



TO: Monterey County Legislative Committee

FROM: Ashley S. Walker, Senior Policy Advisor
Kasha Hunt, Policy Advisor

DATE: February 10, 2025

RE: State Legislative Program: Advocacy Update – **AGENDA ITEM #5**

5. State Report –

- a. Status of the Legislature:** Early in January, the Governor released his state budget proposal, which projected a positive outcome for the state with a minor surplus, and the legislature was committed to introducing bills that would “Make California Affordable Again” to improve the lives of Californians. Shortly thereafter, the horrific wildfire disaster in Los Angeles County turned the Legislature and Governor’s attention to emergency response. We are seeing a trend in introduced bills, being focused on wildfire prevention, insurance, protecting Californians from the new Trump Administration’s federal policies, and streamlining rebuilding measures. Bill introduction deadline is approaching, with the deadline falling on February 21. The legislature will begin holding committee hearings in the coming months.
- b. Legislation:** We are currently tracking about 120 bills for the County. Most of these bills will be amended in the coming months and/or are just spot bills. Below are bills with recommended positions for the Legislative Committee’s consideration.
 - i. AB 1 (Connolly) Residential property insurance: wildfire risk:** Current Department of Insurance regulations prohibit an insurer from using a rating plan that does not take into account and reflect specified wildfire risk mitigation, including property-level building hardening measures. This bill would require the department, on or before January 1, 2030, and every 5 years thereafter, to consider whether or not to update its regulations to include additional building hardening measures for property-level mitigation efforts and communitywide wildfire mitigation programs.
CSAC Position: Support.
Suggested Position: Support.
 - ii. AB 49 (Murastsuchi) Schoolsites and day care centers: entry requirements: immigration enforcement:** This bill would prohibit school officials and employees of a local educational agency from allowing an officer or employee of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to enter a school for any purpose without providing valid identification, a written statement of purpose, and a valid judicial warrant, and receiving approval from the superintendent of the school district, the

superintendent of the county office of education, or the principal of the charter school. Additionally, this bill extends protections to day care centers, prohibiting employees of day care centers from allowing ICE to enter for any purpose without providing a valid judicial warrant.

CSAC Position: None.

Current Position: Support.

- iii. **AB 53 (Ramos) Personal income taxes: exclusion: Military Services Retirement and Surviving Spouse Benefit Payment Act:** This bill, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2027, and before January 1, 2037, would exclude from taxable income retirement pay received by a taxpayer from the federal government for service performed in the uniformed services, as defined, during the taxable year. The bill, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2027, and before January 1, 2037, would also exclude from taxable income annuity payments received by a qualified taxpayer, as defined, pursuant to a United States Department of Defense Survivor Benefit Plan during the taxable year.

CSAC Position: None.

Suggested Position: Support.

- iv. **AB 226 (Calderon) California FAIR Plan Association:** This bill increases the financial tools available to offset the increased exposure to the FAIR Plan. Through the bond option that AB 226 establishes, this ensures the admitted market is able to absorb the costs of an assessment in the case of a catastrophe by giving admitted insurers a much longer runway to pay off the debts of the FAIR Plan.

CSAC Position: None.

Suggested Position: Support.

- v. **AB 259 (Rubio) Open meetings: local agencies: teleconferences:** Current law, until January 1, 2026, authorizes the legislative body of a local agency to use alternative teleconferencing if, during the teleconference meeting, at least a quorum of the members of the legislative body participates in person from a singular physical location clearly identified on the agenda that is open to the public and situated within the boundaries of the territory over which the local agency exercises jurisdiction, and the legislative body complies with prescribed requirements. Current law requires a member to satisfy specified requirements to participate in a meeting remotely pursuant to these alternative teleconferencing provisions, including that specified circumstances apply. Current law establishes limits on the number of meetings a member may participate in solely by teleconference from a remote location pursuant to these alternative teleconferencing provisions, including prohibiting such participation for more than 2 meetings per year if the legislative body regularly meets once per month or less. This bill would remove the January 1, 2026, date from those provisions, thereby extending the alternative teleconferencing procedures indefinitely.

CSAC Position: None.

Suggested Position: Support.

- vi. **AB 303 (Addis) Battery energy storage facilities:** This bill tackles two key issues: It ensures local voice is restored to the permitting process for utility-scale battery energy storage systems, and creates buffer zones around sensitive areas so that these facilities are not built next to schools, homes, hospitals, thriving agricultural lands, estuaries and other important natural habitats. The Assemblymember would like the County to Sponsor/Support the bill.

