: local coastal program: amendments: accessory and junior dwelling units. As amended on June 19, 2024 – Support Set for Hearing – June 26, 2024 – Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee

Dear Assemblymember Ward:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, is proud to support SB 1077 (Blakespear), which requires the California Coastal Commission (Commission) by July 1, 2026, in coordination with the California Housing and Community Development Department (HCD), to develop and provide guidance for local governments to facilitate the preparation of amendments to a local coastal program (LCP) to clarify and simplify the permitting process for accessory dwelling units (ADU) and junior accessory dwelling units (JADU) in the coastal zone.

Counties within the Coastal Zone are subject to the California Coastal Act which is implemented via cooperative agreements between the California Coastal Commission and counties and cities. Most development in the Coastal Zone requires a coastal development permit issued by local agencies with a certified Local Coastal Plan (LCP) or by the Commission in the absence of a cooperative agreement. LCPs link statewide coastal policies to local planning efforts with the goal of protecting the quality and environment of California’s coastline.

The State, counties, and cities should mutually encourage, seek, and support efforts to streamline, improve, and modernize coastal development permit and local coastal planning processes, without compromising or undermining the original intent and tenets of these laws. SB 1077 clarifies the process for the Commission to develop and provide guidance to local jurisdictions to update LCPs to facilitate ADU and JADU permitting in the coastal zone, and would require the Commission, in coordination with HCD, to convene at least one public workshop to receive and consider public comments on the draft guidance before the finalization of the guidance document and to post the guidance document on the Commission’s internet website.

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 1077 aligns with our AT HOME efforts, specifically as it relates to the Housing pillar.

For these reasons, CSAC is proud to support SB 1077. 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 Senator Catherine Blakespear
The Honorable Members, Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
Consultant, Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



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June 17, 2024

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

**Re: SB 1144 (Skinner) Marketplaces: online marketplaces.
As Amended June 5, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set for Hearing 6/19/24 – Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

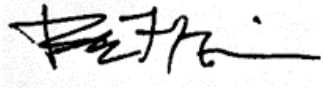
The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) writes in support of SB 1144, by Senator Nancy Skinner. This bill seeks to address a critical facet of the rapidly evolving world of retail theft by expanding existing provisions on online marketplaces and improving enforcement authority over illegitimate operations. SB 1144, which is part of President pro Tempore Mike McGuire and Senate leaders' bipartisan legislative package, *Working Together for a Safer California*, 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 and it would expand protections and transparency for consumers by ensuring 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.

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 with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ryan Morimune
Legislative Advocate, CSAC

CC: The Honorable Nancy Skinner, California State Senate
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee



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June 18, 2024

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

**Re: SB 1159: CEQA: Roadside Wildfire Risk Reduction Projects
As Amended, April 24, 2024 – SUPPORT
Referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

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

The Honorable Buffy Wicks

June 18, 2024

Page 2 of 2

Senior Legislative Advocate

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



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June 20, 2024

The Honorable Chris Ward
Chair, Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
1020 N Street, Room 156
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1187 (McGuire) Housing programs: Tribal Housing Reconstitution and Resiliency Act.
As introduced on February 14, 2024 – Support
Set for Hearing – June 26, 2024 – Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee

Dear Assemblymember Ward:

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 that reads "Mark Neuburger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Senator Pro Tempore Mike McGuire
The Honorable Members, Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
Consultant, Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



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June 20, 2024

The Honorable Chris Ward
Chair, Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
1020 N Street, Room 156
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

Set for Hearing – June 26, 2024 – Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee

Dear Assemblymember Ward:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, is proud to support SB 1361 (Blakespear), which 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, flowing style.

Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Members, Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
Consultant, Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee
Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



June 14, 2024, 2024

The Honorable Lori Wilson
Chair, Assembly Committee on Transportation
1020 N St, Suite 112
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 1387 (Newman): California Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project: vehicle eligibility: schoolbus grant requirements.
Notice of SUPPORT *(As amended 6/10/2024)*

Dear Chair Wilson,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities), the California Special Districts Association (SCDA), 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, expand the list of those eligible to receive a voucher for the purchase of a zero-emission pickup, and establish specific provisions for zero-emission school buses.

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 must meet is extremely challenging 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.

Additionally, the recent amendments to SB 1387 introduce specific provisions for zero-emission school buses, providing grants for local educational agencies to purchase zero-emission school buses and cover the incremental costs of zero-emission school bus services provided by private contractors. These provisions are vital in ensuring that school transportation can transition to zero-emission vehicles, supporting the broader goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fostering cleaner communities.

For these reasons, Cal Cities, CSDA, 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 Anthony Tannehill of CSDA at anthony@csda.net, 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



Anthony J. Tannehill
Legislative Representative
California special Districts Association

CC: The Honorable Josh Newman
Members, Assembly Committee on Transportation
Stephanie Choing, Science Fellow, Assembly Committee on Transportation
Daniel Ballon, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



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June 18, 2024

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

**Re: SB 1390 (Caballero): Groundwater recharge: floodflows: diversion.
As Amended: June 17, 2024—SUPPORT
Set for hearing June 25, 2024 – Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Papan,

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: The Honorable Anna Caballero, California State Senate
Honorable Members, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee
Consultants, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee



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Graham Knaus

June 20, 2024

The Honorable Assemblymember Chris Ward
Chair, Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1395 (Becker) Shelter crisis: Low Barrier Navigation Center: use by right: building standards.

As amended on April 18, 2024 – Support

Set for Hearing – June 24, 2024 - Assembly Committee on Natural Resources

Dear Assemblymember Ward:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, is proud to support SB 1395 (Becker), which extends the sunset on authorized emergency housing under the Shelter Crisis Act (SCA) to January 1, 2036.

Specifically, this bill allows actions related to contracting for services for a homeless shelter under the SCA to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), eliminates the sunset for by-right approval of low barrier navigation centers and exempts from CEQA certain actions by local agencies related to low barrier navigation centers, and clarifies that state programs subject to “Housing First” includes programs that fund emergency shelters and interim housing.

There is a significant housing shortage across the full housing continuum in California and the supply of permanent, affordable housing continues to be a considerable challenge to addressing homelessness. This is especially true for affordable housing to support Californians who are aged, disabled, justice involved, and/or have significant mental health or substance use disorder needs. Siting shelters and supportive housing often draws significant resistance from community members, and counties and cities must continue to work to remove these barriers and identify and support the development of infrastructure needed to address homelessness.

CSAC supports increasing the development and operational support of permanent supportive housing and other housing tailored to support individuals with complex/high needs, including individuals with behavioral health needs, or justice involvement, including recovery residences, as well as addressing significant barriers of well-intentioned tools and processes being used to block projects or create local challenges to growth.

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 1395 aligns with our AT HOME efforts, specifically as it relates to the Housing pillar.

For these reasons, CSAC is proud to support SB 1395. 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 Senator Josh Becker
The Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
Consultant, Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



June 24, 2024

The Honorable Thomas Umberg
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
1020 O Street, Room 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2149 (Connolly) – Oppose Unless Amended
As Amended May 16, 2024**

Dear Senator Umberg:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) and the League of California Cities (CalCities), we must regrettably oppose Assembly Bill 2149 (Connolly), *unless amended*. This measure creates a requirement for local agencies to regulate and enforce safety provisions set forth in the bill on all gates that weigh more than 50 pounds and are over 48 inches wide or are more than 84 inches high, which capture a massive variety number of gates.

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. Although the bill currently focuses on owners and private contractors to inspect the gate and make repairs, the local building department may be required to step in should health and safety measures not be addressed during the initial inspection. As a result, if another unfortunate situation occurs where someone is injured or killed by a gate, local governments may be liable if the local government did not take action due to delays or a lack of staff resources.

For example, if a faulty gate was reported by a private inspector to the local building department, inspectors may have to delay enforcement due to staff shortages and a continuous push by the state to streamline a variety of permits in California. This can result in long delays for enforcing state regulations putting local governments at risk for future litigation. 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 would increase. Further, with the central role that industry contractors have in the bill, we are greatly concerned with potential for predatory behavior that could be engaged in. The provisions of

this measure place local governments in the difficult position of determining whether a complaint filed by a private inspector is meritorious or part of a pattern of profit seeking behavior. Finally, we are troubled by the sponsor 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 local governments should not utilize administrative penalties and fines to fund their operations. We believe the legislature's guidance provided in the public safety area applies equally 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 are concerned with the predatory behaviors the bill and we don't believe all of our members have uniform agreement that local agency involvement in this regulatory space is the most effective way to address the risks identified by this bill. With that in mind 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 cities and counties have a clear understanding of the scope and risk of the gates they are considering to regulate.

This bill creates a new state-mandated local program. While cities and counties are required to comply with all state mandates, they only receive funding to carry out a select group of state-mandated programs in the form of after-the-fact reimbursement payments from the state. Cities and counties absorb all other state-mandated costs using local revenues. After a bill is signed into law, reimbursement for local governments to comply with state-mandated programs is not automatic. Rather, cities and counties initiate the process to receive reimbursement via the Commission on State Mandates, which may take a year or more to determine whether the new law meets the criteria for reimbursement—and even longer to establish a process and rate for reimbursement. Therefore, cities and counties comply with new laws pending reimbursement status, often funding these programs alone for years, facing the uncertainty of reimbursement.

After years of layered responsibilities for counties and insufficient financial support from the state, we urge the Legislature to pair all new requirements with an appropriation in the state budget act for city and county implementation.

For these reasons, CSAC, RCRC and CalCities 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, or Brady Guertin (Cal Cities) bguertin@calcities.org.

Sincerely,



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Tracy Rhine
Senior Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California



Brady Guertin
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities

cc: The Honorable Damon Connolly, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Margie Estrada, Chief Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
Morgan Branch, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 25, 2024

The Honorable Thomas Umberg
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
1020 O Street, Room 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2149 (Connolly) – Oppose Unless Amended
As Amended June 24, 2024**

Dear Senator Umberg:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) and the League of California Cities (CalCities), we must regrettably oppose Assembly Bill 2149 (Connolly), *unless amended*. This measure creates a requirement for local agencies to regulate and enforce safety provisions set forth in the bill on all gates that weigh more than 50 pounds and are over 48 inches wide or are more than 84 inches high and meet exceedingly vague public access criteria, which capture a massive variety number of gates.

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. Although the bill currently focuses on owners and private contractors to inspect the gate and make repairs, the local building department may be required to step in should health and safety measures not be addressed during the initial inspection. As a result, if another unfortunate situation occurs where someone is injured or killed by a gate, local governments may be liable if the local government did not take action due to delays or a lack of staff resources.

For example, if a faulty gate was reported by a private inspector to the local building department, inspectors may have to delay enforcement due to staff shortages and a continuous push by the state to streamline a variety of permits in California. This can result in long delays for enforcing state regulations putting local governments at risk for future litigation. 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 would increase. Further, with the central role that industry contractors have in the bill, we are greatly concerned with potential for predatory behavior that could be engaged in. The provisions of

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For these reasons, CSAC, RCRC and CalCities 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, or Brady Guertin (Cal Cities) bguertin@calcities.org.

Sincerely,



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Tracy Rhine
Senior Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California



Brady Guertin
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities

cc: The Honorable Damon Connolly, Member of the California State Assembly
Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Margie Estrada, Chief Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
Morgan Branch, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



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Graham Knaus

June 25, 2024

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

**Re: AB 2249 (Pellerin): Elections: retention of election records.
As Amended June 20, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on July 1, 2024**

Dear Senator Caballero,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties, representing all 58 counties in California, I write in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 2249 by Assemblymember Pellerin. This measure would provide needed clarification to laws dictating the retention of election records, protect local governments from abuses of the California Public Records Act (CPRA), and improve election security.

AB 2249 would accomplish these commendable goals by clarifying existing laws regarding the retention of election records. Existing law already establishes that certain election materials must be sealed during their retention period and, often, destroyed upon the conclusion of that period. AB 2249 would clearly establish that certain election materials – including audit logs of adjudicated ballots, tabulator tapes, and digital ballot images – are protected under existing statutes that require elections officials to seal election materials until the conclusion of their record retention period.

The need for this bill was made clear due to litigation brought against the Nevada County Registrar of Voters due to a CPRA request seeking vast records related to the November 2020 presidential general election and the 2021 gubernatorial recall. Because state law did not clearly protect certain records from disclosure by requiring them to be sealed and, ultimately, destroyed, a court found that the county was required to produce the records – after the long and expensive process of redacting confidential information from the records.

The California Public Records Act serves as a vital tool for the public to hold their governments and elected leaders accountable. California’s public agencies take their responsibilities under the CPRA seriously, devoting substantial resources to responding thoroughly and promptly to public records requests.

Public agencies at all levels of government have reported a significant increase in the quantity and breadth of CPRA requests over the past several years. A variety of public agencies reported a 73% increase in the volume of CPRA requests over the past five years. A vast majority of those agencies reported receiving CPRA requests that required an inordinate amount of staff time, with more than 90% reporting CPRA requests that diverted local resources away from local programs and services.

These requests can be costly and time-consuming for local agencies, as they can require significant staff time to discover, review, and redact records, often requiring the specific subject matter experts on an issue to dedicate substantial time outside of their core responsibilities to ensure the agency fully responds to a CPRA request. Counties have reported single CPRA requests seeking decades of 911 call transcripts or decades of correspondence from local officials. One small, rural county reported a single requestor who has submitted hundreds of CPRA requests over the past few years, including a single request that required the county to review over 621,000 records. The county estimates that producing records in response to just a portion of the requests would cost the county over \$1.8 million and require a minimum of 34 employees working around the clock for a year to collect and redact the records.

Furthermore, due to the modernization of how public sector work is conducted, there has been a significant increase in disclosable records (e.g., emails, text messages, inter-office direct chat messaging platforms, etc.) created by routine government work. In response, there has been a proportionate increase in the complexity and sophistication of the work necessary to respond to CPRA requests due to the staff time spent searching for records and redacting material that is exempt or prohibited from disclosure (e.g., confidential attorney-client correspondence, social security numbers, criminal history, trade secrets, medical records, etc.).

The heightened use of the CPRA— and the subsequent heightened impacts to governments — has occurred over the same period that saw local governments lose revenue sources that absorbed some of the cost pressures of CPRA requests.

In 2014, California voters approved Proposition 42, which, among other provisions, amended the California constitution to discontinue the requirement that the State reimburse local governments for the cost of complying with CPRA laws or any subsequent CPRA laws enacted by the Legislature. Prior to Proposition 42, costs for local governments to comply with the CPRA were a reimbursable state mandate for which local governments could file annual claims with the State Controller's Office.

In 2020, the California Supreme Court ruled that local agencies cannot charge for staff time and technical costs necessary to review, redact, and release public records in response to CPRA requests, allowing fees to be used only for limited circumstances — including, for example, \$0.10 per page for physical copies, the cost of physical hardware used to transmit records, or the cost of data extraction. Agencies are not allowed to seek reimbursement for the significant costs that can be incurred for the time spent by legal counsel in reviewing and explaining the legality of a claim, exemptions, or redactions applicable to the request — or the staff time spent redacting private information from voluminous records requests.

Election officials are required to conduct complicated elections with limited resources — conducting perhaps the most essential element of the people's business despite rampant misinformation and harassment. The way the state has traditionally funded elections — through the state mandates process — has caused local governments to fund elections with the uncertainty of when, and how much, they will eventually be reimbursed. During that period of uncertainty, mandates can be suspended at any time, forcing local governments to choose between absorbing costs for services expected of their communities or ceasing that service because of lost reimbursement from the state. AB 2249 is yet another bill that aims to protect those limited and vital resources.

The Honorable Anna Caballero

June 25, 2024

Page 3 of 3

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2249 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 Gail Pellerin, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Robert Ingenito, Principal Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee
Cory Botts, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



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CEO

Graham Knaus

June 25, 2024

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

**RE: AB 2257 (Wilson): Property-related Water and Sewer Fees and Assessments:
Remedies
As Amended June 20, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set to be heard in the Senate Local Government Committee on July 3, 2024**

Dear Senator Durazo,

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 Assemblymember 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.

