



# NOSSAMAN LLP | Memorandum

**TO:** Monterey County Legislative Committee

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

**DATE:** March 11, 2024

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- a. Status of the Legislature:** The deadline to introduce new bills was on Friday, February 17, and there was a total of 2,124 proposals that made the deadline. The first policy committee deadline is on April 26. The Legislature will be on Spring Recess from March 22 – April 1.

Leadership in the Senate officially changed, with Senator Mike McGuire taking the position as Pro Tem. The Pro Tem released some changes to Committee Chairs and Membership, including naming Senator Caballero as the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

- b. State Budget:** The LAO most recently, has updated their projected state budget deficit, now predicting a massive \$73 billion shortfall. The Legislature has been holding hearings in the budget subcommittees, reviewing the Governor's January budget proposals, and discussing the LAO's suggestions and predictions. The Legislature acknowledges there will need to be significant adjustments in order to balance the State Budget this year, and in the out years.

- i. CalWORKS Program:** CWDA and CSAC are encouraging counties to oppose cuts to the CalWORKs program proposed in the Governor's Budget, which total over \$400 million, including the permanent elimination of all funding for specific CalWORKs services. These cuts destabilize the CalWORKs program and unfairly and disproportionately place the burden of resolving a statewide budget deficit on very low-income families, jeopardizing counties' ability to administer the CalWORKs program and serve our most vulnerable Californians. The Governor's Budget proposes to eliminate the CalWORKs Family Stabilization (FS) Program and the CalWORKs Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Program beginning in the current fiscal year and annually ongoing. Recommended position: Oppose.

- c. State Budget Member Requests:** Senator Anna Caballero is requesting submittal of budget proposals for the 14th Senate District. Given the economic difficulties facing the State of California, these requests may not be included in the state budget at all. Requests are limited to only one pressing priority project and are due by Friday, March 15. After talking with the Senator's staff, the San Lucas project is likely the best fit for this request.

There have been no other official solicitations for budget requests, but we have informed our delegation of our funding needs and will continue to request assistance for the projects we presented at the Legislative Workshop earlier this year.

**d. Legislation:**

- i. **AB 2982 (Reyes) California Children and Families Act of 1998: working group.** This bill would establish, by March 1, 2025, a workgroup to create recommendations for a statewide comprehensive, equity-focused prenatal-to-3 system agenda, as specified. The bill would require the workgroup to submit its recommendations to the administration and to the Legislature by January 31, 2026. This bill is being sponsored by First 5 California. Recommended position: Support.
  - ii. **AB 2902 (Wood) Organic waste: reduction regulations: exemptions.** This proposal right-sizes and increases flexibility for smaller and rural local governments to comply with SB 1383 organic waste recycling regulations, facilitates smaller scale community composting programs, and asks CalRecycle to recognize local government efforts to keep forest and agricultural waste out of landfills. This bill is being sponsored by RCRC. Recommended position: Support.
  - iii. **AB 3035 (Pellerin) Agricultural employees.** This bill is currently a spot bill. We understand that Santa Clara County is working with Assemblymember Pellerin on a farmworker housing proposal. The plan is to expand on the Farm Worker Housing Act of 2019 (AB 1783, Rivas), which created ministerial standards for qualifying farmworker housing operated by affordable housing organizations or public housing agencies. The proposed legislation would (1) increase the cap on the number of units for a housing project so that larger, more cost-effective developments are an option, and (2) expand existing law to allow streamlined development of agricultural worker housing in areas nearby to agricultural land with access to municipal services. Recommended position: Watch until language is in print.
  - iv. **SB 1179 (Durazo) Affordable Internet and Net Equality Act of 2024.** This measure requires the California Department of Technology (CDT) to only enter into a procurement contract with a qualified internet service provider (ISP) that offers affordable internet service for eligible households and will require the CDT to establish and meet state internet coverage expansion goals for all eligible households. This bill is being sponsored by the CA Emerging Technology Fund. Recommended position: Support.
  - v. **AB 1390 (Caballero) Groundwater recharge: floodflows: diversion.** This measure will allow additional avenues for water agencies to satisfy flood planning requirements, while maintaining existing requirements and clarifies when flood conditions begin and end for the purposes of the act. SB 1390 will also recognize and utilize sophisticated flow forecasting models to better anticipate flood conditions. Lastly, this measure will increase public accountability by expanding reporting requirements for diverters, ensuring public safety and the quality of community drinking water supplies. This bill is being sponsored by Sustainable Conservation. Recommended position: Support.
- e. **Climate Bond Update:** The Legislature has resumed negotiations on a climate bond to be placed on the November 2024 ballot for the voters of California. The Governor has indicated support for a climate bond, and the Legislature largely feels that this investment is even more critical now, given the budget deficits we are facing and limited investments we can make from the General Fund. In order for a water bond to qualify for the November ballot, the Legislature would need to swiftly pass

an agreed upon bond bill, and it would need to be signed by the Governor no later than June. Nossaman has been advocating for several projects to be funded in the bond, or at very least ensuring they can be funded through the proposed competitive grant programs contained in the bond. Nossaman worked with the County to identify projects that would benefit from water bond funding and shared that information with our legislative delegation.

- f. **Dam Safety Coalition Update:** The LAO has proposed the Legislature considering removing funding from the recently created Dam Safety grant program in order to address the anticipated budget deficit. The most recent coalition letter the County and WRA signed on to urges the Administration and Legislature to maintain dam safety as a priority in budgetary and water and climate bond discussions in 2024. The Coalition has been holding advocacy meetings to relay this message as well.
- g. **Veterans' Home:** There are continued discussions with our Legislative Delegation about the need for a Veterans' home in the Central Coast. While there is no legislation introduced, we continue to work with the Delegation on creative ways to assist the Veterans Community. The County will continue to advocate for the construction of a new home.
- h. **San Lucas Drinking Water Project:** We have requested that our Legislative Delegation advocate for a funding and/or legislative solution to address the lack of safe and clean drinking water in San Lucas.
- i. **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 29 – FEMA and Cal OES open two Disaster Recovery Centers in San Diego County to support recovery efforts in areas affected by severe storms and flooding, January 21-23, 2024.
  - February 29 – The Employment Development Department (EDD) announces that residents of San Diego County, are now able to apply for federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits related to the severe storms and flooding of January 21-23, 2024.
  - February 27 - Governor Gavin Newsom announced the record seizure of 62,224 pounds of fentanyl in California in 2023 through California National Guard (CalGuard) supported counter-drug operations.
  - February 19 - President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Approves Major Disaster Declaration for California. FEMA announced today that federal disaster assistance has been made available to the state of California to supplement recovery efforts in the areas affected by severe storms and flooding, January 21-23, 2024.
  - February 18 - Ahead of Severe Winter Storm, Governor Newsom Activates State Operations – Governor Gavin Newsom today announced actions the state is taking as another potentially dangerous winter storm is set to impact much of California between now and Wednesday. The storm is anticipated to be brief but intense.
  - February 14 - Following Governor Gavin Newsom's efforts to bolster CAL FIRE's firefighting fleet, President Biden signed the National Defense Authorization Act which authorized the official transfer of seven C-130H aircraft from the United States Coast Guard to CAL FIRE.
  - February 7 - Governor Gavin Newsom requested a Major Disaster Declaration from President Biden to support San Diego County as it recovers from severe winter storms in late January.

- February 4 - Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency for eight counties in Southern California as a series of winter storms began impacting much of the state with high winds, damaging rain and heavy snowfall.

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