



**TO:** Monterey County Legislative Committee

**FROM:** Ashley S. Walker, Senior Policy Advisor

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## STATE LEGISLATIVE REPORT

### a. 2021-22 Legislative Session

Members were sworn in on December 7, 2020 and nearly 200 bills have already been introduced. There are clear policy themes that the Legislature is focusing on, based on what proposal have been introduced so far. So far, legislative proposal focuses include: affordable housing, broadband, climate change, wildfire and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS), bond proposals (broadband, K-14, and climate change bonds) and COVID-19 related proposals addressing emergency response, labor and employment laws and benefits, vaccination planning, and more.

The Senate and Assembly leadership released Committee Membership for the 2021-22 Legislation Session. The Assembly announced the formation of a new standing Committee Emergency Management (the only standing committee in the Legislature focused exclusively on the issues of emergencies and disasters) while the Senate has a dedicated Special Committee on Pandemic Emergency Response.

### b. State Budget

The Governor's 2020-21 January Budget proposal will be released in early January.

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) produced a report on the State budget, *The 2021-22 Budget: California's Fiscal Outlook*. The report summary states, "We find the budget situation has improved considerably relative to the June budget act with an estimated \$26 billion windfall in 2021-22. However, the state also faces an operating deficit beginning in 2021-22 and throughout the outlook period, growing to \$17 billion by 2024-25. Our analysis also finds it is quite unlikely for revenues to grow fast enough for the budget to break even and erase the operating deficit."

The Senate Pro Tem released the Senate's budget priorities for the coming year. They include:

- Restore trigger solutions that were originally expected to be reversed with federal funds, including Proposition 98 deferrals, cuts to higher education, and state employee compensation.
- Eliminate the scheduled program suspensions set to effect the 2020-21 fiscal year, which are primarily focused on health care, aging, and development disability programs.
- Assist local governments whose revenues are suffering due to the economic impacts of the pandemic, including those reliant on tourism and hotel occupancy taxes.
- Repay recent borrowing and return reserve funds.

- Make targeted, new investments to meet current challenges, including the COVID-19 health crisis, Californians experiencing homelessness, and emergency preparedness.

We will monitor the release of the budget details, help the County to analyze impacts, and advocate for budget priorities.

**c. Legislation**

The following bills have been identified as priorities for the County to either watch, support or oppose.

- i. **AB 14 (Aguiar-Curry) Communications: broadband services: California Advanced Services Fund - *recommend support*:** Existing law establishes the State Department of Education in state government, and vests the department with specified powers and duties relating to the state's public school system. This bill would authorize local educational agencies to report to the department their pupils' estimated needs for computing devices and internet connectivity adequate for at-home learning. The bill would require the department, in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission, to compile that information and to annually post that compiled information on the department's internet website.
- ii. **AB 15 (Chiu) COVID-19 relief: tenancy: Tenant Stabilization Act of 2021 - *informational*:** Would extend the definition of "COVID-19 rental debt" as unpaid rent or any other unpaid financial obligation of a tenant that came due between March 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021. The bill would also extend the repeal date of the act to January 1, 2026. The bill would make other conforming changes to align with these extended dates. By extending the repeal date of the act, the bill would expand the crime of perjury and create a state-mandated local program.
- iii. **AB 16 (Chiu) Tenancies: Tenant, Small Landlord, and Affordable Housing Provider Stabilization Act of 2021 - *informational*:** Would state the intent of the Legislature to enact the Tenant, Small Landlord, and Affordable Housing Provider Stabilization Act of 2021 to address the long-term financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on renters, small landlords, and affordable housing providers, ensure ongoing housing stability for tenants at risk of eviction, and stabilize rental properties at risk of foreclosure. This bill would include legislative findings and declarations in support of the intended legislation.
- iv. **AB 34 (Muratsuchi) Broadband for All Act - *County sent support letter 12/10/20*:** Would declare the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would enact the Broadband for All Act of 2022, to become operative only if approved by the voters at the November 8, 2022, statewide general election, to authorize the issuance of state general obligation bonds to fund increased access to broadband services to rural, urban, suburban, and tribal unserved and underserved communities.
- v. **AB 41 (Wood) Broadband infrastructure - *informational*:** Existing law provides that the Department of Transportation has full possession and control of state highways and associated property. Existing law requires the department to develop guidelines to facilitate the installation of a broadband conduit on state highway rights-of-way. This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact future legislation that will improve California's "Dig Once" policy and expedite the deployment of broadband infrastructure in communities that are currently unserved and underserved.