The Honorable Maria Elena Durazo

June 25, 2024

Page 2 of 2

For these reasons, CSAC supports AB 2257 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, Senate Local Government Committee
Anton Favorini-Csorba, Chief Consultant, Senate Local Government Committee
Ryan Eisberg, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 18, 2024

The Honorable Tom Umberg
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O St, Room 2100
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2371 (J. Carrillo) Electrified security fences
Notice of OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED *(As of 4/1/24)*

Dear Chair Umberg,

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) regrettably must take a position of **oppose unless amended** on **AB 2371**, which would prohibit local governments from banning electrified security fences within areas zoned for manufacturing, industrial property, or property zoned under another designation as long as the fence is authorized to be used for a commercial purpose that stores, parks, services, sells, or rents vehicles, vessels, equipment, materials, freight, or utility infrastructure within an outdoor lot or yard so long as the land does not include any residential or hospitality uses.

AB 2371 would force local governments to permit and allow for electrified security fences if such installations meet the requirements in subdivision (b) of Section 835 of the California Civil Code; or ban their installation altogether.

Considering the potential hazards an electrified security fence can pose to the public, it is critically important for local governments to retain their discretion on a case-by-case basis to ensure installation of such fences is safe and appropriate for the given area. While existing law may help establish minimum standards for the installation of electrified security fences, it simply cannot account for all community circumstances that may require additional discretion. Local governments are best suited to balance the needs of their residents and businesses to ensure potentially hazardous facilities are installed safely and appropriately. Unfortunately, this bill fails to strike that balance.

Although the bill specifies that if there is a residential or hospitality use near the facility electrified fences may be prohibited by the local government, it fails to account for recent legislation that forced cities to approve housing, byright, without discretions or environmental review in commercial, rental, and parking zones. As local governments continue to address the need for more housing, local governments need discretion to balance competing needs.

We appreciate the author's interest in bringing this measure forward and remain committed to work with them to resolve our concerns about the bill's limit of local government's authority to determine what is best for its respective community.

Unfortunately, at this time Cal Cities respectfully **opposes unless amended** AB 2371. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at bguertin@calcities.org.

Sincerely,



Brady Guertin
Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist



Mark Neuburger
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

CC: The Honorable Juan Carrillo
Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Ian Dougherty, Principal Consultant, Senate Judiciary Committee
Morgan Branch, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 25, 2024

The Honorable Thomas Umberg
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
1021 O St. Ste. 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2421 (Low) Employer-Employee Relations: Confidential Communications.
OPPOSE (As Amended 06/17/24)

Dear Senator Umberg,

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), the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), the California School Boards Association (CSBA), and the Small School Districts' Association, 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.

Recent amendments to the bill removed prior language stating the **intent** to create an employee-union representative privilege in the context of California public employment, and now express an intention not to create an evidentiary privilege. However, **the substantive provisions of the bill**, which were previously intended to create a privilege, remain largely unchanged.

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

Limits 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 has 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.” The bill was recently amended to add an exception for when the employee representative is a witness or party to any of the events forming the basis of a potential administrative disciplinary or criminal investigation. This amendment is exceptionally narrow, leaving necessary investigations subject to the bill's prohibitions. Further, administrative disciplinary investigation is not defined, leaving the bill's application subject to interpretation and dispute. More broadly, there are many necessary administrative investigations that are not “disciplinary” (e.g., Government Code Section 53087.6). 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. It would also limit the ability of public employers to conduct investigations into workplace safety, harassment, and other allegations, as required by law (See, e.g., Senate Bill 553 (Cortese) Occupational safety: workplace violence: restraining orders and workplace violence prevention plan).

Under this bill, the employee or the “employee representative” could at will decide to shield 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.

Expansion of New One-Sided Standard

As noted above, while the prior intent language referencing a privilege has been removed, the substance of the bill remains largely the same. Although the intent language states that the bill does not apply to criminal investigations, the substantive provisions of the bill are not limited in that manner – only the narrow employee representative party/witness exception references criminal investigations. Moreover, the intent language states that the “...confidentiality protections prohibit public employers,

their agents, and those acting on their behalf from compelling the disclosure of confidential communications, including to third parties." How the prohibition might interact with judicial and administrative proceedings is deeply unclear at best. Although provisions of the bill may not be called a privilege, the impact on investigations and litigation may be largely the same.

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. For attorney-client privilege and physician-patient privilege, notably, the attorneys and physicians are licensed and subject to professional discipline for professional misconduct. The "rules of the road" for establishing and waiving attorney-client privilege, for example, are well understood. Numerous exceptions exist to balance the public interest (Evidence Code Section 950, et seq.); the holder of the privilege is well defined. Spousal privilege is also long standing and protects the integrity of family relationships, and also has established "rules of the road" (Evidence Code 970, et seq). Shielding employee-employee representative communications bears none of the protective and public interest balancing characteristics of privileges. AB 2421 fails to recognize this well-established threshold and instead would create a new, broad shield for public employees without meaningful limitation on how it will function.

Additionally, the provisions of 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 will lead to disputes as to its application in certain workplace investigations, administrative proceedings, and civil litigation.

Unlike privileges, which 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

AB 2421 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. As noted above, SB 553 (Cortese), has recently provided new structure and requirements for preventing and investigating workplace violence. AB 2421 would interfere with those requirements. 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. It should also be noted that SB 553 will allow collective bargaining representative standing to seek temporary restraining orders in connection with workplace violence. AB 2421 may create a problematic scenario wherein such a TRO may be sought but an employer may not be able to fully investigate the underlying facts.

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 (covering confidential communications made in connection with representation relating to any matter within the scope of the recognized employee organization's representation), 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, our concerns with AB 2421 have not been meaningfully addressed, and the organizations listed below respectfully remain opposed to the bill. 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>
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 <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>Dorothy Johnson Legislative Advocate Association of California School Administrators djohnson@acsa.org</p>
 <p>Jason Schmelzer Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM) jason@SYASLpartners.com</p>	 <p>Andrew Martinez Senior Director of Government Relations Community College League of California amartinez@cclleague.org</p>
 <p>Chris Reeve Legislative Director California School Boards Association creeve@csba.org</p>	 <p>Alyssa Silhi Legislative Advocate California Association of Park and Recreation Districts asilhi@publicpolicygroup.com</p>

 <p>Nick Romley Legislative Advocate Small School Districts' Association Nick@capitoladvisors.org</p>	
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CC:

The Honorable Evan Low
Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary
Ian Dougherty, Counsel, Senate Committee on Judiciary
Morgan Branch, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Mary Hernandez, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary,
Office of Governor Gavin Newsom



June 27, 2024

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

**RE: AB 2496 (Pellerin) – Liability claims: foster family agencies and noncustodial adoption agencies.
As Amended June 10, 2024 – OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED
Set for Hearing on July 2, 2024**

Dear Senator Umberg:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the Urban Counties of California (UCC), we are writing to share that we regretfully have an Oppose Unless Amended position on AB 2496 authored by Assembly Member Pellerin. While we share the concerns of the author and sponsors regarding the ongoing viability of an insurance product that allows Foster Family Agencies to appropriately maintain their licensure, we believe that this challenge is best addressed in a thoughtful, collaborative manner that ensures the safety and well-being of children in foster care while balancing risk and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) are a critical partner of counties in caring for the well-being of children placed into foster care. Our associations recognize that there are significant challenges in the insurance market for FFAs and that this creates risks for their licensure. Counties support the goal of finding a solution to this issue so that FFAs can stay in business and continue serving vulnerable children and youth. However, we have several concerns with the approach outlined by this bill.

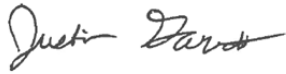
AB 2496 would, among other things, prohibit the use of certain types of indemnification agreements in contracts between counties and FFAs. Not all counties contract with FFAs for child welfare and adoption services, choosing instead to use simpler placement agreements with FFAs. Regardless of the scope of the contract, these agreements routinely include provisions allocating the inevitable risks between the parties, as negotiated by the parties themselves. The purpose of these provisions is not to hold FFAs responsible for the negligence of others. Indeed, even the broadest indemnity clauses typically exclude the county's own sole negligence from their scope. Rather, the principal purpose of an indemnification provision is to allow the parties to negotiate, in advance, their respective responsibilities in the vast majority of real-world cases where liability is disputed or shared. Many counties are self-insured for liability purposes, and it is critical these counties are allowed to negotiate their contracts as works best for their operations and their service providers.

More broadly, counties regularly use indemnification clauses in their contracts with many entities, not just Foster Family Agencies. To make specific indemnification clauses, as a matter of public policy, void in FFA contracts opens the door to challenging these necessary contract provisions in other county agreements where negotiated language on indemnification is a standard contract term. We respectfully request amendments be taken to AB 2496 to remove the indemnification prohibition from the bill as proposed in Code of Civil Procedure 1062.34(b)(1) as identified on page 5, lines 10-19.

Additionally, given the complexities of this issue and the importance of protecting children placed into foster care, we believe that state leadership is needed. We respectfully request that this bill be amended to require that the relevant state agencies, including the California Department of Social Services and Department of Insurance, work collaboratively with all stakeholders to address the underlying insurance availability issues for FFAs so that we can continue to achieve our shared goal of best serving our families and children in the child welfare system.

Our coalition appreciates your consideration of these amendments and looks forward to continued dialogue on AB 2496.

Sincerely,



Justin Garrett
Senior Legislative Advocate
CSAC



Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
RCRC



Jean Hurst
Legislative Advocate
UCC

cc: The Honorable Gail Pellerin, California State Assembly
Members and Consultants, Senate Judiciary Committee



June 24, 2024

The Honorable Senator Lola Smallwood-Cuevas
 Chair, Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee
 1020 O Street, Room 6740
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2561 (McKinnor) Local public employees: vacant positions. – OPPOSE
 As Amended March 11, 2024
 Set to be heard in Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement July 3,
 2024**

Dear Senator Smallwood-Cuevas,

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), California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA), County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), California Association of Recreation and Parks Districts (CARPD), Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM), Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD), Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC), California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (CAPH), California State Sheriffs' Association (CSSA), 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

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

For counties, the issue of vacancies is particularly acute with the highest rates typically in behavioral health, the sheriff's department, probation departments, human resources departments, and social services. Local government decision-makers and public agency department heads 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, probation officers, 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, CMUA, CBHDA, CWDA, PRISM, CARPD, ACHD, CPOC, CAPH, CSSA 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
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kdean@counties.org



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Director of State Legislative Affairs
California Special Districts Association
aarona@cdda.net



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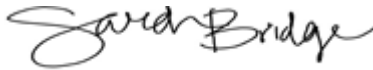
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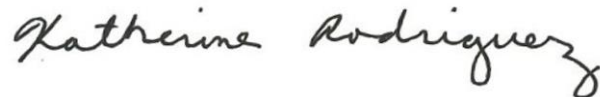
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Alyssa Silhi
Director of Government Affairs
California Association of Recreation and Park
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asilhi@publicpolicygroup.com

cc: The Honorable Tina McKinnor, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee
Glenn A. Miles, Consultant, Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement
Committee
Scott Seekatz, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Malik Gover, Legislative Aide, Assembly Member McKinnor's Office



June 11, 2024

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear, Chair
Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
1020 N Street, Room 533
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 2631 (M. Fong) – Local agencies: ethics training – As Amended 5/20/24 – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Blakespear:

The Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), and the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) are proud to co-sponsor Assembly Bill 2631, relating to the FPPC's local agency ethics training course.

Existing law requires each local agency official to receive ethics training every two years that includes training on their ethical duties under the Political Reform Act of 1974 and on other ethics principles and laws. The Fair Political Practices Commission has voluntarily maintained an online local ethics training course that is available to all local officials free of charge. The training course is a highly beneficial resource for local agencies and is heavily relied on and used by local officials, with 88,900 users completing the course since 2010. With the passage of AB 2158 in 2022, about 2,000 additional agencies and several thousand additional agency officials will become subject to these training requirements starting in 2025, which the FPPC expects will result in increased usage of the training course.

AB 2631 would codify the FPPC's ethics training program in statute, thereby making it a permanent program that can be relied on by local officials indefinitely. The bill will ensure that local officials continue to have free and convenient access to a resource that educates these officials on important ethics laws that impact their work and decision-making.

Thank you to the Committee for your consideration of this important bill. If you have any questions, please contact Lindsey Nakano at LNakano@fppc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Adam Silver, Chair
Fair Political Practices Commission

Eric Lawyer, Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

Marcus Detwiler, Legislative Representative
California Special Districts Association

Johnnie Piña, Legislative Affairs Lobbyist
League of California Cities

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Elections Committee



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June 25, 2024

The Honorable Marie Alvarado-Gil, Chair
Senate Human Services Committee
1020 N Street, Room 521
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2704 (Zbur): In-home supportive services: criminal background checks.
As Amended April 25, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set for Hearing on July 1, 2024 – Senate Human Services**

Dear Senator Alvarado-Gil,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I am writing in support of Assembly Bill 2704 by Assembly Member Rick Chavez Zbur. This measure prohibits the Department of Justice (DOJ) from assessing a fee on an In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) provider, applicant to become a provider, or a county for the purposes of conducting an investigation or criminal background check of an IHSS provider or applicant.

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 essential program 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, about 680,000 IHSS providers deliver services to over 775,000 recipients in the state.

In order to become an IHSS provider, applicants must submit fingerprint images to the DOJ for a criminal background check. The DOJ currently sets this fee at \$32, which is in addition to third-party vendor costs to perform fingerprinting. This cost creates a financial barrier for those seeking to become IHSS providers, many of which are low-income.

AB 2704 waives the DOJ criminal background check fee for IHSS providers without shifting the financial burden to counties. This measure reduces the financial barrier of becoming an IHSS provider and will aid efforts to recruit and retain the state’s caregiving workforce. As the number of Californian’s receiving services through the IHSS program is expected to continue to grow, it is critical to ensure California has a qualified and prepared workforce to meet the needs of this vulnerable population.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2704. 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.

Sincerely,

Justin Garrett
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Rick Chavez Zbur, California State Assembly
Members and Consultants, Senate Human Services Committee
Joe Parra, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



**California Special
Districts Association**
Districts Stronger Together



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**



June 04, 2024

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

RE: Assembly Bill 2729 (Patterson) – Oppose [As Amended April 25, 2024]

Dear Senator Durazo:

California Special Districts Association (CSDA), representing nearly 1,000 independent special districts throughout the state, California Fire Chiefs Association (CFCA – CalChiefs), Fire Districts Association of California (FDAC), and California Association of Recreation and Park Districts (CARPD), California State Association of Counties, and League of California Cities respectfully oppose Assembly Bill 2729 as amended April 25th, 2024, and respectfully oppose **Assembly Bill 2729 (Patterson)**.

Development impact fees are those fees authorized by the Mitigation Fee Act that are assessed to mitigate the impact of development and help fund the infrastructure needed to provide essential services to growing communities. These fees are used to help local agencies purchase real property (such as land for parks, open space, fire stations, or other uses). Fees may also be spent on related facilities and equipment. This could include a fire station and equipment, or a community park and recreation facility with playgrounds and athletic fields.

AB 2729 would, among other things,

- Generally, require that development impact fees be locked-in at a point in the process that could be far from completion of the development,
- Generally, prohibits collection of fees until the issuance of a certificate of occupancy,
- Prohibits charging interest on those deferred fees, and
- Otherwise puts a shot-clock on local communities' efforts to develop infrastructure should the fees be paid sooner, under certain conditions.

These features risk delaying or denying vital community improvements.

- Reduces the flexibility for communities to work with, and partner with, development proponents to build the thriving and equitable communities that the residents deserve.
- Reduces the ability to right-size the timeline of delivery of payments and the associated improvements putting private developers in the driver's seat when determining the outlay and timing for infrastructure, facilities and other equipment to serve the community.
- Shifts risks from the private sector to local communities ill-suited to absorb such risk.
- Creates one-size-fits-all approach for all communities and projects contemplated in this measure.

For these reasons we oppose **AB 2729**.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns at anthonyt@csla.net

Sincerely,



Anthony Tannehill, Legislative Representative
California Special Districts Association



Brady Guertin, Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist
League of California Cities



Julee Malinowski-Ball, Legislative Advocate
California Fire Chiefs Association
Fire Districts Association of California



Mark Neuburger, Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties



Alyssa Silhi, Legislative Representative
California Association of Recreation and Parks Districts

CC: The Honorable Joe Patterson
Members, Senate Committee on Local Government
Jonathan Peterson, Consultant, Senate Committee on Local Government
Ryan Eisberg, Consultant, Republican Caucus
Brody Borcherding, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor



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June 25, 2024

The Honorable Angelique Ashby, Chair
Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3320
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2774 (Grayson): Childcare for Working Families Act.
As Amended June 24, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set for Hearing on July 1, 2024**

Dear Senator Ashby,

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, Senate Business, Professions & Economic Development
Committee
Kalya Williams, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 24, 2024

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The Honorable Richard Roth, Chair
Senate Health Committee
1020 O Street, Room 3310
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 2871 (Maienschein): Overdose fatality review teams.
As Amended April 24, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set for Hearing on July 3, 2024**

Dear Senator Roth,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties of the state, I am writing in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 2871 by Assembly Member Brian Maienschein. This measure would allow counties to establish overdose fatality review teams to engage in system-wide team review when there is a drug fatality, promote information sharing between county agencies and local stakeholders and experts, and strengthen the integration of local prevention efforts.