CSAC Position: None.

Suggested Position: Watch

- vii. **SB 23 (Valadares) Property taxation: exemption: disabled veteran homeowners:** This bill would exempt from taxation, property owned by, and that constitutes the principal place of residence of, a veteran, the veteran's spouse, or the veteran and the veteran's spouse jointly, if the veteran is 100% disabled. The bill would provide an unmarried surviving spouse a property exemption in the same amount that they would have been entitled to if the veteran was alive and if certain conditions are met.

CSAC Position: None.

Suggested Position: Support.

- viii. **SB 72 (Caballero) The California Water Plan: long-term supply targets:** SB 72 would modernize the California Water Plan to reflect California's new climate reality and establish long-term water supply targets that, when met, will ensure sufficient, high-quality water for urban, environmental and agricultural needs across the state. This bill requests that the 2025-26 Budget include \$6.8 million in ongoing funds for 5 years, and \$3.4 million ongoing for the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to update and modernize the California Water Plan and develop long-term targets for the state's future water supply, in support of SB 72.

CSAC Position: None.

Suggested Position: Support.

- ix. **SB 239 (Arreguín) Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body:** Current law, until January 1, 2026, authorizes specified neighborhood city councils to use alternate teleconferencing provisions related to notice, agenda, and public participation, as prescribed, if, among other requirements, the city council has adopted an authorizing resolution and 2/3 of the neighborhood city council votes to use alternate teleconference provisions. This bill would authorize a subsidiary body, as defined, to use alternative teleconferencing provisions and would impose requirements for notice, agenda, and public participation. The bill would require the subsidiary body to post the agenda at the primary physical meeting location. The bill would require the members of the subsidiary body to visibly appear on camera during the open portion of a meeting that is publicly accessible via the internet or other online platform.

CSAC Position: None.

Suggested Position: Support.

- c. **Special Session Updates:** In response to the Los Angeles County wildfires, the Governor swiftly opened his special session focused on “Protecting California Values from the Trump Administration,” to include wildfire recovery. The Legislature passed, and the Governor signed a \$2.5 billion package for wildfire recovery in January. The Legislature also passed two budget bills in the Special Session related to defending California values, and the Governor is expected to sign these bills in the coming week to fund litigation expenses for the California Department of Justice against the Trump Administration.

i. **Defending California Values:**

- **AB X1-1 (Gabriel) An act to amend the Budget Act of 2024:** This bill would allocate funds to defend the state’s policies against anticipated federal challenges from President Trump. The bill proposes setting aside up to \$25 million for the California Department of Justice and other state agencies to prepare for potential litigation in areas such as civil rights, reproductive freedom, climate action and immigration.
Status: Senate vehicle was used.
Current Position: Support.
- **AB X1-2 (Gabriel) An act to amend the Budget Act of 2024:** This bill proposes immediate allocation of \$25 million to provide legal services to vulnerable persons at risk of detention, deportation, eviction, wage theft, intimate partner violence, and other actions that put their safety at risk, as a result of potential or actual federal actions.
Status: Senate vehicle was used.
Current Position: Support.
- **SB X1-1 (Wiener) An act to amend the Budget Act of 2024:** This bill allows the Department of Finance to increase funding for the Department of Justice by up to \$25 million for the 2024-25 fiscal year for costs related to defending the state against enforcement and legal actions taken by the federal government, filing affirmative litigation challenging actions taken by the federal government, and taking administrative action authorized under state law to mitigate the impacts of actions taken by the federal government, subject to notification of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. The bill also requires reporting by the Department of Justice to annually report expenditures of funds provided pursuant to this authority and the creation of an internet website that will include information on litigation filed against the federal government.
Status: On the Governor’s Desk.
Current Position: Support.

ii. **Immigrant Removal Defense Funding:**

- **AB X1-2 (Gabriel) An act to amend the Budget Act of 2024:** This bill proposes immediate allocation of \$25 million to provide legal services to vulnerable persons at risk of detention, deportation, eviction, wage theft, intimate partner violence, and other actions that put their safety at risk, as a result of potential or actual federal actions.

Status: Senate vehicle was used.

Current Position: Support.