- vi. **AB 73 (Rivas) Employment safety: agricultural workers: wildfire smoke - informational:** Would require the Division of Occupational Safety and Health within the Department of Industrial Relations to designate a wildfire smoke strike team within each regional office for purposes of enforcing regulations regarding air quality safety for agricultural workers, as defined. The bill would require the department, by January 1, 2023, in coordination with other state agencies to establish a stockpile of N95 filtering facepiece respirators, as defined, of sufficient size to adequately equip all agricultural workers during wildfire smoke emergencies. The bill would require the department to establish guidelines for procurement, management, and distribution of the N95 respirators.
- vii. **AB 74 (L. Gonzalez) Unemployment and disability benefit payments: direct deposit - informational:** Would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would require the Employment Development Department to make benefit payments available through direct deposit to ensure recipients are able receive payments in a quick, secure manner.
- viii. **AB 89 (Jones-Sawyer) Peace officers: minimum qualifications - informational:** Current law requires peace officers in this state to meet specified minimum standards, including age and education requirements. This bill would increase the minimum qualifying age from 18 to 25 years of age. This bill would permit an individual under 25 years of age to qualify for employment as a peace officer if the individual has a bachelor's or advanced degree from an accredited college or university. The bill would provide legislative findings in support of the measure.
- ix. **SB 3 (Caballero) Tenancy: COVID-19 - informational:** The COVID-19 Tenant Relief Act of 2020 establishes certain procedural requirements and limitations on evictions for nonpayment of rent due to COVID-19 rental debt, as defined. Existing law defines COVID-19 rental debt as unpaid rent or any other unpaid financial obligation of a tenant that came due during the covered time period, defined as the period between March 1, 2020, and January 31, 2021. The act also requires a notice that demands payment of rent that came due during the transition time period, defined as the period between September 30, 2020, and January 31, 2021, to comply with additional specified requirements. This bill would extend the covered time period and transition time period for purposes of the act to March 31, 2021.
- x. **SB 4 (Gonzalez) Communications: California Advanced Services Fund - County signed coalition letter in support on 12/7/20:** Current law establishes the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, known as "GO-Biz," within the Governor's office to serve the Governor as the lead entity for economic strategy and the marketing of California on issues relating to business development, private sector investment, and economic growth. This bill would require the office to coordinate with other relevant state and local agencies and national organizations to explore ways to facilitate streamlining of local land use approvals and construction permit processes for projects related to broadband infrastructure deployment and connectivity.
- xi. **SB 28 (Caballero) Rural Broadband and Digital Infrastructure Video Competition Reform Act - informational:** Would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation relative to the Digital Infrastructure and Video Competition Act of 2006, to be known as the California Rural Broadband and DIVCA Reform Act of 2021.

- xii. **SB 45 (Portantino) Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparedness, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2022 - *recommend support*:** Would enact the Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2022, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$5,510,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance projects for a wildfire prevention, safe drinking water, drought preparation, and flood protection program.
- xiii. **SB 59 (Caballero) Cannabis licenses - *recommend support*:** MAUCRSA, until January 1, 2022, authorizes a licensing authority, in its sole discretion, to issue a provisional license if the applicant has submitted a completed license application to the licensing authority, including evidence that compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or local cannabis ordinances is underway, if applicable, as specified. This bill would extend the repeal date of these provisional license provisions to July 1, 2028. By extending provisional licensure, the applications for which are required to be signed under penalty of perjury, the bill would expand the scope of the crime of perjury, and would thereby impose a state-mandated local program.

**d. Governor's Executive Orders that Impact Monterey County**

The following actions have been taken by the Governor since the last Legislative Committee meeting. This list was provided by CSAC to all County officials. We are happy to provide the details of any item listed below, should the Committee desire.

- December 7: Governor Newsom announced statewide expansion of CA Notify, a smart phone tool designed to slow the spread of COVID-19. CA Notify is a completely private, anonymous and secure tool that allows Apple and Google smart phone users to help slow the spread by opting in to receive COVID-19 exposure alerts letting them know when they've come into contact with someone who has tested positive.
- December 3: The Governor, due to unprecedented COVID-19 case surge and viral transmission, along with growing concern for a dwindling intensive care unit bed capacity and healthcare staffing, laid the groundwork to put the state, by region, under a more restrictive Stay-at-home Order should a region drop below the ICU capacity threshold.
- November 30: Governor Gavin Newsom announced he would build on the state's ongoing support throughout the pandemic, with the following immediate support and relief: 1) Tax Relief for Businesses Impacted by COVID-19. 2) \$500 Million for New COVID Relief Grant for Small Business. 3) Increase Funding for the California Rebuilding Fund by \$12.5 million.
- November 24: Governor Gavin Newsom issued the state's first-ever Social Innovation Impact Report highlighting innovative public-private-partnerships that have contributed \$3.9 billion toward the state's housing efforts, COVID-19 response and more. A copy of the report can be found [here](#).
- November 20: Governor Gavin Newsom released "Recovery for All," the final report by the Task Force Co-Chairs Ann O'Leary and Tom Steyer. Additionally, Governor Gavin Newsom announced the opening of the California Rebuilding Fund to help impacted small businesses rebuild from the economic crisis and keep local economies strong.

- November 19: Governor Gavin Newsom and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced a month-long Stay-at-Home Order, effective November 21, in counties in the purple tier. This comes in response to an unprecedented, rapid rise in COVID-19 cases across California and in an effort to decrease transmission and slow hospitalizations before the death count surges.
- November 16: Governor Gavin Newsom and state public health officials have taken necessary action to slow advancement of the Blueprint for a Safer Economy county tier assignments in response to record rate increases of COVID19 cases in the state.

**e. State Bill/Issues Track:** See attached.

**ATTACHMENTS: DRAFT SUPPORT LETTERS**

- AB 14 (Aguiar-Curry) Communications: broadband services: Advanced Services Fund.
- SB 45 (Portantino) Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparedness, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2022.
- SB 59 (Caballero) Cannabis licenses.