California is facing an overdose epidemic, which has been exacerbated by the increased availability of fentanyl over the last decade. In 2022 alone, 7,385 Californians died as a result of an opioid overdose, with nearly 88 percent of those deaths related to fentanyl. Addressing this growing crisis requires a system-wide effort from local health departments, social services and public safety agencies, community-based groups, and other stakeholders with expertise. Although overdose fatality reviews can currently be conducted to a limited degree, the ability to share information about individuals is limited under existing law.

Existing death review teams authorized under current law, such as teams for children, domestic violence, and elder abuse, have yielded tremendous results and influenced system-wide policy changes. AB 2871 builds on these successful models and provides the specific statutory authorization needed to create overdose fatality review teams, which will allow for greater sharing of information needed to further identify issues and gaps in addressing the overdose fatality crisis. Importantly, recent amendments ensure privacy protections for the deceased and the deceased’s family remain in place.

It is for these reasons that CSAC supports AB 2871. 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 consideration.

Sincerely,

Jolie Onodera
Senior Legislative Advocate

cc: The Honorable Brian Maienschein
Members and Consultants, Senate Health Committee
Tim Conaghan, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Joe Parra, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



CWDA

Advancing Human Services
for the Welfare of All Californians

June 28, 2024

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

**Re: SB 1249 (Roth): Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act.
As Amended June 12, 2024 – SUPPORT IN CONCEPT
Set for hearing on July 2, 2024**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), we are writing to share our Support in Concept position on Senate Bill 1249 by Senator Richard Roth. This legislation would move forward on recommendations of the California Department of Aging (CDA) CA 2030 Steering Committee to create a future-ready aging network in California.

California's Master Plan for Aging has created and accelerated numerous opportunities to strengthen and enhance services for older adults. One such initiative was the CA 2030 Steering Committee which was established to examine the state's aging network and identify recommendations to help strengthen the structure and services for California's growing older adult population. CSAC and CWDA were both represented on the Steering Committee along with other key stakeholders from the aging network. The final report outlined a series of recommendations in nine key areas including funding, services, and public service area designations.

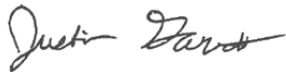
SB 1249 would move forward on several of the recommendations found in the CA 2030 Steering Committee final report. The bill would establish a CDA-led stakeholder process to identify core programs and services, develop objectives and performance measurements for those core programs and services, develop a consumer engagement plan, and update the intrastate funding formula for area agencies on aging (AAAs). In addition, it would require CDA to work with stakeholders to establish criteria for applying for a AAA designation and removing a AAA designation. Following the rulemaking process for that criteria, a county would be able to submit a letter of intent to be considered for designation.

CSAC and CWDA are supportive of the overall aim of SB 1249 and many of the specific provisions. In our advocacy on this legislation, we have highlighted the need for county flexibility on how best to administer aging services, increased funding to support the establishment and meeting of metrics for core services, and funding protections for those AAAs that may be impacted by a changed AAA designation. SB 1249 does not address the fiscal aspects of the changes to the aging network at this time; however, CSAC and CWDA encourage the Legislature and CDA to incorporate funding needs and protections during the stakeholder process to ensure funding will be addressed in some manner.

While we continue to advocate on our fiscal concerns, given our overall alignment on the goals of the bill and importance of strengthening the aging network, we are taking a support in concept position. Our organizations appreciate the partnership on this bill from the author. We look forward to continuing to work together on this legislation and to being strong partners in the various CDA stakeholder processes that would follow enactment of SB 1249.

Should you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Justin Garrett
Senior Legislative Advocate
CSAC
jgarrett@counties.org



Eileen Cubanski
Interim Executive Director
CWDA
ecubanski@cwda.org

cc: The Honorable Richard Roth, California State Senate
Members and Consultants, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Susan DeMarois, Director, California Department of Aging



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Riverside County



CEO

Graham Knaus

June 24, 2024

The Honorable Alex Lee, Chair
Assembly Human Services Committee
1020 N Street, Room 124
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 1322 (Wahab): Foster youth: Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers Program.
As Amended May 16, 2024 – SUPPORT
Set for Hearing on June 25, 2024**

Dear Assembly Member Lee,

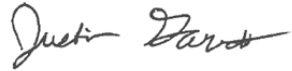
On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 counties in the state, I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1322 by Senator Aisha Wahab. This measure would expand the age of youth eligible for a grant under the Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers Program to youth who were in foster care at some point between the ages of 15-18 years old.

The Chafee Program is a federal program that receives both federal and state funding to assist youth aging out of foster care cover the costs of attending postsecondary education or vocational training. Although federal criteria for the program requires that foster youth must have been in care between the ages of 14 and 18, California restricts eligibility to those who were in care between the ages of 16 and 18.

SB 1322 amends California eligibility requirements to include foster youth who left care at the age of 15, expanding the number of former foster youth who are eligible to receive postsecondary education and vocational training grants under the Chafee program beginning in 2025-26. To ensure youth currently eligible do not lose funding, the expansion is contingent upon appropriation of sufficient funds.

Chafee vouchers provide California’s foster youth with flexible, financial support, allowing thousands of young adults to pursue postsecondary education or vocational training each year. Expanding the population eligible for this support will increase education and economic opportunities for additional foster youth. It is for these reasons that CSAC supports SB 1322. 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 Aisha Wahab, California State Senate
Members and Consultants, Assembly Human Services Committee
Eric Dietz, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus



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CEO

Graham Knaus

June 28, 2024

Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

RE: *National Suicide Hotline Act of 2018 Proposed Rule: WC Docket No. 18–336; FCC 24–45; FR ID 221857*

Filed Electronically

To Whom It May Concern:

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) supports the Federal Communication Commission’s Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to improve access to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988 Lifeline) through rules requiring wireless carriers to implement a georouting solution for calls to it. Such a rule would ensure that callers to the 988 Lifeline are connected to a crisis center where the caller is located, irrespective of the area code associated with the wireless phone - a process known as ‘georouting.’

The 988 Lifeline’s critical life-saving service would be enhanced with the ability to locate the region in which the caller has dialed 988. The NPRM notes that the ability to do so has been validated by last summer’s proof of concept trial of a potential solution for routing wireless calls performed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the administrator of the 988 Second Lifeline, Vibrant Emotional Health (Vibrant – Lifeline Administrator), and other industry partners. Given the success of the proof of concept, CSAC supports FCC’s efforts, along with its partners, to work with wireless carriers to implement such a system or systems nationwide. Furthermore, CSAC understands the legal and privacy concerns and thus supports the FCC’s proposal to direct calls based on a geographic location (georouting) without providing the precise location (geolocation).

Routing calls to where the individual is in crisis is commonsense. Calls routed and answered by a local crisis center provides the individual in crisis with the local resources that may reduce the risk of suicide or assist with the mental health crisis. A caller’s contact with the local crisis call center may also lessen the need for emergency health care services and/or the involvement of law enforcement.

While there will be costs to creating a georouting system, the NPRM notes that creating the current 988 system to enable more individuals to access suicide prevention and mental health crisis services has far surpassed the cost of implementation. Georouting will further enhance the system by saving lives or mitigating costs of emergency responders to assist persons having a mental health crisis,

CSAC supports the efforts of the FCC and its public and private partners to create a nationwide georouting system to further strengthen the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'GKnaus', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Graham Knaus, CEO
California State Association of Counties



2024-25 BUDGET ACT AGREEMENT
June 27, 2024

TO: CSAC Board of Directors
County Administrative Officers

FROM: Graham Knaus, CSAC Chief Executive Officer
Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez, CSAC Chief Policy Officer

RE: **2024-25 Budget Act Agreement**

In a strong and unexpected show of cohesion, the Senate, Assembly, and the Administration made comparatively quick work of the negotiations to settle the details of the 2024 Budget Act. This year, the Governor and the Legislature faced the first truly difficult year for budget deliberations in more than a decade, after a prolonged period of economic recovery following the height of the Great Recession. Leaning on [relatively recent memory](#), the magnitude of the state's budget problem and reconciliation of the differences between the Governor's May Revision budget proposal and the Legislature's Joint Budget Plan seemed like a formidable task for a scant two-week window of time. It would have been understandable, although unwelcome, for negotiations to linger into early July or beyond. Regardless of the tidiness of the timing, budget negotiations throughout 2024 were notably marked by reflexive, lugubrious accounts of fiscal fortitude and wistful glances at the future.

County leaders and CSAC approached this cuts budget with a clear vision for preserving core services, and precision advocacy to protect counties. Given the limited experience at the state level with managing significant fiscal crises, the state needed county expertise and ground truth from their primary intergovernmental partner to balance the budget in a manner that meets our collective responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of Californians. Thus, although the final budget agreement includes many significant budget reductions, the 2024 Budget Act recognizes the vital role of county governments and protects the public services that counties deliver. The final spending agreement for the 2024-25 state budget retains the fundamental architecture of the Legislature's budget proposal. This includes adoption of CSAC's mantra throughout 2024: preserve core social safety net programs and continue funding for the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program. While not the permanent solution we had hoped for, HHAP funding continues next year at the same funding level of \$1 billion.

In addition to the HHAP funding, CSAC advocated for several of the key wins for counties in the 2024 Budget Act, including:

- **\$103 million** in 2024-25 for the Victim Services Program to provide financial assistance and support to victim services providers to ensure all victims of crime in California receive the support they need.

- **\$40 million** in 2024-25 for the Public Defender Pilot Program for counties to implement recently chaptered legislation related to a wide range of post-conviction services.
- **\$73.5 million** to backfill insufficient Educational Revenue Augmentation Funds (ERAF) for affected counties and rejected a proposal that would have resulted in a loss of approximately **\$130 to \$180 million** in excess ERAF for affected counties.
- **\$184.1 million** preserved for local public health workforce and infrastructure.
- **More than \$600 million** preserved for various CalWORKs programs including the Single Allocation, Family Stabilization, and Enhanced Subsidized Employment.
- Adopts **CSAC-supported language** that requires the state to work with counties to review the budgeting methodology for county IHSS administration.
- **\$160 million** preserved for various Child Welfare and Foster Care programs including the Family Urgent Response System and Bringing Families Home.
- **More than \$100 million** preserved for various Adult Protective Services (APS) programs including APS Expansion and Home Safe.
- **\$315 million** preserved for the Multifamily Housing Program for grants to a broad variety of affordable housing projects.
- **\$560 million** preserved for the Regional Early Action Planning 2.0 Program for grants for a broad variety of projects that further the state's housing and climate goals.

By The Numbers: 3 Budget Bills, 19 Trailer Bills, and 9 Ballot Measures

On the heels of sending the Legislature's Joint Budget Plan for 2024-25 to the Governor's desk earlier this month, the 2024-25 spending package compromise was released over the weekend via the introduction of [SB 108](#). SB 108 will amend the budget bill passed by the Legislature 12 days ago ([AB 107](#)) and will reflect the compromised spending priorities in 2024-25. The 2024 Budget Act includes total expenditures of \$297.9 billion in 2024-25 (\$211.5 billion of which is state General Fund) after accounting for \$46.8 billion in budget-balancing solutions to address the deficit. The Budget Act draws down \$5.1 billion in 2024-25 and \$7.1 billion in 2025-26 in reserves to bridge the budget gap. The balance of the Rainy Day Fund in 2024-25 is projected to be \$17.6 billion, with overall reserves of \$22.2 billion. Rainy Day Fund reserves are just under the cap of 10% of the state's General Fund revenue, which lawmakers propose to increase to 20% via a future constitutional amendment on the statewide ballot.

Speaking of the statewide initiative process—considerations of legislative and administrative priorities were not the only driving force behind the expeditious budget-balancing negotiations. The timing and content of the finalized 2024 Budget Act can in part be explained by the looming presence of more than a dozen statewide initiatives that are eligible for the 2024 election ballot in November. Strategic investments or omissions from the state budget are a longstanding tool for the state to negotiate with proponents of statewide ballot measures to withdraw their initiatives. The June 27 deadline for propositions to qualify to appear on the November ballot undoubtedly added significant pressure to the outcome of spending deliberations in June. Even for the heavy hitters in California governance, there is no stronger motivation to be decisive than a rapidly approaching deadline.

As noted previously, the final spending agreement for the 2024-25 state budget retains the fundamental architecture of the Legislature's budget proposal. With the erosion of many cuts proposed by the Administration in May, and the need for the Governor to retain some budgetary bargaining chips to bump ballot measures, even some seasoned state budget pundits to ponder: how is the budget balanced? Of course, the answer can be found in the details of the roughly 2,000 pages of budget trailer bills.

For example, a deviation from the Legislature’s budget proposal that represents a minor win for the Administration includes an agreement to partially redirect some of long-debated Managed Care Organization (MCO) tax revenues from Medi-Cal provider rate increases to offset existing expenditures for the Medi-Cal program. How did the Administration and the Legislature reach this compromise and fund both priorities? By introducing trailer bills ([SB 159](#) and [AB 160](#)) to increase the MCO tax rate for specified providers, thereby increasing the pool of forecasted revenues to play with.

The budget-balancing solutions package also includes savings in 2024-25 by delaying implementation of recently signed [SB 525](#) (Chapter 890, Statutes of 2023), which would increase the minimum wage for health care workers, among creating other fiscal pressures in the health care sector. As you may recall, in 2023 CSAC immediately identified the fiscal pressures created by SB 525 and ardently worked with the author and sponsors to amend the bill to include realistic timelines to implement wage increases for healthcare employees that recognize the unique financial challenges for California counties. It would seem that the delay of SB 525 is acknowledgement of CSAC’s fiscal arguments, albeit nearly a year later.

Of course, the 2024-25 budget bill is accompanied by 17 other trailer bills that include the implementation language for specific appropriations and reductions, listed in the table below as well as described in more detail in specific policy sections of this document. The sections below reconcile the differences between the legislative and administrative budget priorities and synthesize the final 2024-25 state spending proposal and the implications for counties.

If you have questions regarding the Budget Action Bulletin, please e-mail Jessica Sankus, CSAC Principal and Fiscal Policy Analyst, at jsankus@counties.org.

2024-25 Budget Bills and Trailer Bills		
Trailer Bill	Topic	Status*
AB 107	Budget Bill (Legislative Budget Plan)	Chaptered
SB 108	Budget Bill Junior – Budget Act of 2024	Enrolled
SB 109	Budget Bill Junior – Amends the Budget Act of 2023	Enrolled
SB 153	K – 12 Education	Enrolled
SB 154	Proposition 98 Suspension	Chaptered
SB 155	Higher Education	Enrolled
SB 156	Resources	Enrolled
SB 159	Health	Enrolled
AB 160	Managed Care Organization Tax	Enrolled
AB 161	Human Services	Enrolled
AB 162	Developmental Services	Enrolled
SB 163	Early Learning and Child Care	Enrolled
SB 164	General Government	Enrolled
AB 166	Housing	Enrolled
SB 167	Taxation	Chaptered
AB 168	Public Safety	Assembly Floor
AB 169	Juvenile Justice	Enrolled
AB 170	Courts	Enrolled
AB 171	Labor	Enrolled
AB 173	Transportation	Enrolled
SB 174	Public resources: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): exemptions: native fish and wildlife: Capitol Annex.	Enrolled
SB 175	Revenues	Enrolled

**As of 4pm on Thursday, June 27*

THE STATE'S FISCAL CONDITION

High risk, high reward? Or just too much risk?

Although California voters rejected two ballot measures that would have legalized sports betting in California in November 2022, gambling is still alive and well in California. To balance the state budget and preserve their priorities, the Administration and the Legislature entered into some wagers that may or may not pay off in the coming years. In this era of always having your cake and eating it too, boldly creative solutions seem to be normalized.