- **SB X1-2 (Wiener) An act to amend the Budget Act of 2024:** Amends the 2024 Budget Act to provide \$25 million of additional General Fund resources for immigration and legal aid services. Provides \$25 million (one-time General Fund) in the 2024 budget act for immigration services, specifically:
 - Appropriates \$10 million to the Legal Services Trust Fund to provide legal services to vulnerable persons at risk of detention, deportation, eviction, wage theft, intimate partner violence, and other actions that put their safety at risk, as a result of potential or actual federal action;
 - Adds \$10 million to the Immigration Services Funding program (also called "One California program") at the Department of Social Services for immigration services funding;
 - Increases \$5 million to the Judicial Council, to be distributed through the California Access to Justice Commission to nonprofit providers of legal services.
 - Specifies that up to 2.5% of funding provided for each item in this bill can be used for administrative expenses and requires reporting to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.

Status: On the Governor's Desk.

Current Position: Support.

- d. **Governor's Actions and Executive Orders:** The following actions have been taken by the Governor since the last Legislative Committee meeting. This list is compiled from CalOES, California Health and Human Services, California Department of Public Health, and FEMA. Nossaman can provide additional details of any item listed below, should the Legislative Committee desire.

- **February 01** - At the direction of Governor Newsom, the state is augmenting flood fighting and swift water resources across Northern and Central California to protect communities from the significant wet weather event expected through the upcoming days.
- **January 31** - Governor Newsom today issued an executive order that would make it easier to divert and store excess water from incoming winter storms.

- **January 30** - Governor Newsom is deploying resources and thousands of personnel to communities throughout Northern California in anticipation of a potentially major storm system.
- **January 29** - Governor Newsom today issued an executive order to support small business owners and workers impacted by Los Angeles-area firestorms.
- **January 27** – Governor Newsom signed an executive order that cut red tape, and further suspended Coastal Commission rules to help LA firestorm survivors rebuild.
- **January 22** - With anticipated rain in the forecast, Governor Newsom mobilized the full-force of the state government to protect recent burn scar areas and prepare for mudslides.
- **January 20** - Governor Newsom signed an executive order to help protect Southern California communities from landslides and flooding as they continue to recover from recent firestorms.
- **January 19** – Governor Newsom signs executive order to protect public safety in firestorm-devastated communities.
- **January 19:** Governor Newsom announced moving additional personnel, engines, and aircraft to rapidly attack any new fires as continued extreme weather arrives.
- **January 18** – Governor Newsom announces commitment from major lenders to provide firestorm survivors with mortgage relief.
- **January 17** – Governor Newsom issued an executive order that expands eviction protections for tenants who provide shelter to survivors of the Los Angeles-area firestorms.
- **January 16** – Governor Newsom signs executive order to extend property tax deadline for LA firestorm communities until April 2026.
- **January 16** – Governor Newsom signs executive order to fast-track temporary housing for Los Angeles firestorm area.
- **January 15** – Governor Newsom deploys additional CHP officers to protect firestorm-devastated communities.
- **January 15** - FEMA announces that FEMA Transitional Sheltering Assistance is available for Los Angeles County residents.
- **January 15** - Governor Newsom issued an executive order to allow expert federal hazmat crews to start cleaning up properties. This is a key step to getting people back to their properties safely and begin rebuilding.
- **January 14** - Governor Newsom issued an executive order barring opportunist and predatory investors from making unsolicited, undervalued offers to families impacted by the firestorms to buy their land, taking advantage by offering fast cash for destroyed property.
- **January 14:** Governor Newsom signed an executive order to quickly help L.A. schools, children, and families affected by the firestorms. This executive order aims to assist schools and get children back in the classroom.

- **January 13** – Governor Newsom announced that the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration has automatically extended the tax filing deadline for three months for taxpayers within Los Angeles County.
- **January 12** – Governor Newsom signed an executive order to suspend permitting and review requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act and the California Coastal Act to allow victims of the recent fires to restore their homes and businesses faster.
- **January 12:** Governor Newsom announced he has increased the number of California National Guard personnel activated to support the response efforts to about 2,500 service members.
- **January 12**—Governor Newsom today issued an executive order to direct fast action on debris removal work and mitigate the potential for mudslides and flooding in burned areas.
- **January 11** – Governor Newsom announced he has increased California National Guard personnel activated to support Los Angeles responders to 1,680 service members.

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