Nonetheless, the finalization of the 2024 Budget Act may be an appropriate moment to reflect and recalibrate the state's barometer for risk tolerance in light of an uncertain economic future. Included below are several budgetary maneuvers included in the 2024 Budget Act deal for which the state is taking a calculated risk in the interest of balancing the budget:

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Shifts

The package of budget-balancing solutions included in the 2024 Budget Act deal relieves pressure from the General Fund by shifting certain expenditures from the General Fund to special funds. This includes shifting \$5.2 billion for clean energy and other climate programs across five fiscal years from the General Fund to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (funds generated from Cap-and-Trade program auctions). Additionally, the Administration recently updated their methodology used to calculate the GGRF revenues that result from the Cap-and-Trade auctions. The less conservative methodology yields an increased estimate of future revenues. It is not clear whether the choice to increase the revenue projections is related to the need to shift expenditures from the General Fund to the GGRF, however, the timing is certainly convenient. In the event that actual Cap-and-Trade auction revenues fall short of these higher estimates, the funding for these programs will need to be reevaluated and reprioritized. Ultimately, the worst-case scenario is this fund shift maneuver may have simply prolonged the inevitable difficult decisions regarding how to prioritize funding for clean energy and other climate programs.

Managed Care Organization Tax Revenues

Not unlike the GGRF revenue estimate, the Managed Care Organization (MCO) tax also received a "glow-up" in the 2024 Budget Act deal. The MCO tax is a tax on managed care organizations based on health insurance enrollment in the Medi-Cal program and in the commercial sector. The 2023 Budget Act, in addition to federal approval, authorized the MCO tax from April 2023 through December 2026. Although [CMS approved](#) California's MCO tax model in January 2024, in late 2023 the state acknowledged that the [federal government has indicated](#) it may not approve such a large MCO tax again. Three months later, the state submitted a modification to CMS to increase the amount of the tax. The revised MCO Tax model included in SB 136 (Chapter 6, Statutes of 2024) as part of the early budget action package is still pending CMS (federal) approval. The modified tax model is estimated to generate \$1.5 billion in additional net funding to the state over the next few years.

In total, the 2024 Budget Act reflects \$6.9 billion in 2024-25 and \$23.1 billion through 2026-27 in MCO tax funding to support the Medi-Cal program. To be clear, the MCO tax has been a tool to offset General Fund expenditures for the Medi-Cal program for years, and the state and stakeholders are consistently at odds regarding the appropriate use of the funding (level of offsetting existing General Fund cost pressures vs. augmentations for the Medi-Cal program). This year the stakes are higher, as this debate existed before the backdrop of [an initiative](#) that is eligible for the statewide ballot in November that would restrict the possible uses for MCO tax

revenues. If this measure passes, it would upset the apple cart of budget-balancing solutions by an unknown, but potentially significant amount. Any decreases to the General Fund offset for the Medi-Cal program will require more budget-balancing solutions to fill the gap.

Assumptions about the performance of the market

Because of the state’s reliance on personal income tax (PIT) revenue for an outsized portion of its budget and, by extension, capital gains tax revenue, our fiscal condition relies heavily on the performance of financial investments. To further compound the volatility, an outsized portion of PIT revenue – and corporate tax revenue – is due to [technology company equity](#). While those revenues can be robust given California’s role as a global leader in the technology sector, the state’s reliance on the revenue source add to the significant challenges in forecasting future revenue and, therefore, balancing our budget. While [recent performance](#) has been strong, with May’s PIT withholding arriving \$1.2 billion, or 17%, above projections, we note that markets are naturally unpredictable. The 2024 Budget Act is balanced based on the Administration’s forecast that revenues in the coming fiscal year will be higher than pre-pandemic levels in 2018-19 and will reflect a more typical annual growth pattern of five percent. Given the well-known predilection for boom-and-bust cycles of revenue volatility, it is difficult to accept that any revenue forecast can be described as “typical” with certainty.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)

The Crime Victims Fund (CVF) established by VOCA is an essential revenue stream for counties and community organizations to deliver a wide range of critical victim services. Deposits into the CVF are allocated to states from the U.S. Department of Justice, and in California, the Governor's Offices of Emergency Services (CalOES) administers grants. Since the CVF is financed by monetary penalties associated with federal criminal convictions, the amount of funding allocated to states is volatile. Over the years, Congress has made changes to stabilize the fund, but the CVF balance has reached a historic low. Given the anticipated catastrophic cuts, CSAC, along with a broad coalition of supporters immediately [uplifted](#) the need for state assistance. Coordinated efforts resulted in the inclusion of \$103 million one-time General Fund in the 2024 Budget Act for the Victim Services Program that will help county departments and community partners sustain life-saving victim services. Since the funding is one-time, CSAC will continue advocacy efforts, which include supporting legislation to supplement VOCA funding at the state level, and on the federal level, supporting the Crime Victims Fund Stabilization Act (H.R. 8061 and the recently introduced S. 4514).

Public Defender Pilot Program

Last year, CSAC alongside county public defenders and a wide array of criminal justice organizations advocated to reject cuts to the third and final year of the Public Defense Pilot Program, which was established in the 2021 Budget Act and funded at \$50 million per year. Ultimately, efforts were successful at preserving funding for the final year, but the amount was reduced by \$10 million. Unfortunately, this January the Governor once again proposed to eliminate the last round of funding for the program. CSAC yet again banded together with a diverse coalition and key legislators. By the end of final budget negotiations, the \$40 million funding was preserved. This moderate, short-term investment is not only critical for counties to implement recently passed legislation related to a wide range of post-conviction services, but it has notably yielded at least \$90 million in cost-savings to the state, based on projections from the Legislative Analyst's Office.

Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST)

Throughout the year, CSAC has worked tirelessly with the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) to effectuate additional changes to the IST Growth Cap and Penalty Program, with the end goal of lowering final penalty amounts for counties that exceed their growth cap. The proposed change incorporates a county's IST commitment rate in comparison to the statewide IST commitment rate. This proposed change was accepted by the Administration. With these changes, counties could save millions of dollars in years to come, if their IST commitment rate is lower than the statewide median IST commitment rate. Penalized counties for Year 1 of the program should have recently received their penalty invoices from DSH.

Local Public Safety

Proposition 47 Savings Estimate

Each year, state savings from the implementation of Proposition 47 are allocated through grants to public agencies for various recidivism reduction programs (such as mental health and substance use treatment services), truancy and dropout prevention, and victims' services. The 2024 Budget Act includes an estimate of savings due to passage of Proposition 47, projected to be \$94.8 million in 2024-25, nearly \$7 million higher than January's projections. Proposition 47,

approved by voters in 2014, requires misdemeanor rather than felony sentencing for certain property and drug crimes, and permits incarcerated persons previously sentenced for these reclassified crimes to petition for resentencing.

Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS)

The 2024 Budget Act eliminates funding for Post Release Community Supervision annually by \$4.4 million General Fund, which was provided to county probation departments to address the temporary increase in the number of individuals released from prison on PRCS as a result of Proposition 57 (2016).

Community Corrections Performance Incentive Grant

The Community Corrections Performance Incentive Grant, established by SB 678 (Chapter 608, Statutes of 2009), was created to provide incentives for counties to reduce the number of felony probationers sent to state prison. While the Governor's January Budget proposal included \$113.6 million General Fund in 2024-25 for probation departments, updated projections were not included in the May Revision. The 2024 Budget Act provides for an increase from the Governor's January Budget to a total of \$116.1 million General Fund in 2023-24 for county probation departments for the Community Corrections Performance Incentive Grant. The 2024 Budget Act also includes a reversion to the previous methodology for calculating incentive payments for counties beginning in 2024-25, as specified in existing statute, and a one-year freeze of the formula in 2024-25. Provisional budget bill language expresses the Legislature's intent to review the formula. Additionally, \$8 million in funding previously provided to counties to submit community corrections plans and reports to the state will no longer be annually appropriated.

Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC)

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Grants

The 2024 Budget Act approves the Governor's proposal to revert \$10.5 million in 2023-24 for MAT funding.

Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program

The 2024 Budget Act includes a reduction of \$3.6 million one-time for vertical prosecution models.

Adult Reentry Grants

The 2024 Budget Act preserves \$111 million for the Adult Reentry Grant, including the proposed reversion of \$54.1 million in 2023-24, and the delayed funding proposed in the Governor's January Budget, ensuring community-based organizations can continue to provide critical community reentry services for those formerly incarcerated in state prison.

California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP Grant Program)

The 2024 Budget Act includes a reduction of \$9 million General Fund in 2024-25 and ongoing for the Cal VIP grant program, which will be replaced by the funding from the newly created Gun Ammunition Tax (Chapter 231, Statutes of 2023). Estimates indicate \$75 million will be available beginning in the budget year to support Cal VIP.

Local Detention Facility Oversight

The 2024 Budget Act provides \$3.3 million and 15 positions in 2024-25 and \$7.7 million and 35 positions ongoing to implement in-custody death reviews pursuant to SB 519 (Chapter 306, Statutes of 2023).

Juvenile Justice

- The 2024 Budget Act provides \$210 million one-time General Fund for the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant (JJRBG), established by SB 823 (Chapter 337, Statutes of 2020), for the treatment and rehabilitation of realigned youth in county care.
- The budget trailer bill, AB 169, also includes provisions to:
 - Maintain the current JJRBG funding formula for 2024-25.
 - Transfer all juvenile justice grant administration duties from the BSCC to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR).
 - Require counties to report Secure Youth Treatment Facility data twice a year.
- The 2024 Budget Act appropriates \$2.2 million to reimburse cities and counties for costs associated with implementing SB 203 (Chapter 335, Statutes of 2020), which requires youths, 17 years of age or younger, to consult with legal counsel prior to custodial interrogation.

Department of State Hospitals (DSH)

Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST) Solutions

Jail-Based Competency Treatment (JBCT) and Community Based Restoration (CBR)/Diversion programs – The 2024 Budget Act includes a reduction of \$73.3 million one-time General Fund in 2023-24 and \$49.9 million General Fund in 2024-25 to reflect activation delays in JBCT and CBR/Diversion programs, as well as county stakeholder contracts that are not yet executed.

Other IST Solutions Adjustments

The 2024 Budget Act reduces the DSH budget for IST Solutions by \$45 million in 2023-24 one-time to reflect updated implementation timelines for various initiatives. In addition, \$129.5 million is shifted from 2025-26 to 2026-27.

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)

CDCR's budget continues to grow primarily due to rising maintenance, infrastructure, and staffing costs. Concurrently, the state's prison population continues to decline. This has created significant angst for legislators over the years, particularly in light of the budget deficit. The final budget deal includes a reduction of \$750 million over a 3-year window (2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25).

The 2024 Budget Act adopts the Governor's proposal to deactivate 46 housing units across 13 prisons, totaling about 4,600 beds, resulting in \$82 million in savings annually. The final budget also includes various health care, maintenance, and operational savings proposed by the Administration or the Legislature. In addition, the Administration's statewide operations cuts, including reduction of prior budget allocations linked to now-vacant positions, are slated to cut nearly \$400 million annually from the CDCR budget.

Other Items of Relevance Include:

- *Adult Population Adjustment* – The 2024 Budget Act projects the average daily adult incarcerated population to be 90,860 in 2024-25, which is 825 fewer than projected at the time of the Governor's January Budget. The projected parolee average daily population is 41,287 in 2024-25, which is a decrease of 935 compared to the Governor's January Budget projection.
- *Chuckawalla Valley State Prison* – The 2024 Budget Act includes a reduction of \$77.6 million and 436.1 positions in 2024-25 and \$132.3 million and 743.2 positions ongoing

thereafter to reflect the maintenance of efforts to accelerate the closure of Chuckawalla State Prison to November 2024.

- *California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal Justice-Involved (CaAIM JI) Initiative* – The 2024 Budget Act maintains the Governor’s May Revision proposal for \$16.5 million in reimbursements for CDCR to continue the development of an information technology-based Medi-Cal billing system that supports CaAIM JI implementation.
- *Los Angeles County Fire Camp Contract* – The 2024 Budget Act rejects the Governor’s proposed \$2.4 million reduction for 2024-25 but approves the reduction of \$4.8 million in 2025-26 and annually thereafter for the fire suppression services contract with Los Angeles County.

Judicial Branch

- *CARE Act Funding* – The 2024 Budget Act reverts \$17.5 million one-time General Fund for CARE Act implementation and makes various adjustments totaling \$59.1 million reduction annually beginning in 2024-25. Provisional budget bill language also updates the number of counties eligible to receive grants for legal representation.
- *Trial Court Trust Fund Unrestricted Fund Balance* – The 2024 Budget Act reverts a total of \$100 million one-time of the unrestricted fund balance of the Trial Court Trust Fund to the General Fund in 2024-25.
- *Trial Court Operations* – The 2024 Budget Act includes a \$98 million ongoing reduction to trial court operations reflecting the 7.95% state operations reduction and a one-time \$5 million reduction in operation savings from the Judicial Council in 2023-24.
- *Trial Court Trust Fund Backfill* – The 2024 Budget Act provides \$37.3 million General Fund in 2024-25 and annually thereafter to backfill the Trial Court Trust Fund for revenue declines expected in 2024-25.
- *Remote Access to Court Proceedings* – The 2024 Budget Act reappropriates \$5.1 million to support the implementation of AB 716 (Chapter 526, Statutes of 2021), which prohibits a court from excluding public access to the courtroom when remote access is available.

Department of Justice (DOJ)

Adjustments for Some Recently Signed Legislation:

The 2024 Budget Act includes \$17.5 million (\$15.2 million General Fund) to implement the following signed legislation. It also includes a shift of \$840,000 in 2024-25 and \$814,000 in 2025-26 and 2026-27 from General Fund to the Unfair Competition Law Fund to implement AB 1076. Please note that these are some of the notable legislative changes and not an exhaustive list:

- Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Policies: Chapter 524, Statutes of 2023 (AB 449)
- Tribal Police: Chapter 638, Statutes of 2023 (AB 44)
- Dealers Record of Sale: Chapter 237, Statutes of 2023 (AB 574)
- Restorative Justice Program: Chapter 513, Statutes of 2023 (AB 60)
- Criminal Records Relief: Chapter 444, Statutes of 2023 (AB 567)

Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)

As described previously, the 2024 Budget Act includes \$103 million one-time General Fund in 2024-25 for the Victim Services Program to provide financial assistance and support to victim services providers to ensure all individuals impacted by crime in California receive the help they need.

AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

As described earlier in this document, the 2024 Budget Act builds on the reductions proposed in the Governor’s May Revision including further 2025-26 cuts, as well as funding reductions to programs that were appropriated in previous budget years but have not been expended. These funds have been “swept” back into the General Fund as part of the budget solution. The final budget agreement sustains most of the program cuts in the Governor’s May Revision but preserves several programs by shifting the funding source from the General Fund to the Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Fund (GGRF).

Flood and Water Management

Major Reduction to Water Storage in Future Years Sustained

The final budget agreement includes the reduction of \$500 million in 2025-26 for water storage facilities in the Department of Water Resources (DWR) budget. This funding was intended to support significant additional water supply investments and provided a needed state commitment to balance local and regional water investments.

Reduction to Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Sustained

The final budget agreement sweeps \$5.7 million from the Department of Conservation’s Multi-Benefit Land Repurposing Program which was created to support the conversion of lands necessitated by the reduction of groundwater use under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Cuts to County Supported Water Programs

The final budget agreement cuts \$50 million for dam safety, maintaining \$50 million from the original \$100 million appropriation. The budget also cuts \$6.8 million from the Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations program which increased the capacity of medium-scale watersheds to more accurately predict and release water from reservoirs for all downstream beneficiaries.

Flood Programs State Matching Funds Sustained

The final budget agreement includes a number of flood programs, the majority of which are tied to federal matching funds for ongoing flood projects in the Central Valley including:

- \$31 million for systemwide flood risk; and
- \$33 million for urban flood risk and Central Valley Flood risk programs.

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

Counties are on the front lines to clean up Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances that have leached into the soil and water. The final budget agreement reverts \$101.6 million General Fund in prior year funds and reduction of \$30 million in 2024-25 for Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl support. This would maintain just under \$23 million that was previously allocated to the program.

Forestry and Fire Protection

Fund Shifts Sustaining Fire Prevention Programs

The 2024 Budget Act sustains a number of fire programs through shifts from the General Fund to GGRF over several years. These include:

- \$20 million Prescribed Fire Liability Pilot program, sustaining this county-supported program.
- \$82 million for Wildfire and Forest Resilience program fire prevention grants.

- \$10 million for tribal wildfire and forest resilience grants. These grants support fire prevention and resilience on tribal lands.

Adding Five Firefighter Hand Crews

The 2024 Budget Act includes \$43 million General Fund and 226 positions for five new firefighter hand crews. Hand crews are requested annually and provide ongoing support for vegetation management, hazardous fuel reduction projects, and wildland fire suppression. Out-year funding was not included in the final budget agreement.

Fire Insurance

As of the time of publishing, the final budget agreement does not include the anticipated fire insurance trailer bill language that the Governor had suggested would accompany the 2024 Budget Act to address the state's insurance crisis. Negotiations on the language are likely to continue through the summer and CSAC anticipates that it will center on speeding up the rate filing process.

Coastal Planning and Programs

Sea Level Rise Planning and Grants Programs

The final budget agreement sustains \$2.1 million General Fund in the budget year and \$3.8 million ongoing (with 18 permanent positions) for state support of SB 272 (Chapter 384, 2023). SB 272 mandated that local governments incorporate sea level rise into Coastal Commission-approved local coastal plans by 2034. Notably, the 2024 Budget Act cuts \$221 million General Fund at the Coastal Conservancy that was used for Sea Level Rise adaptation grants.

Offshore Wind Permitting

The final budget agreement sustains \$1.5 million General Fund on a one-time basis for the Coastal Commission's continued role in offshore wind energy planning and management. The funds are anticipated to be used to review proposed lease areas for consistency with state and federal coastal acts, and to support engagement with state, tribal, federal and local partners.

Diablo Canyon

The final budget agreement sustains \$40 million in 2024 for the Diablo Canyon land conservation and economic development for Wild Cherry Canyon and delays and fund shifts the outstanding \$110 million to GGRF. This equals \$10 million in 2025-26, \$50 million in 2026-27, and \$50 million in 2027-28.

Waste and Recycling

Compost Permitting Pilot Program

Two years ago, the budget committed \$7.5 million for the Compost Permitting Pilot Program. Of that amount, \$7 million was to be allocated during this year's fiscal cycle and utilized to issue out as grants to local governments. The funding was intended to help local government entities and facilities locate and permit small- and medium-sized compost facilities and would serve as a tool to help local jurisdictions implement SB 1383's (Chapter 395, Statutes of 2016) goals of diverting organic waste away from landfills. The final budget agreement reverts \$6.7 million General Fund for the Compost Permitting Pilot Program, leaving \$800,000 of what was previously committed.

Farming, Ranching and Agriculture

The final budget agreement includes a series of significant fund shifts and cuts to farming and agriculture support programs at the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) across all sectors of farming and ranching. These include:

- \$18 million for drought and flood relief for small farmers by shifting funding from the General Fund to GGRF.
- \$14.4 million for the Farm to Community Food Hubs Program by shifting funding from General Fund to GGRF.
- \$20.6 million cut from the General Fund for the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program.
- \$2.1 million cut for the Fairs Reliance Grant Program.
- A delay of \$7 million for the Livestock Methane Reduction Program (GGRF) from 2024-25 to 2025-26.

Wolf Livestock Compensation Program

The final budget agreement authorizes the Department of Fish and Wildlife to allocate federal funds and donations to pay for the deterrence of wolf presence near livestock, the impacts of wolf presence on livestock, and verified loss of livestock for participating ranchers.

Extreme Heat and Community Resilience

During recent budget surplus years important investments were made in several programs designed to help local communities and residents through extreme heat and other emergency events. This year's projected budget shortfall led the Administration to propose substantial reductions to the programs in the Governor's May Revision.

The final budget agreement restores \$40 million for the Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program by shifting funding to the GGRF, however, it does not include the \$70 million previously allocated for 2023-24 and then delayed to 2024-25.

To address revenue shortfalls, the final budget agreement sustains significant cuts to climate resilience and adaptation programs, including:

- \$75 million reduction for the Regional Climate Resilience Program at the Office of Planning and Research (which has been renamed the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation pursuant to trailer bill SB 164).
- \$15 million reduction of the total \$25 million funding for the Climate Adaptation and Resilience Planning Grants at the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation.

Climate Bond

At the time of publishing, a final agreement on a Climate Bond is notably absent. CSAC has been monitoring conversations around the possibility of a climate and natural resources bond, especially as climate programs face a reduction of investments. Supporters continue to negotiate bond language as it is expected that the Legislature will request an extension of the Secretary of State's June 27th ballot deadline, though a final deal would likely need to happen by July 3 for inclusion in the November Ballot.

Cutting the Green Tape CEQA Streamlining

CSAC has been working with local partners over the past few years to promote reasonable changes to expedite the permitting and compliance process for ecological restoration projects of all sizes, while ensuring that projects are designed and constructed in a manner that minimizes potential impacts. The final budget agreement includes trailer bill language that would extend,

through 2030, the Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects. This is a CEQA exemption for all projects, regardless of size, whose purpose is to restore, protect or enhance native species of their habitat.

GOVERNMENT FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF)**

The Governor's January Budget proposed statutory changes to make charter schools eligible to receive ERAF, which would diminish the portion of excess ERAF available to local agencies in counties with excess ERAF. While the provision would have resulted in no new funding for charter schools, it would have caused five impacted counties to lose approximately \$130-180 million in local revenue. Following tireless advocacy from CSAC against any erosion of local revenue streams, the 2024 Budget Act does not include the legislative proposal.

The Governor's January and May Revision budget proposals lacked an appropriation to backfill the insufficient ERAF amounts for Alpine, Mono, and San Mateo counties. The three counties would collectively require an appropriation of \$73.5 million to be held harmless under the Vehicle License Fee reduction made in 2004. The 2024 Budget Act includes the funds needed to hold the three counties harmless.

Property Tax Postponement Program

The 2024 Budget Act provides \$7.5 million for the Property Tax Postponement Program fund and \$2.8 million to the State Controller's Office for staff and overhead costs to operate the program. The State Controller projects the program was at risk of insolvency in 2025-26 without General Fund support.

California Jobs First

In addition to adopting the \$150 million reduction in funds over three years as proposed in the Governor's May Revision, the final budget agreement reverts \$25 million appropriated in the 2021 Budget Act and transfers authority for overseeing the program from the Office of Planning and Research (now renamed as the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation pursuant to trailer bill SB 164) to the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development. In total, the 2024 Budget Act leaves a total of \$150 million in the program, spread evenly with \$50 million annually from 2024-25 through 2026-27.

Health Care Minimum Wage Delayed

The 2024 Budget Act provides for a delay of the implementation dates of the required minimum wage increases for healthcare workers required by SB 525 (Chapter 890, Statutes of 2023). See *the Health and Human Services portion for additional details*.

Broadband**Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative**

The 2024 Budget Act maintains \$250 million for the Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative (MMBI) in 2024-25. The Governor's January Budget proposed to increase funding for the MMIB by \$250 million in 2024-25 and \$1.3 billion in 2025-26, however, these investments were withdrawn by the Administration in the interest of balancing the budget. The 2024 Budget Act includes provisional language that allows the Department of Finance to increase the appropriation for the MMBI by up to \$250 million in 2024-25 if specified criteria are met. These funds must be spent through December 31, 2026, with payments made through December 31, 2028, for state operations, local assistance, and capital outlay expenditures. The availability of funds is dependent on several requirements of the Department of Technology, including providing a report on aspects of the MMBI to the Chairperson of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, the relevant fiscal and policy

committees of each house of the Legislature, and the Legislative Analysts' Office, on or before October 1, 2024.

Last-Mile Broadband

The 2024 Budget Act deal delays \$550 million for the Broadband Last Mile grants program from 2024-25 to 2027-28.

Broadband Loan Loss Reserve Program

The 2024 Budget Act deal preserves \$50 million General Fund in 2024-25 for the Broadband Loan Loss Reserve Program. To address the state's budget deficit, the Legislature had proposed to eliminate the program entirely by cutting \$750 million that was originally allocated to the program. The Broadband Loan Loss Reserve Program funds costs related to the financing of the deployment of broadband infrastructure by local government agencies or nonprofit organizations.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Despite the significant program and service reductions initially proposed in the Governor’s January and May Revision proposals, the final budget agreement largely protects critical investments in health and human services programs that support our state’s most vulnerable communities.

The final budget agreement does include specified delays, deferrals, and targeted, yet modest, reductions to health and human services programs. In addition, the final budget agreement maintains the Governor’s January proposal to withdraw \$900 million from the Safety Net Reserve to fund existing benefits and services within Medi-Cal and CalWORKs.

CSAC advocated for the preservation of core safety net services that counties deliver to vulnerable Californians as a top budget priority. Counties strongly opposed January Budget and May Revision cuts to CalWORKs, child welfare/foster care, Adult Protective Services (APS), and public health. The final budget agreement largely protects these programs and rejects most of the proposed cuts. County voices that highlighted how these services are vital for the residents of our communities were essential in helping ensure this funding was included in the final budget agreement.

HEALTH

Notable Health and Behavioral Health Budget Solution Outcomes

To address the projected budget shortfall, in addition to the solutions approved under early action and the \$900 million withdrawal from the Safety Net Reserve, the final budget agreement includes the following notable outcomes on proposals in the areas of health and behavioral health:

- *Managed Care Organization (MCO) Tax* – preserves some, but not all, of the \$6.7 billion in provider rate increases proposed for elimination over multiple years in the Governor’s May Revision budget-balancing proposal. The 2024 Budget Act includes \$133 million in 2024-25, \$728 million in 2025-26, and \$1.2 billion in 2026-27 for new, targeted Medi-Cal provider rate increases and investments from the MCO tax. This is in addition to the approximately \$300 million in provider rate increases that became effective January 1, 2024. On the revenue side, the 2024 Budget Act provides for an amendment to the MCO tax to allow the state to collect additional revenue to offset state health care costs. See *the Medi-Cal section for details on the provider rate increases and investments.*
- *Health Care Worker Minimum Wage Increases Delayed* – includes trigger language to delay the effective dates of the minimum wage increases for specified health care workers pursuant to SB 525 (Chapter 890, Statutes of 2023) until one of two events occur: 1) the Department of Finance determines that state cash receipts during the first quarter of the fiscal year are at least three percent higher than the projected amount, or 2) the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) begins data collection necessary to implement a January 1, 2025, Hospital Quality Assurance Fee waiver with the federal government. The final budget agreement also revises provisions defining a “covered health care employee” and “covered health care facility” subject to the wage increases.
- *State and Local Public Health Infrastructure Funding Largely Retained* – protects \$276.1 million General Fund of the \$300 million in ongoing funding for critical investments in

state and local public health workforce and infrastructure that was proposed for full elimination in the May Revision. Local health departments retain \$184.1 million (\$15.9 million reduction), and the Department of Public Health retains \$92 million (\$8 million reduction), representing a modest eight percent reduction consistent with other department/agency reductions taken statewide. CSAC, as part of a coalition of county and public health advocacy organizations, advocated for the preservation of this vital funding.

- *Healthcare Workforce Reductions Partially Restored* – restores \$108.9 million for workforce programs at the Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) to maintain award commitments but allocates those dollars to the fiscal years in which those programs were originally authorized. The May Revision proposed elimination of \$300.9 million in 2023-24, \$302.7 million in 2024-25, \$216 million in 2025-26, \$19 million in 2026-27, and \$16 million in 2027-28 for various healthcare workforce initiatives overseen by HCAI. Additionally, the 2024 Budget Act includes \$40 million supported by MCO tax revenues to strengthen and support the development and retention of the Medi-Cal workforce in 2026-27.
- *Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program (BHCIP) Reduction* – adopts the May Revision proposal to revert \$450.7 million (\$70 million in 2024-25 and \$380.7 million in 2025-26) in General Fund expenditure authority from the last round (Round 6) of BHCIP, while maintaining \$30 million one-time General Fund in 2024-25. Additional BHCIP rounds will be supported by Proposition 1 bond funding.
- *Behavioral Health Bridge Housing (BHBH) Funding Reduction* – adopts the May Revision proposal to reduce BHBH Program funding by \$340 million total (\$132.5 million in 2024-25 and \$207.5 million in 2025-26), while maintaining \$132.5 million General Fund in 2024-25 and \$117.5 million in 2025-26. This leaves slightly over \$1 billion in funding for this program to address the immediate housing and treatment needs of individuals with serious behavioral health conditions who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- *Protects Medi-Cal Expansion Regardless of Immigration Status and Restores IHSS Benefit* – maintains the expansion of Medi-Cal benefits to all Californians regardless of immigration status, including the In-Home Supportive Services benefit for beneficiaries in this population at any age that was proposed for elimination in the May Revision.
- *Temporary Suspension of Medi-Cal County Administration Increases* — instead of a permanent freeze to funding levels as proposed in the Governor’s May Revision, the final budget agreement includes a temporary suspension of the cost of doing business increases for county Medi-Cal eligibility administration from 2024-25 until 2027-28, for county administration of Medi-Cal eligibility functions.
- *Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI) Investment Reversion* — reverts unspent General Fund expenditure authority of \$28.8 million from 2023-24 for the CYBHI Public Education and Change Campaign.
- *Health Enrollment Navigators for Clinics Funding Restored* – eliminates \$18 million General Fund from the Health Enrollment Navigators Project but retains \$8 million in

remaining funding for Health Enrollment Navigators for Clinics in 2024-25 that was proposed for elimination in the Governor's May Revision. These funds are provided to counties and community-based organizations for Medi-Cal outreach, enrollment, and retention activities.

Proposition 1 – Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA)/Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act (BHIBA): Initial Funding for County and State Implementation

Proposition 1, which voters approved at the March 2024 statewide primary election, seeks to address the behavioral health and homelessness crises facing our state through significant reforms to our existing mental health system and \$6.4 billion in critically needed investment in our state's behavioral health infrastructure.

The final budget agreement maintains the May Revision proposal providing \$85 million (\$50 million General Fund and \$35 million federal funds) in 2025-26 for county behavioral health administrative costs for initial planning and implementation of specified portions of the BHSA. CSAC continues its ongoing engagement with the Administration and county partners in the development of the policies, guidance, and fiscal estimates needed to ensure counties are best supported to implement this complex, multi-year initiative.

The 2024 Budget Act also includes resources for the following entities responsible for Proposition 1 implementation efforts: DHCS, the Department of Health Care Access and Information, the Behavioral Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Of note, the housing budget trailer bill (AB 166) limits HCD administrative costs to up to three percent of all bond proceeds allocated to HCD as specified under Proposition 1.

Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act

The final budget agreement includes funding consistent with the Governor's May Revision proposal supporting statewide implementation of the CARE Act. In total, General Fund support for state and county activities consists of \$71.3 million in 2023-24, \$91.3 million in 2024-25, \$106.9 million in 2025-26, and \$107.7 million in 2026-27 and annually thereafter. Overall funding for the program has declined primarily to account for updated assumptions reflecting lower caseload/utilization to date experienced by the eight counties that have implemented the program.

CSAC will continue to advocate for an adequate level of ongoing funding as Cohort 2 counties enter the implementation phase by October 2024 to provide counties with the resources needed to successfully implement this new program. CSAC continues to engage with the Administration, which has committed to continue monitoring utilization trends and make corresponding updates to the caseload assumptions based on actual data.

California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM)

Consistent with the Governor's January and May Revision proposals, the final budget agreement maintains the multi-billion-dollar commitment to continue efforts to transform the healthcare delivery system through CalAIM, to strengthen the Medi-Cal program by offering Californians more equitable, coordinated, and person-centered care.

Medi-Cal

The final budget agreement continues to support implementation of significant investments made to date in the Medi-Cal program, including fully funding the expansion of benefits to adults regardless of immigration status. The 2024 Budget Act includes \$1.4 billion (\$1.2 billion General

Fund) in 2023-24, and \$3.3 billion (\$2.8 billion General Fund) in 2024-25 to implement the expansion to income-eligible adults aged 26-49 regardless of immigration status, which took effect on January 1, 2024.

MCO Provider Tax

As enacted through the early action budget agreement in [SB 136](#) (Chapter 6, Statutes of 2024), DHCS submitted a request to modify the MCO tax proposal to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in March 2024. The modified tax model increases the amount of the tax and is estimated to generate \$1.5 billion in additional net funding to the state over the remaining duration of the tax.

In total, the 2024 Budget Act reflects \$6.9 billion in 2024-25 and \$23.1 billion through 2026-27 in MCO tax funding to support the Medi-Cal program. The final budget agreement includes the following additional updates to the MCO tax proposal:

Additional MCO Tax Revenue

DHCS will be submitting a request to further modify the MCO tax proposal to increase the amount of the tax to generate additional revenue to offset existing state health care costs by \$689.9 million in 2024-25, \$950 million in 2025-26, and \$1.3 billion in 2026-27.

Revised Set of Provider Rate Increases and Investments

The 2024 Budget Act includes \$133 million in 2024-25, \$728 million in 2025-26, and \$1.2 billion in 2026-27 for new, targeted Medi-Cal provider rate increases and investments from the MCO tax. This is in addition to the approximately \$300 million in provider rate increases that became effective on January 1, 2024, for primary care, obstetric care, and non-specialty mental health services.

The Governor's May Revision proposed to eliminate \$6.7 billion in provider rate increases initially planned over multiple years as a budget-balancing solution. The Legislature's budget plan restored the planned provider rate increases but delayed implementation of specified increases for one year. The final budget agreement not only reduces the previously planned total amount for provider rate increases, but also redistributes previously planned rate increases and provides increases to a revised set of providers, programs, and investments entitled the "Medi-Cal Provider Payment Increases and Investment Act," some components of which require federal approval.

The final budget agreement does not include increases to designated public hospitals or behavioral health facilities as initially proposed but funds numerous other investments including multi-year continuous Medi-Cal coverage for eligible children aged 0 up to 5 years beginning in 2026, subject to federal approval. The agreement also includes \$40 million one-time to strengthen and support the development and retention of the Medi-Cal workforce in 2026-27.

Increases Included in Final Budget Agreement Funded by Increased MCO Tax	
Effective as of January 1, 2024:	
	Physician/Non-physician Health Professional Services
Effective on or after January 1, 2025:	
	Physician Emergency Department Services (no longer includes facilities)
	Family Planning and Abortion Services
	Ground Emergency Medical Transportation
	Air Ambulances*
	Community-Based Adult Services (CBAS)*
	Congregate Living Health Facilities*
	Pediatric Day Health Centers*
	Community Health Workers
Effective on or after January 1, 2026:	
	Physician/Non-Physician Health Services
	Services/Supports for FQHCs/RHCs
	Private Duty Nursing*
	Continuous Coverage for Children Aged 0 up to 5*
	Non-Emergency Medical Transportation*
<i>*New/not included in initial proposal</i>	

Of note, most items within this set of provider rate increases and investments would be repealed if the qualified ballot measure *Protect Access to Healthcare Act of 2024* ([A.G. No. 23-0024](#)) is approved by the voters at the November 2024 statewide election.

Health Care Worker Minimum Wage Increase (SB 525) Delay

The final budget agreement includes trigger language to delay the effective dates of the minimum wage increases for specified health care workers pursuant to [SB 525](#) (Chapter 890, Statutes of 2023), until one of two events occur:

- 1) If, on or before October 15, 2024, the Department of Finance notifies the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) that the Department of Finance has determined that state cash receipts during the first quarter of the fiscal year (July 1 – September 30, 2024) are at least 3 percent higher than the projected amount as of the 2024 Budget Act, specified minimum wage increases will be effective October 15, 2024.
- 2) If DHCS notifies the JLBC that DHCS has begun the data collection necessary to implement a January 1, 2025, Hospital Quality Assurance Fee waiver with the federal government, which would fund increases to supplemental Medi-Cal program payments to hospitals, specified minimum wage increases will be effective the earlier of January 1, 2025, or 15 days after the date of the notification.

Further, the final budget agreement also revises statutory provisions defining a “covered health care employee” and “covered health care facility” subject to the minimum wage increases.

Public Health

State and Local Public Health Infrastructure Investments Largely Protected

The final budget agreement maintains \$276.1 million in ongoing General Fund support to the state and local health jurisdictions for critically needed public health priorities such as modernizing local public health infrastructure and bolstering public health staffing. The May Revision proposed to fully eliminate the \$300 million in ongoing funding, which CSAC in coordination with a broad coalition of local partners actively engaged with the Administration and Legislature to restore. Local health departments retain \$184.1 million (\$15.9 million reduction), and the Department of Public Health retains \$92 million (\$8 million reduction), representing a modest eight percent reduction consistent with other department/agency reductions taken statewide.

With regard to current year funding, although the Governor's May Revision proposed to revert \$52.5 million (\$41.5 million in state operations and \$11 million in local assistance support) back to the General Fund, the final budget agreement reverts only the state operations funding and retains the \$11 million for local assistance. However, any unspent local funds in 2022-23 and 2023-24 will revert to the General Fund.

Syndromic Surveillance Program

The 2024 Budget Act authorizes the Department of Public Health to develop and administer a syndromic surveillance system to timely detect, monitor, and investigate diseases. Subject to an appropriation, trailer bill SB 159 authorizes the Department of Public Health to designate an existing system or create a new electronic health system to rapidly collect, evaluate, share, and store syndromic surveillance data. General acute care hospitals with emergency departments will be required to submit specified data electronically, unless the hospital reports its data to a local health department which in turn reports that data to the Department of Public Health.

Transition to Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care (HCPCFC)

The final budget agreement adopts the proposed May Revision transition and end of the Child Health and Disability Prevention Program and includes provisional language in budget bill SB 108 to provide county flexibility on fund use and reporting of county expenditures during the budget year for administration of HCPCFC and the California Children's Services (CCS) Compliance Monitoring and Oversight Program.

The Governor's January proposal split the \$33.9 million CHDP budget between \$13.1 million for standalone HCPCFC and \$20.8 million for the CCS Monitoring and Oversight Program. However, 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. To provide for county flexibility, the final budget agreement authorizes counties to deviate from the established staffing methodology/allocation by providing a report to DHCS by October 1, 2024, articulating the proposed use of funds to support HCPCFC and CCS Compliance Monitoring and Oversight Program activities. This report is required to be approved through a county's Board of Supervisors prior to submission.

Increase in Directed Payments to Public Hospitals

The final budget agreement adopts the May Revision proposal to increase directed payments to public hospitals, including designated public hospitals and district and municipal public hospitals, through programs such as the Enhanced Payment Program and Quality Incentive Pool. Trailer bill SB 159 authorizes the assessment of an administrative fee on intergovernmental transfers

related to these directed payment programs. Collectively, these actions are estimated to result in ongoing General Fund reimbursements to provide additional support to public hospitals.

Children's Hospital Directed Payments

No sooner than July 1, 2024, SB 159 appropriates \$115 million annually from the General Fund for new directed payments for children's hospitals. The directed payments will support access to critical hospital services for California's most vulnerable children being treated for the most serious and life-threatening diseases. However, SB 159 authorizes DHCS to reduce the reimbursement amount by up to \$75 million annually if the ballot measure *Protect Access to Healthcare Act of 2024* ([A.G. No. 23-0024](#)) is approved by the voters at the November 2024 statewide election and if children's hospitals receive increased reimbursement rates or payments under certain provisions.

On June 25, Governor Newsom and the California Children's Hospital Association publicly announced they had reached an agreement on the expansion of health care for children in the state to help support medical care for critically ill children and those fighting the most serious and life-threatening diseases. Based on this agreement reflected in SB 159, the proponents of the qualified initiative *Affordable, Life-Saving Healthcare for Critically Ill Children* ([A.G. No. 23-0029](#)), which has qualified for the November 2024 ballot, have agreed to withdraw the measure.

Nonhospital 340B Community Clinic Directed Payments

SB 159 requires DHCS to establish a directed payment program for qualifying nonhospital 340B community clinics to earn payments from contracted Medi-Cal managed care plans, subject to an appropriation by the Legislature. Further, on or after January 1, 2026, the directed payment amounts are to be increased utilizing MCO tax revenues, as specified. The statutory sections specifying the payment increases will become inoperative if the ballot measure *Protect Access to Healthcare Act of 2024* ([A.G. No. 23-0024](#)) is approved by the voters at the November 2024 statewide election.

Integration of the Initiative to Advance Precision Medicine into CalHHS

The State Government budget trailer bill (SB 164) integrates the California Initiative to Advance Precision Medicine into the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) from the Office of Planning and Research (which has been renamed the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation pursuant to SB 164). Moving the California Initiative to Advance Precision Medicine within the CalHHS will support broadening its scope to include technologies relevant to pandemic prevention. According to the Administration, precision medicine, particularly when used with advanced diagnostic tools for infectious diseases, has the potential to alleviate the burdens of future pandemics by enabling early detection, faster response, and more effective countermeasures.

Due to the provisions of SB 164, the proponents of the initiative proposing an income tax increase for pandemic spending, the *California Pandemic Early Detection and Prevention Act* ([A.G. 21-0022](#)), which has qualified for the November 2024 ballot, withdrew the measure.

Opioid Settlement Funds

The final budget agreement authorizes expenditure authority from the Opioid Settlements Fund of \$4 million for the California Bridge Program, which provides grants to hospitals and emergency departments to expand substance use disorder and mental health services. However, the final budget agreement allows for the funding to instead be used for the Naloxone Distribution Project

if DHCS receives federal grant funds of at least \$4 million annually for three years for activities under the California Bridge Program.

HUMAN SERVICES

In response to proposed cuts to core safety net services proposed in the January Budget and May Revision, CSAC mobilized with county partners to advocate for the full funding of these vital programs that protect and uplift vulnerable Californians. The final budget agreement protects these programs and largely rejects the proposed cuts while reducing some funding to match actual expenditures of the program. County voices that highlighted how these services are vital for the residents of our communities were essential in helping ensure this funding was included in the final budget agreement.

CalWORKs

Single Allocation

The CalWORKs Single Allocation is funding that the state provides to counties to administer the CalWORKs program and funds local eligibility activities, employment and supportive services for CalWORKs recipients. The final budget agreement rejects the Administration's previously proposed reduction of the Eligibility Administration component of \$40.8 million in 2023-24 and ongoing. The final budget agreement also rejects the Administration's previous proposal of a one-time reduction of \$272 million to the Employment Services component of Single Allocation. The funding for the Single Allocation in 2024-25 does include caseload adjustments and does not include an increase in intensive case management hours that was previously set to occur, with final funding about \$45 million lower than 2023-24.

Home Visiting

The CalWORKs Home Visiting Program supports the positive health development and outcomes for pregnant and parenting families to improve the rate of exits out of poverty. The final budget agreement includes multi-year reductions to Home Visiting to more closely align with actual utilization of the program. Specifically, the final budget reduces funding by \$30 million in 2023-24, \$25 million in 2024-25 and 2025-26, with full funding restored in 2026-27.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

The final budget agreement rejects the Governor's May Revision proposal to eliminate all funding for CalWORKs Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Instead, the final budget temporarily reduces funding to the program over multiple years to more closely align with actual utilization of the program. Specifically, the final budget reduces funding by \$30 million in 2023-24, \$37 million in 2024-25, and \$26 million in 2024-25, with full funding restored in 2026-27.

Family Stabilization

The final budget agreement rejects the Governor's May Revision proposal to eliminate the Family Stabilization program beginning in 2024-25, and includes full funding for the program.

Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE)

The final budget agreement reduces funding to ESE over two years to hold funding to the statewide spending level in 2022-23. Specifically, the final budget reduces funding to ESE by \$30 million in 2023-24 and \$37 million in 2024-25, with full funding restored in 2025-26. AB 161 includes language to require counties to submit updated plans and new outcome reporting metrics, including utilization of funds, employment placements and industry sector data, and

average earnings of participants. Counties must specify how funds will be utilized to prioritize subsidized employment placements that offer opportunities for participants to obtain skills and experiences in their fields of interest.

Maximum Aid Payment (MAP)

The final budget agreement includes a 0.3 percent increase in the MAP, effective October 1, 2024, as proposed in the May Revision. This reflects the revenues available for an increase in the Child Poverty and Family Supplemental Support Subaccount.

TANF Pilot Program

The final budget agreement includes language that allows for up to \$2.4 million General Fund to be spent should California be selected for the federal pilot project authorized by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 that allows up to five states to be selected to test alternative performance metrics within the TANF program. The human services trailer bill (AB 161) includes language that requires CDSS to work with stakeholders on the application and to consider policy changes that align with the application.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

IHSS Backup Provider System

The final budget agreement rejects the Governor's May Revision proposal to eliminate the IHSS Permanent Backup Provider System. Rather, the agreement reduces funding by \$3 million in 2024-25 to reflect lower utilization.

IHSS Regardless of Immigration Status

The final budget agreement rejects the Governor's May Revision proposal to eliminate eligibility for IHSS services to individuals who were part of the full scope Medi-Cal expansion to undocumented individuals.

IHSS County Administration

AB 161 contains a County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) sponsored and CSAC supported request related to the budgeting methodology for county IHSS administration. The language will require the California Department of Social Services to work with county representatives and other stakeholders to review county workload and administrative costs during the development of the budget for 2025-26 and every subsequent three years.

Child Welfare and Foster Care

Foster Care Rate Reform

AB 161 enacts the new foster care permanent rate structure. The final language does not include the trigger that was proposed in the May Revision, but instead would implement the new rates on July 1, 2027, one year later than originally proposed. The agreement also provides \$20.5 million (\$13.3 million General Fund) for automation changes to support the new rate structure. Under the new rate structure, a child will fall under a certain rate tier based on their age and their Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment. The rate will include three components (care and supervision, strengths building, and immediate needs) and follow the child, not the placement. Other key provisions outlined in AB 161 include annual adjustments based on the California Necessities Index (CNI), requirements for implementing the immediate needs program, requirements to create a schedule to transition children already in foster care when the rates are

implemented to the new rate structure, and establishment of the strengths building program component.

Foster Care Caregiver Approvals

The final budget agreement rejects the Governor's May Revision proposal to eliminate \$50 million ongoing for county child welfare agencies to complete approvals for foster caregivers and instead maintains full funding. AB 161 extends the timeframe from 90 days to 120 days for Resource Family Approval application processing in alignment with the timeframe for emergency caregiver funding.

Family Urgent Response System (FURS)

The final budget agreement rejects the Governor's January Budget proposal to eliminate \$30 million ongoing for FURS and instead maintains full funding for this program that provides immediate crisis support to foster youth and caregivers.

Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) Supplement

The final budget agreement includes the Governor's January Budget proposal to eliminate \$25.5 million (\$18.8 million General Fund) ongoing for a housing supplement for foster youth placed in a SILP starting in 2025-26 (\$258,000 will be provided in 2024-25). Rather, increased housing supports will be provided directly to youth placed in a SILP through the implementation of the new foster care rates.

Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program

The final budget agreement rejects the Administration's proposal to reduce funding by \$13.7 million ongoing for the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program. This program helps young adults between 18 to 21 years secure and maintain housing, with a priority given to young adults in the foster care system.

Excellence in Family Finding, Engagement, and Support Program

AB 161 contains language that will assist small counties in accessing funding for the Excellence in Family Finding, Engagement, and Support Program. For those counties that do not have sufficient caseload for a full-time family finding worker, they will now be able to submit a written request for authorization to use program funding for a portion of a full-time position for family finding activities.

Child Support

Local Child Support Agency Funding

The final budget agreement reduces local child support agency funding by \$6 million in 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26. This is less than the \$10 million reduction proposed in the Legislature's budget plan and is intended to more closely align with actual utilization of the program.

Child Support Full Pass-Through

The final budget agreement includes Supplemental Report Language related to infrastructure and other components necessary to implement the full pass-through of child support to families currently receiving CalWORKs.

Child Care

Subsidized Child Care Slot Expansion

The final budget agreement delays the multi-year expansion of subsidized child care slots originally committed to through the 2021 Budget Act by two years, delaying the goal to increase subsidized child care slots by 200,000 until 2028. Approximately 119,000 subsidized child care slots have been added to date. The final budget agreement fully funds approximately 11,000 general child care slots beginning October 1, 2024, for which award letters were issued for this spring.

Emergency Child Care Bridge Program

The Emergency Child Care Bridge Program facilitates the placement of children within the foster care system into a stable child care setting. The final budget agreement rejects the proposed ongoing reduction of \$34.8 million General Fund included in the Governor's May Revision, preserving total General Fund funding for the program at \$83.4 million ongoing.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

APS Expansion

The Adult Protective Services Expansion was enacted in 2021 and lowered the population served by APS from 65 to 60 years of age. In addition, it allowed for increasing social worker staffing to provide long-term case management for individuals with more complex needs. The final budget agreement rejects the proposed ongoing \$39.3 million cut that would have gone into effect 2024-25. Instead, the final budget includes the full funding of \$70 million General Fund for APS Expansion in 2024-25.

APS Training

The final budget agreement rejects the almost complete elimination of funding to support APS training included in the Governor's May Revision. Rather, the final budget includes \$9.4 million (\$4.6 million General Fund) for APS training in 2024-25.

Aging Services

Older Californians Act Senior Nutrition

The final budget agreement rejects the Governor's May Revision proposal to eliminate Older Californians Act Modernization funding for senior nutrition by \$37.2 million in 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27.

Older Adult Behavioral Health Initiative

The final budget agreement includes a reduction for the Older Adult Behavioral Health Initiative of \$35.4 million General Fund over three years (\$5.4 million in 2023-24, \$20 million in 2024-25, and \$10 million in 2025-26) as proposed in the Governor's May Revision. Additionally, the agreement reduces funding for the media campaign component by \$8 million General Fund in 2023-24.

Nutrition Assistance

California Food Assistance Program Expansion

The California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) provides CalFresh food benefits for non-citizens who do not qualify for federal benefits. The 2022 Budget Act included funding to expand CFAP to

all income-eligible Californians, age 55 years or older, regardless of their immigration status. The final budget agreement includes the two-year delay in CFAP expansion, as proposed in the Governor's May Revision, until October 1, 2027.

Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Theft

AB 161 includes language that prevents CalFresh recipients from incurring any loss of nutrition benefits to EBT theft and requires CDSS to establish a protocol to use state funds to replace stolen nutrition benefits. AB 161 also requires counties to replace eligible, electronically stolen benefits as soon as administratively feasible, but no later than ten business days following the receipt of the replacement request.

CalFresh Minimum Nutrition Benefit Pilot

The CalFresh Minimum Nutrition Benefit Pilot Program would provide eligible CalFresh recipients with a minimum monthly benefit of \$50 over 12 months, increasing from \$23. The final budget agreement rejects the May Revision proposal to eliminate the program and instead provides \$15 million for the pilot in 2024-25.

Work Incentive Nutrition Supplement Program

The Work Incentive Nutrition Supplemental (WINS) Program provides \$10 per month supplemental food benefits to working families who receive CalFresh benefits but do not receive CalWORKs benefits. The final budget agreement rejects the May Revision proposal to reduce funding for WINS by \$25 million in 2025-26, which would have eliminated the program. Rather, the final budget includes full funding for WINS.

HOMELESSNESS

CSAC continued to advocate for ongoing and sustainable homelessness funding consistent with the [AT HOME](#) plan, which also calls for clear accountability at all levels of government. In this difficult budget year, the path for additional funding for the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program was uncertain, as no funding beyond the current Round 5 was included in the Governor's January budget proposal or May Revision. The final budget agreement includes the \$1 billion for Round 6 of HHAP that was contained in the Legislature's budget plan. The strong and sustained advocacy from counties about how critical this funding is to the progress we are collectively achieving at the local level was essential in securing this funding.

HHAP Program

The final budget agreement provides \$1 billion for a Round 6 of the HHAP program, which provides flexible funding to counties, large cities, and continuums of care (CoCs) to address homelessness in local communities. Unfortunately, the 2024 Budget Act also adopted a proposal from the Governor's May Revision budget to cut \$260 million from HHAP Round 5 supplemental funding that was originally bonus funding in prior HHAP rounds.

The housing trailer bill (AB 166) outlines the implementation of Round 6 of the HHAP program. Round 6 continues many of the core elements of [Round 5](#). This includes the funding distribution (city/CoC/county breakdown, point-in-time count allocation methodology, supplemental Homekey funding) and collaboration requirements (regional homelessness action plan, joint application, identification of roles and responsibilities, signed MOU). In addition, contained in AB 166 are changes to program administration, regional plans, funding, and accountability. The list below outlines the key changes for HHAP Round 6 that differ from the prior round.

Program Administration

- The administration of the HHAP program is transferred from the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal-ICH) to HCD effective July 1, 2024.
- The Round 6 application must be made available by January 31, 2025, and due no later than 180 days from when it is made available.
- Final report deadlines are added for all HHAP rounds.
- The annual HHAP report will now be due on April 1 instead of January 1 of each year.
- The HHAP quarterly fiscal reports of funds expended and obligated must now be submitted monthly.

Regional Plans

- An update to the Round 5 regional plan can meet the requirement for a Round 6 regionally coordinated homelessness action plan.
- Federally recognized tribal governments in the region are now included on the list of entities who will be invited to the regional plan development meetings.
- The identification of roles and responsibilities in the regional plan must now include roles related to the Behavioral Health Services Act.
- The Round 5 requirement for a description of key actions to improve performance metrics has been modified to now require the inclusion of a system performance and improvement plan that describes key actions that will be undertaken to improve the system performance measures that are submitted.
- This system performance plan must describe how each jurisdiction is utilizing other local, state, and federal funding as key actions and must specifically address an extensive list

of homelessness programs, human services programs, health programs, and behavioral health programs. Some of this new requirement replaces the prior round requirement of describing how the region is connecting individuals to a list of various wraparound services and health and human services programs.

Funding

- In order to utilize Round 6 funding for new interim housing other than interim housing for youth or for non-housing solutions, the region must demonstrate how sufficient resources from other sources are being used to sustain existing interim housing and planned portfolio of permanent affordable housing.
- The eligible uses of funding are slightly modified and reorganized. There is now a new homelessness prevention category that captures existing eligible uses and a new non-housing solutions category that captures existing eligible uses.
- The allocation for tribal applicants is increased from two percent to three percent.
- The one percent amount set aside in Round 5 for planning for and preparing the regional action plans is not included in Round 6.

Accountability

- In a section of the code related to housing element enforcement, the HHAP program is added to the list of programs where the Attorney General can be notified for taking action against local jurisdictions for violations of state law.
- In order to receive HHAP Round 6 funding, an applicant needs to meet earlier HHAP rounds obligation and expenditure deadlines (fully obligated Rounds 1-3, fully expended Round 1, expended at least 50% and obligated at least 75% of first disbursement of Round 4).
- In order to receive the second half of Round 6 funding, a city or county must have a compliant housing element.
- If HCD determines that a grantee has made insufficient progress on key actions or failed to improve on at least half of the region's system performance measures, HCD may require a corrective action plan as part of regional plan update. The regional plan update, including corrective action plan if applicable, must be approved prior to the disbursement of the second half of Round 6 funding.

Encampment Resolution Funding

The final budget agreement provides \$150 million in 2024-25 and \$100 million in 2025-26 for the Encampment Resolution Funding program, which provides competitive grants to address homeless encampments and provide support for residents to move toward permanent housing. Half of the funding is reserved for projects that address state rights-of-way. AB 166 outlines administration and accountability for these grants. Administration of the program is transferred from Cal-ICH to HCD and the program is added to the list of programs where the Attorney General can be notified for taking action against local jurisdictions for violations of state law similar to HHAP. Monthly and annual reports that detail uses of funding, how many individuals are served, and housing exits will be required.

Bringing Families Home (BFH) Program

BFH provides housing-related supports to child welfare involved families and those at risk of homelessness. The final budget agreement rejects the Governor's May Revision proposal to revert \$80 million General Fund from 2022-23. Instead, the final budget delays \$40 million until 2025-26 and another \$40 million until 2026-27. The human services budget trailer bill (AB 161) also includes language to extend the county match waiver of funds through June 30, 2027.

Home Safe Program

Home Safe helps prevent homelessness for victims of elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect served by APS. The final budget agreement rejects the Governor's May Revision proposal to eliminate \$65 million General Fund for Home Safe. Instead, the final budget reappropriates up to \$92.5 million General Fund for Home Safe from 2022-23, available for expenditure until June 30, 2026. AB 161 extends the grantee match waiver of one-time funds appropriated for Home Safe until June 30, 2026.

Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP)

HDAP serves people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and are likely eligible for disability benefits and housing supports. The final budget agreement reappropriates up to \$100 million General Fund from 2022-23, available for spending until June 30, 2026. The agreement also approves the May Revision proposal to revert \$50 million General Fund from 2022-23. AB 161 permanently removes the baseline match requirement for grantees of funds from HDAP, effective July 1, 2024, and extends the waiver requirement to seek reimbursement of federal funds to June 30, 2026.

HOUSING, LAND USE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The General Fund resources provided in the past few years for housing and transportation have been unprecedented both in amount and duration. The 2024-25 budget reductions, fund shifts, and delays signal the end of substantial General Fund investments in those areas. In the housing policy area, the Administration and Legislature will likely continue to highlight awards and investments that were provided to housing programs in earlier budgets while downplaying the reality that future resources will not be forthcoming. Nonetheless, CSAC celebrates the restoration of funding to the Multifamily Housing Program and the Regional Early Action Planning (REAP 2.0) grant program.

In the transportation space, the past years of General Fund augmentations have also been notable. The current and future lean budget years ahead will likely see a return to limiting transportation investments to funding streams that are dedicated for that purpose.

HOUSING AND LAND USE

The 2024 Budget Act maintains most of the reductions proposed in the Governor's May Revision. Additionally, the final budget agreement reduces the remaining balances from several programs that support affordable housing, including the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention (VHHP) Program, the Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG) Program, and the Foreclosure Intervention Housing Preservation Program (FHIPP), while restoring funding for the Multifamily Housing Program and REAP 2.0 grant program.

Multifamily Housing Program

The Governor's May Revision proposed to eliminate the Multifamily Housing Program. The 2024 Budget Act deal restores \$315 million for the Multifamily Housing program that was provided in past budgets. The program provides competitively awarded grants to a broad variety of affordable housing projects.

REAP 2.0 Grants

The final budget agreement restores \$560 million of the original \$600 million appropriated for the REAP 2.0 program in the 2021 Budget Act. Additionally, the program funding will be allocated in three ways. First, \$480 million will be allocated on a population formula basis to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO). The budget provides \$30 million for a competitive program for projects in jurisdictions that are not part of an MPO and tribes. Finally, a separate \$30 million competitive program will fund projects that increase infill housing production and reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled. CSAC was a strong advocate for the restoration of REAP 2.0 funding.

Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention program (HHAP)

The final budget agreement includes \$1 billion in Round 6 of the HHAP program. The housing trailer bill (AB 166) includes additional reporting requirements and requires a city or county to have a state-approved Housing Element as a precondition for receiving the second half of their Round 6 HHAP awards. *For more information on HHAP, please see the Homelessness Section on Page 28.*

Adaptive Reuse Program Eliminated

The Governor's January Budget did not make changes to the Adaptive Reuse Program, preserving the appropriation of \$127.5 million General Fund made in last year's budget. However,

the final budget deal reverts this remaining funding back to the General Fund, eliminating the program.

Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG) Program

The 2024 Budget Act adopted a \$235 million cut to the IIG program. This reduction leaves the program with \$689 million in funding provided over the past three budgets. The IIG program funds housing projects on infill parcels with priority given to sites in downtown areas as well as transit oriented projects.

Foreclosure Intervention Housing Preservation Program Eliminated

The 2024 Budget Act cuts the remaining \$236.5 million in 2023-24 for this program, in addition to the \$237.5 million proposed in the Governor's January Budget, eliminating the program.

CalHome

The 2022 Budget Act included \$350 million one-time General Fund (\$250 million in 2022-23 and \$100 million committed for 2023-24) for the Department of Housing and Community Development's CalHome program, to provide local agencies and nonprofits grants to assist low- and very-low-income first-time homebuyers with housing assistance, counseling and technical assistance. The Governor's January Budget proposed to remove \$100 million one-time General Fund in 2023-24. The 2024 Budget Act includes a total cut of \$152.5 million, leaving \$198 million for the program.

Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program Eliminated

The final budget agreement maintains the past proposal to revert \$76.3 million appropriated in the past budgets for the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program. This action effectively ends General Fund support for the program, thus eliminating the program.

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

The 2024 Budget Act maintains a one-time additional \$500 million in state supplement Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), which supports affordable housing production. The LIHTC program provides investments to a variety of affordable housing projects, helping to leverage federal affordable housing resources in the process. By statute, the state must allocate a specified amount to state LIHTC each year. In recent years, the state budget has also included a \$500 million supplement to the statutory threshold. The Governor's January Budget did not include such a supplement for 2024-25.

TRANSPORTATION

After years of unprecedented General Fund allocations to transportation programs, the 2024 Budget Act deal maintains the Governor's May Revision reduction proposals. The final budget retains \$1.3 billion in General Fund sources and \$582 million in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) resources for transportation programs.

A large portion of the funding provided for specific transportation programs in past budgets has been shifted from General Fund resources to be funded from the GGRF, which is supported by revenues from the state's Cap-and-Trade auctions. The Legislature and Administration have adopted an increased estimate of future revenues that Cap-and-Trade auctions will produce. If actual Cap-and-Trade auction revenues fall short of these higher estimates, the funding for these programs will again be in jeopardy and require legislative action to restore the amounts promised in this budget.

Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP)

The TIRCP funds capital projects that support state and local intercity rail, bus, ferry, and rail transit systems. The final budget agreement provides \$1.5 billion General Fund and \$463 million GGRF resources for formula TIRCP. Additionally, the final budget agreement provides \$1.4 billion General Fund and \$133.2 million GGRF resources for competitive TIRCP.

Zero Emission Transit Capital Program

The 2023 Budget Act established the Zero Emission Transit Capital Program and appropriated \$1.1 billion in GGRF and Public Transit Account resources from 2023-24 to 2026-27. The final budget agreement retains \$220 million in GGRF resources to fund this program in 2024-25 and shifts \$690 million of the GGRF funding provided to 2026-27 and 2027-28. The funding will be allocated to regional transportation planning agencies by a population-based formula and another formula based on revenues to fund zero-emission transit equipment and operations.

Active Transportation Program (ATP)

The 2024 Budget Act provides \$100 million in General Fund resources for the ATP. The ATP is a competitive transportation grant program that funds projects which increase the use of active modes of transportation, such as walking and biking.

PUBLIC WORKS

Zero Emission Vehicle Fueling Infrastructure Grant Program

The 2024 Budget Act maintains the Governor's May Revision proposal that reduces \$143.9 million from the Zero Emission Vehicle Fueling Infrastructure Grant Program. This leaves the program with \$119.5 million in GGRF funds to provide grant funding to counties to support the implementation of California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) regulations. Beginning January 1, 2024, CARB began to require that all public fleet owners begin replacing their medium and heavy-duty fleet vehicles with Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEV). The most common types of compliant ZEV's utilize either battery-electric components or hydrogen fuel cell technology. State funding is necessary to provide resources to counties to acquire the ZEV medium and heavy-duty vehicles without increasing rates and fees. Additionally, counties need financial assistance to build out the necessary charging infrastructure to implement the ACF regulations.

CSAC is advocating for reasonable changes to the ACF regulations as well as funding for compliant vehicles and EV Charging Infrastructure. CSAC has also requested bond funding for ACF infrastructure within the 2024 Climate, Water, and Natural Resources Bond.

Caltrans Fleet Replacement Reporting Language

After significant CSAC advocacy, the final budget agreement includes reporting language which requires Caltrans to report on a variety of data points related to their purchase of vehicles that comply with CARB's ACF regulations. The information provided by Caltrans will be highly valuable for county vehicle fleet managers to analyze and consider as they continue efforts to make their fleet purchases compliant with the ACF regulations.



June 19, 2024

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

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

Dear Chair, Caballero:

The undersigned organizations are proud to **SUPPORT 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,

Dominic Russo, Acclamation Insurance Management Services (AIMS)

Dominic Russo, Allied Managed Care (AMC)

Laura Curtis, American Property Casualty Insurance Association

Sarah Bridge, Association of California Healthcare Districts (ACHD)

Faith Borges, California Association of Joint Powers Authorities

Ashley Hoffman, California Chamber of Commerce

Jason Schmelzer, California Coalition on Workers' Compensation

Jeff Rush, California Joint Powers Insurance Authority

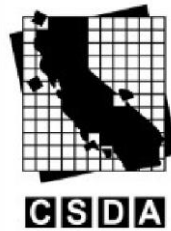
Aaron Avery, California Special Districts Association

Kalyn Dean, California State Association of Counties

Johnnie Piña, League of California Cities

Jen Hamelin, Public Risk Innovation Solutions and Management

Jean Hurst, Urban Counties of California



June 18, 2024

The Honorable Lola Smallwood-Cuevas
Chair, Senate Committee on Labor, Public
Employment and Retirement
1021 O St. Ste. 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2421 (Low) Employer-Employee Relations: Confidential Communications.
OPPOSE (As Amended 06/17/24)

Dear Senator Smallwood-Cuevas,

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), the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), and the California School Boards Association (CSBA), 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.

Recent amendments to the bill removed prior language stating the **intent** to create an employee-union representative privilege in the context of California public employment, and now express an intention not to create an evidentiary privilege.

However, **the substantive provisions of the bill**, which were previously intended to create a privilege, remain largely unchanged.

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

Limits 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 has 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. It would also 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 shield 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.

Expansion of New One-Sided Standard

As noted above, while the prior intent language referencing a privilege has been removed, the substance of the bill remains largely the same. 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 shield for public employees, which was previously intended to be a privilege, without meaningful limitation on how it will function.

Additionally, the provisions of 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 privileges, which 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

AB 2421 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, our concerns with AB 2421 have not been meaningfully addressed, and the organizations listed below respectfully remain

opposed to the bill. 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 jpiña@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@cdda.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>Dorothy Johnson Legislative Advocate Association of California School Administrators djohnson@acsa.org</p>

 <p>Jason Schmelzer Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM) jason@SYASLpartners.com</p>	 <p>Andrew Martinez Senior Director of Government Relations Community College League of California amartinez@cclleague.org</p>
 <p>Chris Reeve Legislative Director California School Boards Association creefe@csba.org</p>	 <p>Alyssa Silhi Legislative Advocate California Association of Park and Recreation Districts asilhi@publicpolicygroup.com</p>

CC:

The Honorable Evan Low
Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Labor,
Public Employment and Retirement
Glenn Miles, Consultant, Senate Committee on Labor, Public
Employment and Retirement
Corry Botts, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Mary Hernandez, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary,
Office of Governor Gavin Newsom



June 19, 2024

The Honorable Lola Smallwood-Cuevas, Chair
 Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee
 1021 O Street, Suite 6740
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **AB 2557 (Ortega): Local agencies: contracts for special services and temporary help: performance reports**
As amended 6/17/24 – OPPOSE
Set for hearing 7/03/24 – Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee

Dear Senator Smallwood-Cuevas:

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), California Fire Chiefs Association (CalChiefs), the Fire Districts Association of California (FDAC), Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM), the California Association for Local Economic Development (CALED), and the California and Nevada Civil Engineers and Land Surveyors (CELSA), National Society of Professional Engineers - California (NSPE-CA), California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (CAPH), California County Superintendents, Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), the California Association of County Veterans Services Officers (CACVSO), the Emergency Medical Services Administrators' Association of California (EMSAAC), the California Records' Association of California (CRAC), the California State Sheriffs' Association (CSSA), we write to inform you of our opposition to Assembly Bill 2557, Assembly Member Liz Ortega's measure relating to contracting by local agencies. Even after considerable amendments, our organizations believe the proposal contained in AB 2557 remains overly burdensome, costly, 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. Make no mistake: the provisions of AB 2557 will be costly to implement. At a time when the state and local agencies are facing significant fiscal challenges, it is difficult to fathom that the extensive reporting, posting, and contracting requirements of the bill are worth the investment of scarce public resources. With the new requirements of AB 2557 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 many millions of dollars statewide, which includes Proposition 98 funds.

AB 2557 continues to apply broadly to a wide range of local services, including, but not limited to, jail health care, forest and wildfire prevention and management, public works surveyors, family reunification services, 9-1-1 dispatching, permitting, engineering, outside counsel, accounting, payroll, IT/Cybersecurity, RFP consulting services, real estate consulting, scientific monitoring and research, special education assistants, school nurses, data collection, among others.

New requirements are burdensome, duplicative, and impractical. While recent amendments appear to remove the obligation for reporting by contractors directly, AB 2557 takes most of those same requirements and requires local agencies to put them in the contractual agreement. This means that contractors will continue to have to provide considerable information that may not be directly applicable to the work that they are contracted to do or may be duplicative of other mandated reporting requirements associated with their work. New amendments also remove a prior exemption for contracts between governmental entities, making the bill's new website posting, noticing, and contractual requirements applicable to those commonly used contracts, imposing considerable redundancy for both parties with no discernable benefit.

While internet posting is already occurring for most contracts per statutory requirements to post meeting materials under the Ralph M. Brown Act, AB 2557 would now require that contracts and any related documents be posted separately on local agencies' internet website. This is likely an expensive endeavor that would require considerable investment in IT infrastructure and staff for local agencies, a cost that may potentially be subject to an SB 90 mandate claim or included in the school block grant mandate reimbursement. The measure further fails to recognize that some special districts are not required to have websites pursuant to Senate Bill 929 (McGuire, 2018).

We remain concerned that the timeframes provided in the proposed amendments are impractical; as we have previously communicated, local agencies often are unaware of a need for a procurement process in a consistent timeframe. While the bill includes the requirement for a “reasonable” notification to the employee representative, we are unclear as to what exactly this requirement means. Arguably, parties naturally at odds on the general issue of contracting will disagree as to what is “reasonable,” making this requirement at best a subject of a dispute, and at worst, an infeasible obligation. Further, the emergency exemption provided in the bill appears to only apply to portions of the notice provisions. Please consider that local agencies are first responders to any public emergency, including very real-world examples of a natural disaster, a global pandemic, an unanticipated need to care for those crossing our southern border seeking asylum, to name a few, and need flexible and accessible means for contracting with clear understanding by all parties of what is required prior to doing so.

Finally, new language includes provisions that are sufficiently vague and introduce confusion into a process that is generally well-understood and executed by practitioners. For example, the language is unclear about what is meant by “beginning a procurement process.” It is also unclear how the bill applies to sole-source contracts, contracts under the threshold for a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, or contracts for on-call services. Amendments for noticing requirements would also expand the bill’s application to “functions, duties, responsibilities, or services” performed by that are currently performed or were in the previous five years performed by represented employees. This expansion will also create ambiguity with the bill’s provisions applicable to website posting and contractual requirements, both of which apply to “functions” performed by represented employees.

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. 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.

In addition, recent amendments would dramatically expand local agencies’ notice provisions. Under existing MMBA requirements, local agencies notify bargaining units of the intent to contract out for items within the scope of representation. The bill would expand those requirements for every contract even when it is clearly not in the scope of representation. The new requirement will increase the workload of staff and lengthen the amount of time it takes to enter a contract.

Finally, AB 2557 has already been amended a number of times throughout the legislative process; however, in no instance have these amendments addressed the significant concerns of the local agencies responsible for implementing the bill nor have they addressed any of the considerable challenges faced by local agencies in attracting and retaining a robust public sector workforce. Further, these additional burdens continue to undermine a collaborative and productive working relationship with private sector and non-profit partners, who local agencies regard as essential to meeting our statutory obligations and effectively serving our respective communities.

AB 2557 represents a sweeping change to the fundamental work of local governments, but we remain 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



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
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Jessica Gauger
Director of Legislative Advocacy & Public Affairs
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County Health Executives Association of California




Lisa Gardiner
Director of Government Affairs
County Behavioral Health Directors Association



Eileen Cubanski
Executive Director
California Welfare Directors Association



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Legislative Advocate
Association of California School Administrators



Chris Reefer
Legislative Director
California School Boards Association



Conlin Reis
President
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California

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Ian Padilla
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Coalition for Adequate School Housing

Faith Borges
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Todd A. Bloomstine
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Joubin Pakpour, P.E.
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Julee Malinowski Ball
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Fire Districts Association of California

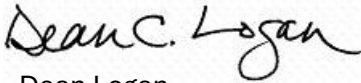
Gurbax Sahota, ACE
President & CEO
California Association for Local Economic
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Legislative Advocate
Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management

Cory M. Salzillo
Legislative Director
California State Sheriffs' Association

Eric Angstadt
Executive Secretary
California and Nevada Civil Engineers and Land
Surveyors

Katherine Rodriguez
Senior Director or Policy
California Association of Public Hospitals and
Health Systems



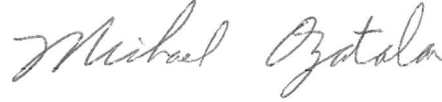
Dean Logan
President, County Recorders Association of California
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, Los Angeles County



David O. West II
President
California Association of County Veterans
Services Officers



Kristopher M. Anderson, Esq.
Senior State Relations Advocate
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Michael Ozatalar, P.E.
President
NSPE-California



Gayle Garbolino-Mojica
President
California County Superintendents



John Poland, Paramedic
EMSAAC Legislative Chair
Regional Executive Director, Sierra – Sacramento
Valley EMS Agency



Yazdan Emrani
Director
American Society of Civil Engineers - Region 9

cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee
The Honorable Liz Ortega, California State Assembly
The Honorable Mike McGuire, Senate President pro Tempore
Mary Hernandez, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Cesar Diaz, Consultant, Office of Senate President pro Tempore Mike McGuire
Misa Lennox, Consultant, Office of Senate President pro Tempore Mike McGuire



June 21, 2024

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

Re: **AB 2715 (Boerner): Ralph M. Brown Act: closed sessions
As amended 4/24/24 – SUPPORT
Set for hearing 6/25/24 – Senate Judiciary Committee**

Dear Senator Umberg:

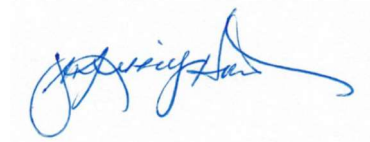
On behalf of the Urban Counties of California (UCC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), we write in support of Assembly Bill 2715, Assembly Member Tasha Boerner's measure that would authorize local agency governing bodies to convene a closed session to consider or evaluate matters related to cybersecurity.

Local agencies are subject to a wide range of cybersecurity risks, from elections and patient data to critical infrastructure and emergency communications. The wide range of risks and the increasing sophistication of cyber-criminals makes us exceptionally vulnerable to a security breach. Existing law is unclear about whether current exemptions can be used to hold a closed session discussion about a local agency's cybersecurity risks and vulnerabilities when a cyber-attack is not imminent or underway. Therefore, local agencies do not currently have a method of privately discussing their cybersecurity, which increases local agencies' vulnerability to such attacks.

Our obligations to sustain reliable and effective services that protect the health and safety of the public are paramount. Allowing discussion of cybersecurity in closed session helps facilitate discussion of effective and safe mechanisms to ensure the safety of public information and infrastructure. As exists for current closed session items, any decision that results from such a closed session must be disclosed in an open session, ensuring the public is aware of the decision that has been made.

AB 2715 represents an important modernization of the Brown Act and, as such, we are supportive of the measure. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can offer additional assistance.

Sincerely,



Jean Kinney Hurst
Legislative Advocate
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Sarah Dukett
Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California
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Eric Lawyer
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties
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cc: Members and Consultants, Senate Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Tasha Boerner, California State Assembly



June 14, 2024

The Honorable Tina McKinnor
Member, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5520
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2797 – OPPOSE
As Amended 6/10/2024**

Dear Assembly Member McKinnor:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and the Urban Counties of California (UCC), we regretfully oppose your Assembly Bill 2797, which would allow a Carrier of Last Resort provider to abandon those responsibilities and leave large swaths of the most vulnerable Californians without reliable and affordable access to basic telephone service.

Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) telephone service providers are located throughout the state, ensuring access to basic telephone service, many times to residents that lack dependable or affordable options for connectivity. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) oversees these service providers to ensure that important consumer protections, such as access to free 9-1-1 and discounted service rates through the Lifeline program, are implemented. Most importantly, COLR providers are required to provide service to anyone that requests it, and must have the ability to do so, in cases such as new housing developments or restoration of service after a major storm or natural disaster. Non-COLR service providers, including wireless companies, may currently have infrastructure and provide access in a given area – but they are not required to do so and can stop service at any time. Non-COLR providers are also not required to offer affordable service options to eligible residents.

AB 2797 relieves any provider of its COLR obligations when it sends notice to the CPUC stating that it currently has no customers or population in a census block and concludes it is no longer a COLR provider for that area. Additionally, a COLR provider is also relieved of its responsibilities under the law in census blocks that the provider states are served by two other alternative voice services, if affordable, as defined by the COLR provider. The mere notification by the COLR provider that it meets these requirements relieves it of the designation and rate requirements. This bill establishes a process wholly outside any oversight and approval framework, gifting for-profit companies with financial incentives to make self-interested findings to be the sole arbiters to the truth and accuracy of that information. The CPUC's core function is to balance procedures and safeguards

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to “protect consumers and ensure the provision of safe, reliable utility and infrastructure at reasonable rates¹....” AB 2797 puts the industry’s interests ahead of the needs of some of the most disadvantaged Californians and will interfere with the ability to reach emergency services, receive evacuation notices, or simply call a friend or family member for help.

Lastly, the COLR providers also define what an affordable alternative voice service is in “urban” census blocks. The bill states that a service is affordable if it costs no more than 25 percent higher than the company’s current *nondiscounted* basic telephone service. For those customers currently utilizing the Lifeline program, which provides up to \$19.00 toward service, this cost increase could be exponential as the baseline is already higher than what they are required to pay under the COLR service. Further, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and wireless products are often provided in bundles, so customers that are accustomed to a bill for only basic telephone service must now pay more for the bundled services - products they don’t necessarily want - just to get basic voice service.

We support the evolution to more advanced technologies that provide reliability, redundancy and ubiquitous access to connectivity, for both internet and voice service. However, AB 2797 does not provide a transition process for these communities to receive these modern telecommunications. Rather, it is a process for companies to abandon essential services, at the cost of public safety and consumer safeguards. As we embark on another wildfire season, those in fire prone areas continue to have the ability to receive evacuation notices and safety instructions, even when power is lost, through their plain old telephone lines. Shifting to modern technologies must be done through a collaborative effort with communities and the state to ensure that companies are held accountable and California residents never lose the ability to connect with the outside world. The CPUC is set to vote on a new proceeding on June 20, 2024 that will create a public, transparent process for reviewing COLR policies and what changes are needed to the current structure to reflect to the progression of the industry over the last thirty years.

For these reasons, we must oppose your AB 2797. If should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tracy Rhine (RCRC) at trhine@rcrcnet.org, Kalyn Dean (CSAC) at kdean@counties.org, or Jean Hurst (UCC) at jkh@hbeadvocacy.com.

Sincerely,



Tracy Rhine, RCRC
Senior Policy Advocate



Kalyn Dean, CSAC
Legislative Representative



Jean Hurst
Legislative Representative

¹ CPUC website

The Honorable Tina McKinnor
Assembly Bill 2797 - Oppose
June 14, 2024
Page 3

cc: The Honorable Steven Bradford, Chair, Senate Energy, Utilities, and
Communications Committee
Members of the Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications Committee
Nidia Baustista, Chief Consultant, Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications
Committee
Kerry Yoshida, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



June 18, 2024

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

**RE: AB 3025 (Valencia): County employees' retirement: disallowed compensation: benefit adjustments.
As Amended May 2, 2024 – OPPOSE
Set for Hearing June 25, 2024 – Senate Judiciary Committee**

Dear Senator Umberg,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), California Special Districts Association (CSDA), Urban Counties of California (UCC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and League of California Cities (Cal Cities), we regret to inform you of our opposition to Assembly Bill (AB) 3025, which would place a significant financial burden on member agencies of county retirement systems by requiring member agencies, including counties, cities, and special districts, to pay substantial penalties for decisions they did not make and over which they had no authority.

Following the passage of the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA), county retirement systems took varying approaches to comply with the provisions of PEPRA related to which types of compensation may be included in retirement benefit calculations. On July 30, 2020, the California Supreme Court issued a decision in the case *Alameda County Deputy Sheriff's Assn. v Alameda County Employees' Retirement Assn.*, otherwise known as the "*Alameda decision*," in which the Court upheld provisions PEPRA related to disallowed forms of compensation for retirement calculations. Over the last four years, the impacted '37 Act systems have been working to comply with *Alameda* and recalculate retirement benefits for members who retired after January 1, 2013.

AB 3025 unfairly places the financial consequences of the Court's decision on counties and other agencies by requiring '37 Act system employers to pay a "penalty" equal to 20 percent of the current actuarial value of retiree benefits deemed unlawful. The penalty, which will result in affected agencies owing millions of unbudgeted dollars to retirees for what the Court found to be an illegal benefit, implies those agencies made the decision to misapply the law. In reality, they simply complied with the pension agreements established between employees, employers, and retirement systems.

For the reasons stated above, we must oppose AB 3025. The fiscal impact on affected agencies will place a significant strain on general fund dollars, resulting in reductions to critical programs including public safety, transportation, and behavioral health. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions about our position.

Respectfully,



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

cc: The Honorable Avelino Valencia, California State Assembly
Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Margie Estrada, Chief Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
Morgan Branch, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus