



# RCRC 2024 LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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## **RCRC 2024 LEGISLATIVE DIGEST**

**As a result of the 2024 legislative session California will see a record 1,017 new laws take effect in 2025, many impacting local governments statewide. This Legislative Digest is intended to outline some of those statutory changes affecting RCRC member counties, as well as measures that either failed passage in the Legislature, or were not signed by the Governor, but may be reintroduced in the next legislative session.**

**Below are a few highlights of statutory changes that may have significant impacts for counties in 2025 and beyond.**

**AB 98 (Carrillo, Juan) Planning and zoning: logistics use: truck routes**, imposes restrictions and design standards on logistics use projects within 900' of a wide variety of sensitive receptors. Under the bill, these projects include all buildings in which cargo, goods, or products are moved or stored for later distribution to businesses or retail customers and where heavy-duty trucks are involved in the movement of those goods, regardless of the size of the facility. Design standards are more aggressive for projects built on lands zoned for agriculture and all projects are restricted to siting on arterial roads, collector roads, major thoroughfares, or "local roads that predominantly serve commercial uses" (and which may not be available where projects are needed in rural areas). The bill also requires all local governments to update their circulation elements to identify and establish travel routes for the transportation of goods, materials, or freight for storage, transfer, or redistribution. These routes are to avoid residential areas and sensitive receptors. Failure to update the circulation element by January 1, 2028, exposes the local government to penalties of up to \$50,000 for each six-month period. RCRC opposed the measure. **Signed (Chapter 931, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 869 (Wood) Hospitals: seismic safety compliance**, expands the Small and Rural Hospital Relief Program for seismic and establishes a relief program for health care district hospitals; and provides for extensions of seismic safety requirement deadlines. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 801, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2346 (Lee) Organic waste reduction regulations: procurement of recovered organic waste products**, provides additional flexibility for local governments to meet CalRecycle's SB 1383 organic waste procurement requirements by allowing jurisdictions to claim credit for organic waste procured from community compost operations, vermicomposting operations, and investments made by jurisdictions to establish or expand the capacity of compostable materials handling operations or community composting operations. AB 2346 also allows jurisdictions to satisfy a portion of procurement obligations by purchasing mulch produced from tree trimming operations conducted by the jurisdiction or contractor at facilities that do not currently qualify under the existing regulations. RCRC supported this measure, which was sponsored by Stopwaste (Alameda County Waste Management Authority). **Signed (Chapter 712, Statutes of 2024)**



**AB 2469 (Committee on Emergency Management) Emergency Management Assistance Compact: California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program**, extends the sunset of the California Wildfire Mitigation Program, the state's pilot program to assist low-income homeowners with wildfire home retrofits, from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2030. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 402, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2496 (Pellerin) Foster family agencies and noncustodial adoption agencies**, enacts short-term provisions to address the impact of foster family agency (FFAs) losing insurance, which is anticipated to occur for some FFAs this fall. Specifically, the bill authorizes the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to temporarily waive provisions in order to expedite the transfer of an approval of a resource family from an FFA to a county. The bill includes provision restricting indemnification language within county contracts with FFA, which will sunset in two years. **Signed (Chapter 403, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2561 (McKinnor) Local public employees: vacant positions**, requires a public agency to present the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts during a public hearing before the governing board at least once per fiscal year and entitles the union for a bargaining unit to make a presentation at the public hearing. RCRC was pivotal in negotiating the removal of problematic meet and confer provisions. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed (Chapter 409, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2715 (Boerner) Ralph M. Brown Act: closed sessions**, authorizes local agency governing bodies to convene a closed session to consider or evaluate matters related to cybersecurity. Allowing discussion of cybersecurity in closed session helps facilitate discussion of effective and safe mechanisms to ensure the safety of public information and infrastructure. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 243, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2902 (Wood) Solid waste: reduction and recycling**, provides additional flexibility to local governments implementing the CalRecycle's SB 1383 organic waste diversion objectives, including by: 1) Extending the existing rural exemption for the 19 counties with fewer than 70,000 residents; 2) Providing flexibility and financial assistance to reduce the risk of adverse human/bear interactions related to organic waste management; 3) Increasing local benefits from edible food recovery programs; 4) Promoting the use of organics in animal feed operations; 5) Clarifying that mulch and compost give aways and rebate programs are not gifts of public funds; and, 6) Providing information on state grants and low-interest loans that may be available to reduce emissions from landfills and compost facilities. RCRC sponsored this measure. **Signed (Chapter 421, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 399 (Wahab) Employer communications: intimidation**, prohibits 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. This measure applies to all employers, including private employers and public employers such as local governments and the State of California. While on its face this bill may appear as if it would not be a problem for local agencies, it is overly broad and may 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 board of supervisors would fall under “legislation” or “regulation.” RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed (Chapter 670, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 504 (Dodd) Wildfires: defensible space: grant programs: local governments**, provides additional time for existing homes to comply with Zone 0 regulations once they are adopted and allows them to come into compliance over a longer period. Also makes important changes to facilitate the adoption of zone 0 including clarification that defensible space is not just for average weather conditions, but all for windy days when wildfires often happen. This measure will provide important guidance to regulators that there should be the same standard for both existing homes and new homes to simplify inspections and compliance. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 982, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 946 (McGuire) Personal Income Tax Law: Corporation Tax Law: exclusions: wildfire mitigation payments**, excludes payments from the California Wildfire Mitigation Program, the state's pilot grant program to aid low-income homeowners with home hardening retrofits, from eligibility for state income taxes. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 987, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1400 (Stern) Criminal procedure: competence to stand trial**, expands tracking and reporting requirements for the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act, among other provisions. This measure was a late gut and amend in the final week of session, with no opportunity for feedback by counties prior to introduction. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed (Chapter 647, Statutes of 2024)**

**The RCRC Government Affairs staff advocated on behalf of member counties on hundreds of bills over the last year. Below is a list of significant bills representing these efforts, organized by policy area.**

## **AGRICULTURE**

Several farming-related measures were considered by policymakers in 2024. Among the most contentious within this group, was a measure to amend the Williamson Act to change cancellation criteria for solar fields on contracted lands. While the measure was ultimately held, it did prompt a vigorous debate among interested stakeholders; the debate is likely to continue into the next session.

**AB 98 (Carrillo, Juan) Planning and zoning: logistics use: truck routes**, imposes restrictions and design standards on logistics use projects within 900’ of a wide variety of sensitive receptors. Under the bill, these projects include all buildings in which cargo, goods, or products are moved or stored for later distribution to businesses or retail customers and where heavy-duty trucks are involved in the movement of those goods, regardless of the size of the facility. Design standards are more aggressive for projects built on lands zoned for agriculture and all projects are restricted to siting on arterial roads, collector roads, major

thoroughfares, or "local roads that predominantly serve commercial uses" (and which may not be available where projects are needed in rural areas). The bill also requires all local governments to update their circulation elements to identify and establish travel routes for the transportation of goods, materials, or freight for storage, transfer, or redistribution. These routes are to avoid residential areas and sensitive receptors. Failure to update the circulation element by January 1, 2028, exposes the local government to penalties of up to \$50,000 for each six-month period. RCRC opposed the measure. **Signed (Chapter 931, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 1864 (Connolly) Pesticides: agricultural use near schoolsites: notification and reporting**, directs the Department of Pesticide Regulation to require a separate site identification number for the portion of an agricultural field that lies within 1/4 mile of a schoolsite. The bill would also require the department, for permit applications for agricultural use of pesticides designated as restricted materials, notices of intent for use of a pesticide designated as a restricted material, and pesticide use reporting forms and procedures, as they pertain to an agricultural field of which any portion lies within 1/4 mile of a schoolsite. **Signed (Chapter 552, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1261 (Alvarado-Gil) Horse racing: state-designated fairs: allocation of revenues: gross receipts for sales and use tax**, would have increased the amount of the total gross receipts required to be included in the next annual Governor's Budget for use by the Department of Food and Agriculture and transferred to the Fair and Exposition Fund, as specified, from 3/4 of 1% to 3%. RCRC supported this measure. **Failed Passage**

#### Williamson Act

**AB 2528 (Arambula) Williamson Act contracts: cancellation: energy projects**, would have authorized a landowner, if their land is located in the Counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, or Tulare, with a water basin in condition of critical overdraft, to petition the board or council to cancel a Williamson Act contract or a farmland security zone contract if the land meets specified criteria, including, among other things, not having permanent access to sufficient water to support commercially viable irrigated agricultural use on the land, and the landowner would be subject to a land use entitlement for specified energy projects. Would have also authorized a board or council to approve the cancellation if the board or council finds that the land does not have permanent access to sufficient water to support commercially viable irrigated agricultural use and the landowner would be subject to a land use entitlement for the specified energy projects that would use less water than the agricultural use on the land. The bill would require special energy projects to provide a community benefits package, as specified. The bill would have prohibited the imposition of a cancellation fee. impose a cancellation fee equal to 6.25% of the fair market value of the property without the restriction of the Williamson Act contract for cancellation of a Williamson Act contract, and would impose a cancellation fee equal to 12.5% of the fair market value of the property without the restriction of the contract for cancellation of a farmland security zone contract. The bill would have required cancellation fees to be collected by the county treasurer, remitted to the Controller, and, upon appropriation by the Legislature, allocated to the Department of Conservation, and for community benefits packages within the county, as specified. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

**SB 973 (Grove) Williamson Act: cancellation: solar energy projects**, would have authorized a board or council to grant a petition for cancellation where the land subject to the contract is located in a basin under the jurisdiction of an adjudicated watermaster or the groundwater sustainability agency. Would have required the landowner to commit to limiting the amount of water rights to a specific solar energy project, as defined, that uses less water than the agricultural use. Would have also required the board or council to make specified findings, including that the solar energy project use is being permitted that will use less water than the agricultural use. The bill would have prohibited the imposition of a cancellation fee when a contract is canceled pursuant to the bill's provisions. **Failed Passage**

## **CEQA/NEPA**

Throughout 2024, many legislators on both sides of the aisle bemoaned CEQA and the impact it has had on a wide variety of public and private projects throughout the state. This year, the Legislature took a few minor steps to address CEQA problems, primarily through extending the sunset date for an infill exemption for projects on unincorporated areas, ordering an evaluation of how Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) works as a metric for transportation impacts in rural areas (and the realistic availability of feasible mitigation measures), and streamlining the environmental review of small and medium sized compost facilities. The Legislature rejected broader reforms that would have addressed litigation risks, use of CEQA for anti-competitive purposes, and creation of broad CEQA exemptions for wildfire fuel reduction projects.

**AB 1554 (Patterson, Joe) California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: wildfire fuels reduction projects**, would have expressly exempted from the California Environmental Quality Act fuel reduction projects in areas within moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones. RCRC supported the measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 1951 (Fong, Vince) California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: roadside wildfire prevention projects**, would have statutorily exempted from the California Environmental Quality Act fuels reduction projects, including removal of trees and brush within 50' of either side of a roadway. The bill would fill gaps where such work would not qualify for existing statutory or categorical CEQA exemptions and is not covered by CalFire's Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP) Environmental Impact Report (EIR). RCRC supported the measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2199 (Berman) California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: residential or mixed-use housing projects**, extends an existing California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption for infill residential and mixed-use housing projects in unincorporated areas. RCRC supported the measure. **Signed (Chapter 271, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 3007 (Hoover) California Environmental Quality Act: record of environmental documents: format**, requires the county clerk of each county and the Office of Planning and Research to maintain records received from the Department of Fish and Wildlife as part of the California Environmental Quality Act process electronically and authorizes maintenance of a paper copy of those records. Effectively removes a requirement to maintain both paper and electronic copies of those records. **Signed (Chapter 583, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 768 (Caballero) California Environmental Quality Act: Department of Housing and Community Development: vehicle miles traveled: study**, requires the Department of Housing and Community Development, in consultation with local governments and other interested parties, to conduct a study on how vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is used as a metric for measuring transportation impacts of housing projects pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Importantly, the bill requires an analysis of differences in the availability and feasibility of VMT mitigation measures for housing projects in rural, suburban, and urban areas, including strategies that can be used in areas where public transportation and active transportation infrastructure are inadequate. RCRC supported the measure. **Signed (Chapter 773, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1046 (Laird) Organic waste reduction: program environmental impact report: small and medium compostable material handling facilities or operations**, seeks to expedite the construction of compost facilities by requiring CalRecycle to develop a programmatic environmental impact report (EIR) for small and medium-sized organic waste compost facilities. Once complete, local governments could use this program EIR to reduce the time, complexity, and potential for litigation when reviewing proposed small and medium-sized compost facilities. RCRC supported the measure. **Signed (Chapter 452, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1259 (Niello) California Environmental Quality Act: judicial review**, proposed several changes to expedite CEQA litigation review, improve transparency, and ensure that CEQA is not misused for non-environmental purposes, including: 1) Expediting litigation review for major commercial, housing, and public works projects that address longstanding critical needs; 2) Ensuring that judicial remedies enjoining project construction and operation are only used as a last resort when there is an imminent threat to public health and safety or the location contains unforeseen important Native American, historical, archaeological, or ecologically values that would be materially, permanently, and adversely affected; 3) Requiring judicial approval of CEQA settlements and prohibiting inclusion of nonenvironmental provisions in those settlements; and, 4) Allowing a defendant to file a motion requesting disclosure of every person or entity who made a monetary contribution of \$10,000 or more to the lawsuit. RCRC supported the measure. **Failed Passage**

**SB 1272 (Laird) California Environmental Quality Act: program environmental impact report: clean energy infrastructure projects**, would have authorized the Energy Commission to prepare a program environmental impact report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act to analyze the impacts of different classes of facilities, including solar, terrestrial wind, energy storage, and clean energy manufacturing projects that result in a capital investment of at least \$250 million. The measure would have front loaded comprehensive analyses and identification of mitigation measures and allowed the public agency reviewing the actual project to avoid having to cover issues and impacts that were already examined and mitigated in the program EIR. RCRC supported the measure. **Failed Passage**

**SB 1361 (Blakespear) California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: local agencies: contract for providing services for people experiencing homelessness**, exempts from the California Environmental Quality Act actions taken by a local agency to approve contracts providing services for homeless Californians. RCRC supported the measure. **Signed (Chapter 188, Statutes of 2024)**

## **COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

It was another active year for housing and land use policy in the Legislature. Aimed at tackling the ongoing and pervasive housing crisis, many measures were intended to address the perceived development barriers created by local governments. Specifically, there were a number of bills designed to streamline permitting, increase accountability for housing development planning, and decrease the ability of local governments to collect development fees.

As with last year, much of the telecommunication related policy has been moving through the regulatory process at the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), with a couple notable exceptions included below. RCRC was successful in both the Legislature and the CPUC in stopping efforts by the telecommunications industry to remove Carrier of Last Resort Obligations from current providers of basic telephone service.

### Community Colleges

**SB 1222 (Alvarado-Gil) Community colleges: study: Counties of Amador, Alpine, Mariposa, Modoc, and Sierra**, Community College District Study, would have required the Legislative Analyst's Office to conduct a study and prepare a report evaluating the provision of postsecondary education services and opportunities to residents of the underserved Counties of Amador, Alpine, Mariposa, Modoc, and Sierra that are not fully included within the territory of a community college district, and would require the report to include policy recommendations regarding how the state can ensure that residents of those 5 counties have opportunities to participate in both in-person and online postsecondary education programs and courses equivalent to those of similarly sized communities that are fully included within the territory of a community college district,. This bill was sponsored by RCRC. **Failed Passage**

### Housing

**AB 1820 (Schiavo) Housing development projects: applications: fees and exactions**, establishes a process through which development proponents can request preliminary project fee and exaction estimates when submitting a preliminary application, and receive a final good faith estimate of all fees and exactions related to the project after final approval, within a specified timeframe. RCRC was initially opposed to the introduced version of the bill but was able to reach a neutral position on the final language enacted. **Signed (Chapter 358, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 1886 (Alvarez) Housing Element Law: substantial compliance: Housing Accountability Act**, eliminates the current housing element "self-certification" process that allows local governments to "self-certify" their housing element or take the issue to court and have a judge determine substantial compliance with the law. This measure gives the Housing and Community Development Department the authority to determine when a city or county is certified without requiring them to provide detailed findings as to how the local jurisdictions can come into compliance. RCRC opposed this bill. **Signed (Chapter 267, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 1893 (Wicks) Housing Accountability Act: housing disapprovals: required local findings**, makes substantial changes to Builder's Remedy project triggers, approval and requirements on local jurisdictions as well as interaction with the Housing Accountability Act. This bill specifies that a local government may not disapprove a Builder's Remedy project if the local government's housing element was not in substantial compliance with the HAA. RCRC opposed this bill. **Signed (Chapter 268, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2240 (Arambula) Farm labor centers: migratory agricultural workers**, requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to analyze the feasibility and impact of transitioning housing units at Office of Migrant Services farmworker housing centers to year-round housing. RCRC worked with several member counties to amend the bill to eliminate prescriptive, one-size-fits-all requirements to quickly transition all units to year-round housing. **Signed (Chapter 523, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 3012 (Grayson) Development fees: fee schedule template: fee estimate tool**, requires cities and counties to make available on their internet websites a fee estimate tool that the public can use to calculate an estimate of fees and exactions for a proposed housing development, and requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to create a fee schedule template and a list of best practices. RCRC did not take a formal position on the bill. **Signed (Chapter 752, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 3035 (Pellerin) Farmworker housing**, expands an existing streamlined, ministerial permit review process for agricultural farmworker housing to projects located within 15 miles on area designated as farmland or grazing land within Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties. The bill also enlarges the size of projects eligible for that process in Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties from 36 units to 150 units. **Signed (Chapter 524, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 571 (Allen) Fire safety: ingress and egress route recommendations: report**, would have required the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to conduct a study and prepare a report, including recommendations, that evaluates potential improvements to state standards for ingress and egress and evacuation routes for development in the event of a natural disaster, including wildfire. The bill required OPR to convene and consult with a working group that included specified voluntary representatives, including from the Office of the State Fire Marshal and local governments. RCRC initially opposed the introduced version of this bill but worked with the author's office over two years to reach a compromise on the final language of the bill. RCRC supported enrolled legislation. **Vetoed**

**SB 937 (Wiener) Development projects: fees and charges**, prohibits a local government from requiring payment of fees or charges for public improvements or facilities on a designated residential development project before the development receives a certificate of occupancy, except under certain conditions. This bill authorizes a local government to collect certain unpaid fees or charges in accordance with a specified procedure if the housing developer does not post a performance bond or letter of credit. RCRC opposed this bill. **Signed (Chapter 290, Statutes of 2024)**

## Land Use/Planning

**AB 1000 (Reyes) Qualifying logistics use projects**, would prohibit local governments from approving warehouse development projects located within 1,000 feet of a large variety of sensitive receptors. Would also impose new conditions on local approval of warehouse projects between 750-1000 feet of those sensitive receptors, in addition to mitigation measures required under CEQA. RCRC opposed the measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 1889 (Friedman) Conservation element: wildlife and habitat connectivity**, requires the conservation element of a local general plan to consider the impact of development on the movement of wildlife and habitat connectivity. Requires a local jurisdiction, upon the next revision of one or more general plan elements on or after January 1, 2028, to update the conservation element to, among other things, identify and analyze wildlife passage features to ensure that planned development does not undermine the effectiveness of those features. **Signed (Chapter 686, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2085 (Bauer-Kahan) Planning and zoning: permitted use: community clinic**, requires ministerial approval of a permit for development of a community clinic that provides reproductive health services in a zone where office, retail, parking, or health care is a permitted use. RCRC was initially opposed to this bill as introduced but worked with the author's office to reach a neutral position on the final chaptered language. **Signed (Chapter 820, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2632 (Wilson) Planning and zoning: thrift retail stores**, prohibits a local jurisdiction from treating a thrift retail store differently from a non-thrift retail store engaged in the sale of new items that are similar to items sold by a thrift retail store for purposes of zoning, development standards, or permitting. The bill would allow a local agency to require that thrift retail stores meet certain aesthetic or design standards and regulate some aspects of the donation process. Under this bill AB 2632 a local government may not prohibit a thrift retail store from receiving used and donated items for sale in the store or other thrift retail stores, or reuse or recycling, or both reuse and recycling, through other means. RCRC opposed this bill. **Signed (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2904 (Quirk-Silva) Zoning ordinances: notice**, requires notice of a local planning commission's hearing on a proposed zoning ordinance or amendment to a zoning ordinance, if the proposed ordinance or amendment to a zoning ordinance affects the permitted uses of real property, to be published, posted, mailed, and delivered, or advertised, as applicable, at least 20 days before the hearing, instead of 10 days. RCRC initially opposed the introduced version of this bill but worked with the author's office to reach a compromise on language. RCRC was ultimately neutral on the final version of the measure. **Signed (Chapter 747, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 3177 (Carrillo, Wendy) Mitigation Fee Act: land dedications: mitigating vehicular traffic impacts**, prevents local agencies from imposing land dedication requirements on new housing developments in transit priority areas, as defined, to widen a roadway for vehicular traffic purposes, or for achieving a desired roadway width. The bill allows local governments to exercise discretion to impose a land dedication requirement as a condition of approval of a specific housing development for traffic safety features if the local agency makes a finding,



specific to the housing development project and supported by substantial evidence, that the land dedication requirement is necessary to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of the public, including pedestrians, cyclists, and children. **Signed (Chapter 436, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 610 (Wiener) Fire prevention: wildfire mitigation area: defensible space: State Fire Marshal**, would have changed the process for determining areas of the state that are at increased risk of wildfire, replacing the Fire Hazard Severity Mapping and with Wildfire Mitigation Areas. Additionally, the bill would have created statewide regulation of these areas under the authority of the State Fire Marshal. SB 610 would have also removed a local jurisdiction's ability to designate areas to be included in the WMA. RCRC had a concerns position on this measure. **Failed Passage**

### Telecommunications

**AB 1588 (Wilson) State and federal lifeline programs: eligible telecommunications carrier designations: expedited process**, would have required the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to establish an expedited process by which an existing regulated telephone service provider that offers broadband services or has an affiliate that offers broadband services can become an eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) for the purposes of providing Lifeline services. The intent of this Administration sponsored bill was to create a broadband affordability program similar to the current Lifeline program that provides subsidies for basic telephone service. RCRC did not have a formal position on the bill but was in active negotiations with the author's office. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2239 (Bonta) Digital discrimination of access: prohibition**, prohibits “digital discrimination of access” by entities that provide, facilitate, and affect consumer access to broadband internet. The expansive definitions in the bill included local governments that are deploying networks as providers or those that are just building the infrastructure for ISPs to utilize for service. Additionally, the bill included any entity that maintains rights-of-way, exposing that entity to litigation for any decision made in providing access to the right-of-way that facilitates disparate impact in digital access. RCRC had an Oppose Unless Amended position on the bill. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2765 (Pellerin) Public Utilities Commission: reports: telecommunications service: backup electricity**, requires the Public Utilities Commission to include in their annual work plan, a description of the audits and inspections conducted to ensure compliance with the commission’s backup electricity rules for providers of telecommunications service, including, but not limited to, the total number of violations identified by the commission in the prior year, aggregated by company, and a summary of enforcement actions taken for those violations. **Signed (Chapter 740, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2797 (McKinnor) Telephone corporations: carriers of last resort: tariffs**, would have allowed any Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) telecommunication provider to be relieved of its obligations to provide basic telephone service once it submitted a notice to the CPUC that the areas of service met specified requirements. RCRC opposed this bill. **Failed Passage**

## **COUNTY OPERATIONS**

This year, legislation introduced covered a wide range of issues impacting county operations, including labor relations, contracts, Brown Act/Open meetings, retirement systems, California Public Records Act, elections, and cannabis. Labor relations continues to be a hot topic in Sacramento, with lawmakers introducing a number of bills aimed at changing state labor laws. RCRC engaged on numerous labor bills affecting sympathy striking, unemployment insurance for striking workers, contracting, vacancy rates and employer relations that collectively could create circumstances in which critical public services could be at risk. A number of high-priority bills were amended to address local government concerns or were stopped during the legislative process. RCRC-sponsored Senate Bill 1064 (Laird), designed to streamline cannabis licensing, was signed by the Governor.

**AB 2591 (Quirk-Silva) Local government: youth commissions**, would have created a new mandated local program by requiring cities and counties to establish a youth commission in response to petitions from high school pupils enrolled in their jurisdiction. Also, would have overridden the structure of the existing ninety-nine local youth commissions that were developed based on local needs and conditions. Establishing new meeting bodies, which would presumably be funded by redirecting local General Fund dollars from existing programs, must remain a local decision based on local conditions and needs. RCRC advocacy efforts stopped this bill in the Assembly. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2693 (Wicks) Childhood sexual assault: statute of limitations**, would have permitted an otherwise time-barred action alleging childhood sexual assault occurring at a county juvenile detention facility to proceed if commenced by December 31, 2025. Governor Newsom vetoed the bill, expressing concern that a revival of the statute of limitations for this limited group would invite other groups to do so. **Vetoed**

**AB 2939 (Rendon) Parks: counties and cities: interpretive services**, allows the Department of Parks and Recreation to enter into community access agreements to provide interpretive services and visitor services at local parks to provide interpretative services to 30 or fewer participating park visitors at a time. Requires cities, counties, and cities and counties to treat this use of the local park in the same manner as general public use of the local park, except as provided, provided that no benefit is conferred by cities, counties, or cities and counties on eligible entities that is not conferred on the general public. **Signed (Chapter 423, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1050 (Bradford) California American Freedmen Affairs Agency: racially motivated eminent domain**, would have required the Office of Legal Affairs within the California American Freedmen Affairs Agency to, upon appropriation by the Legislature, review and act on applications from members of the public seeking compensation for land taken by racially motivated eminent domain. This measure was one of a number of bills that encompassed recommendations from the California Reparations Task Force, but notable bills, including one that would have established the California American Freedmen Affairs Agency within state government, were held on the Assembly floor. Governor Newsom vetoed this measure noting that the bill tasks a nonexistent state agency to carry out its various provisions and

requirements, while at the same time he expressed appreciation for the author's commitment to addressing racial injustice. **Vetoed**

### Brown Act

**AB 817 (Pacheco) Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body**, would have removed barriers to entry in civic participation by aligning provisions for local advisory bodies with state advisory bodies, allowing these non-decision-making sub-bodies of a legislative governing body to participate remotely via two-way virtual teleconferencing without posting of their location. RCRC co-sponsored the measure and will pursue re-introduction next legislative session. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2715 (Boerner) Ralph M. Brown Act: closed sessions**, authorizes local agency governing bodies to convene a closed session to consider or evaluate matters related to cybersecurity. Allowing discussion of cybersecurity in closed session helps facilitate discussion of effective and safe mechanisms to ensure the safety of public information and infrastructure. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 243, Statutes of 2024)**

### Cannabis

**AB 491 (Wallis) Local government: fines and penalties**, would have provided tools for addressing illicit land use activities, including unlicensed cannabis operations by establishing: (1) streamlined judicial review for minor administrative penalties (under \$25,000) imposed for unpermitted cannabis activities; (2) efficient collection of final penalty order (i.e., after administrative/judicial review is complete), in the same manner presently used for pesticide enforcement fines; (3) clarifies that priority of real property liens used to collect administrative penalties for these violations, by providing that such liens have the same priority as a judgment lien. RCRC sponsored the measure and plans to re-introduce the bill in 2025. **Failed Passage**

**AB 1111 (Pellerin) Cannabis: small producer event sales license**, would have allowed licensed cannabis farmers who cultivate less than 1 acre of cannabis to obtain a specialty event license that would permit them to sell their products to consumers at licensed cannabis events. The bill expands market access through specialty event licenses, providing more opportunities for small commercially licensed cannabis businesses in rural regions to better market their products. RCRC supported the measure. **Vetoed**

**SB 820 (Alvarado-Gil) Cannabis: enforcement: seizure of property**, would have adapted the same seizure of property provisions currently applicable to unlicensed manufacturing of alcoholic beverages (i.e., moonshining), to cover unlicensed commercial cannabis activities. In addition, this measure would invest enforcement proceeds in the Cannabis Control Fund to support equity business. RCRC sponsored this measure. **Failed Passage**

**SB 1059 (Bradford) Cannabis: local taxation: gross receipts**, prohibits a city or county from including in the definition of gross receipts, for purposes of any local tax or fee on a licensed cannabis retailer, the amount of any cannabis excise tax imposed under the Cannabis Tax Law or any sales and use taxes. **Signed (Chapter 874, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1064 (Laird) Cannabis: operator and separate premises license types: excessive concentration of licenses**, simplifies the licensing scheme for commercial cannabis activities by adding a combined activities license classification, which allows for two or more commercial cannabis activities at the same premises to be authorized under a single license and streamlines the submission of owner-related information. RCRC co-sponsored this measure. **Signed (Chapter 875, Statutes of 2024)**

### Elections

**AB 884 (Low) Elections: language accessibility**, would have expanded election language access requirements for single language minority groups which would more than double services costs and demand on labor, materials, and contracted services in many counties. This bill would have created a new state-mandated local program with no subsequent budget allocation. RCRC opposed this measure. **Vetoed**

### Labor and Employment

**AB 2404 (Lee) State and local public employees: labor relations: strikes**, would have declared the acts of sympathy striking and honoring a strike line a human right and, thereby allowing provisions in public employer policies or collective bargaining agreements going forward that would limit or prevent an employee's right to sympathy strike. RCRC's advocacy efforts successfully stopped this bill in the Assembly. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2421 (Low) Employer-employee relations: confidential communications**, would have prohibited specified public employers from questioning employees and employee representatives about communications between employees and employee representatives related to the representative's representation, with a specified exception. RCRC along with a coalition local government association successfully stopped this bill in the Senate. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2561 (McKinnor) Local public employees: vacant positions**, requires a public agency to present the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts during a public hearing before the governing board at least once per fiscal year and entitles the union for a bargaining unit to make a presentation at the public hearing. RCRC was pivotal in negotiating the removal of problematic meet and confer provisions. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed (Chapter 409, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 399 (Wahab) Employer communications: intimidation**, prohibits 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. This measure applies to all employers, including private employers and public employers such as local governments and the State of California. While on its face this bill may appear as if it would not be a problem for local agencies, it is overly broad and may 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 board of supervisors would fall under “legislation” or “regulation.” RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed (Chapter 670, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1303 (Caballero) Public works**, requires a private labor compliance entity, prior to withholding funds for an alleged violation, to confer with the negotiating parties to review relevant public works law, and prohibits the entity from withholding an amount that exceeds the alleged underpayments and penalty assessments. The bill requires a private labor compliance entity seeking to withhold funds to provide a venue for a public works contractor or subcontractor to review and respond to evidence of alleged violations, as specified. Also provides that a violation of the conflict-of-interest provisions by a private labor compliance entity, as defined, would void a contract between the parties and subject the entity to specified civil fines and fees. The bill requires a private labor compliance entity to submit a signed declaration under penalty of perjury verifying that it has no conflicts of interest, as specified. **Signed (Chapter 991, Statutes of 2024)**

#### PERS/Pension

**AB 3025 (Valencia) County employees’ retirement: disallowed compensation: benefit adjustments**, places 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. While the impacted compensation was bargained and mutually agreed upon by both employers and employees, AB 3025 unfairly places the financial consequences of the Court’s decision (Alameda County Deputy Sheriff’s Assn. v Alameda County Employees’ Retirement Assn.) on counties and other agencies. The measure requires 1937 Act County Retirement system employers to pay a “penalty” equal to 20 percent of the current actuarial value of retiree benefits deemed unlawful. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed (Chapter 427, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 252 (Gonzalez) Public retirement systems: fossil fuels: divestment**, prohibits the CalPERS and CalSTRS boards from making additional or new investments or renewing existing investments in a fossil fuel company, defined as one of the 200 largest publicly traded fossil fuel companies, as established by carbon content in the companies’ proven oil, gas, and coal reserves. Forcing divestment of California retirees’ funding ultimately transfers the ownership of the investments to other investors at a great cost to the CalPERS and CalSTRS funds, and removes the ability for the funds, as shareowners, to influence the companies to act responsibly. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

#### Public Contracts

**AB 1890 (Patterson, Joe) Public works: prevailing wage**, would have required a public agency to provide notice to the Department of Industrial Relations, within 30 days, if there is a change in the identity of a contractor or subcontractor performing a project previously reported to DIR, or, if the total amount of the contract change exceeds \$10,000. **Vetoed**

**AB 1957 (Wilson) Public contracts: best value construction contracting for counties**, authorizes counties to select a bidder on the basis of best value, as defined, for construction projects in excess of \$1,000,000. Also authorizes counties to use a best value construction

contracting method to award individual annual contracts, not to exceed \$3,000,000, for repair, remodeling, or other repetitive work to be done according to unit prices, as specified. This bill establishes procedures and criteria for the selection of a best value contractor and requires that bidders verify specified information under oath. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 58, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2489 (Ward) Local agencies: contracts for special services and temporary help**, would have unnecessarily and inflexibly curbed a local agency's authority for contracting, and likely would have resulted in worse outcomes for vulnerable communities and diminished local services for residents and students. RCRC along with a coalition local government association successfully stopped this bill in the Assembly. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2557 (Ortega) Local agencies: contracts for special services and temporary help: performance reports**, would have imposed new requirements on the governing bodies of local agencies that wish to contract out for certain services, including posting contracts and related documents on the local agency's website and providing advance notice to the public agency's affected workforce union representative. The bill also would have required public contracts for functions currently or previously performed by unionized public employees to include specified information beginning July 1, 2026. RCRC along with local government partners advocated strongly against this measure and successfully stopped the bill in the Senate. **Failed Passage**

**SB 830 (Smallwood-Cuevas) Public works**, would have, for public works contracts advertised for bid or awarded on or after January 1, 2026, expanded the definition of "public works" to include an offsite, custom fabrication of sheet metal ducts for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems produced as a nonstandard item solely and specifically designed and engineered for installation in a project, as specified. Would have required a contractor engaging a third-party, offsite fabrication facility to fabricate custom sheet metal ducts for a public works project to enter into a contract with the facility that requires compliance with specified public works laws. Would have required certified copies of payroll records for the offsite, custom fabrication of sheet metal ducts to be accompanied by a written time record of that work certified by each employee performing the work. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

**SB 1376 (Gonzalez) Public contracts: Local Agency Public Construction Act: reporting**, would have required a participating local public entity, as defined, commencing January 1, 2026, and monthly thereafter, to compile and submit to the Office of Planning and Research prescribed information on the entity's contracting activity similar to the information required for the State Contract Act report. Would have also required the Office of Planning and Research, commencing July 1, 2026, to develop and maintain a public online database and accompanying data dictionary compiling the submitted data on its internet website. **Failed Passage**

## **ENERGY**

After passing several measures in 2023 to respond to lengthy utility energization timelines, the Legislature shifted its attention in 2024 to a suite of measures seeking to simplify and shorten the permitting and litigation review process for energy infrastructure projects. While some of those measures stalled in the Legislature, the Public Utilities Commission continues to consider

a range of changes to its internal review process that could reduce the time and resources required to build transmission and distribution infrastructure. The Legislature expanded the controversial California Energy Commission AB 205 opt-in permitting process that allows developers to bypass local approvals, so now hydrogen production facilities will be able to go directly to the state for project approval. RCRC continues to work collaboratively with legislators, developers, and other local governments to share best practices and improve coordination for a host of energy-related projects.

**AB 2787 (Patterson, Joe) Energy: building standards: photovoltaic requirements**, sought to exempt homes rebuilt after certain disasters from a recent California Energy Commission mandate to install solar panels on every new home built in the state. RCRC supported the measure. **Vetoed**

**AB 3238 (Garcia) California Environmental Quality Act: electrical infrastructure projects**, would have expedited the timeframe for regulatory approval of electrical infrastructure projects by creating a narrow California Environmental Quality Act exemption for expansion of utility rights-of-way across state-owned lands and simplifying the state's approval processes for electrical transmissions lines and related infrastructure. RCRC supported the measure and crafted amendments to ensure the bill would not expand preemption of local land use authority. **Failed Passage**

**SB 1221 (Min) Gas corporations: ceasing service: priority neighborhood decarbonization zones**, creates a new Neighborhood Decarbonization Program that allows gas corporations to terminate the provision of gas service to select areas within their service territories, upon approval of 67% of impacted property owners. While expressing support for infrastructure projects that would ultimately save ratepayers money, RCRC opposed the bill because it lacks any durable requirement that impacted property owners not have to shoulder alone the cost of purchasing replacement appliance and upgrading electrical panels, which could reach up to \$20,000 per household. **Signed (Chapter 602, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1420 (Caballero) Hydrogen production facilities: certification and environmental review**, facilitates the construction of hydrogen generation facilities by expanding the California Energy Commission's AB 205 opt-in permitting process to include hydrogen production facilities. By expanding the AB 205 opt-in permitting process, the bill preempts local land use authority by allowing project developers to apply to the California Energy Commission for approval. RCRC expressed support for increasing hydrogen generation but ultimately opposed the bill because it expands eligibility for the CEC's AB 205 opt-in permitting process. **Signed (Chapter 608, Statutes of 2024)**

## **FOREST & PUBLIC LANDS STEWARDSHIP**

In 2024, the most impactful measures related to helping Californians safeguard their properties from the impacts of catastrophic wildfire. Notably, Assembly Bill 2469 (Committee on Emergency Management) and Senate Bill 946 (McGuire), which RCRC supported and helped pass both houses on consent, extend the state's home retrofit grant pilot program for low-income homeowners through the year 2030 and makes those dollars exempt from state income taxes. The Governor signed both measures, along with Assembly Bill 2276 (Wood), which

extended the sunset dates for three important timber harvest exemptions that allow small timberland owners to clear their property for wildfire prevention purposes, and Senate Bill 504 (Dodd), which gives owners of existing homes 3 years to comply with new Zone 0 defensible space regulations once they are adopted by the Board of Forestry.

RCRC also remained active in helping shape the state's forest resilience strategy at the administrative level with continued representation on the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force and the state Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee. Our participation allows RCRC to influence state and federal wildfire mitigation efforts while bringing our member counties' concerns directly to federal land managers and state wildland resilience partners.

**AB 99 (Connolly) Department of Transportation: state roads and highways: integrated pest management**, would have required Caltrans to adopt a statewide policy to use integrated pest management on state roads and highways, and to adopt a statewide policy in cities and counties that have adopted IPM approaches that ensure local policies are at least as stringent as state policy, but are allowed to be more stringent. **Vetoed**

**AB 1554 (Patterson, Joe) California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: wildfire fuels reduction projects**, would have expressly exempted from the California Environmental Quality Act fuel reduction projects in areas within moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones. RCRC supported the measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 1951 (Fong, Vince) California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: roadside wildfire prevention projects**, would have statutorily exempted from the California Environmental Quality Act fuels reduction projects, including removal of trees and brush within 50' of either side of a roadway. The bill would fill gaps where such work would not qualify for existing statutory or categorical CEQA exemptions and is not covered by CalFire's Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP) Environmental Impact Report (EIR). RCRC supported the measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2276 (Wood) Forestry: timber harvesting plans: exemptions**, recasts three important exemptions from timber harvest plan requirements necessary for small land owners to perform fuels treatment and vegetation maintenance on their properties for the purpose of wildfire mitigation and extends their sunset date to January 1, 2031. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 388, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2330 (Holden) Endangered species: incidental take: wildfire preparedness activities**, would have streamlined the process for fuels treatment projects for local governments that require an incidental take of a candidate species. RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

**AB 2469 (Committee on Emergency Management) Emergency Management Assistance Compact: California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program**, extends the sunset of the California Wildfire Mitigation Program, the state's pilot program to assist low-income homeowners with wildfire home retrofits, from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2030. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 402, Statutes of 2024)**



**SB 504 (Dodd) Wildfires: defensible space: grant programs: local governments**, provides additional time for existing homes to comply with Zone 0 regulations once they are adopted and allows them to come into compliance over a longer period. Also makes important changes to facilitate the adoption of zone 0 including clarification that defensible space is not just for average weather conditions, but all for windy days when wildfires often happen. This measure will provide important guidance to regulators that there should be the same standard for both existing homes and new homes to simplify inspections and compliance. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 982, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 675 (Limón) Prescribed grazing: local assistance grant program: Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force**, would require, on or before July 1, 2025, the Board of Forestry's Range Management Advisory Committee, in consultation with specified entities, to develop guidance for local or regional prescribed grazing plans. The bill would require the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (department) and the Department of Conservation to consider and incorporate this guidance in local assistance grant programs. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 772, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 945 (Alvarado-Gil) The Wildfire Smoke and Health Outcomes Data Act**, would have required the State Department of Public Health, in consultation with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, and the State Air Resources Board to create, operate, and maintain a statewide integrated wildfire smoke and health data platform that, among other things, would integrate wildfire smoke and health data from multiple databases. RCRC supported this measure. **Failed Passage**

**SB 946 (McGuire) Personal Income Tax Law: Corporation Tax Law: exclusions: wildfire mitigation payments**, excludes payments from the California Wildfire Mitigation Program, the state's pilot grant program to aid low-income homeowners with home hardening retrofits, from eligibility for state income taxes. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 987, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1101 (Limón) Fire prevention: prescribed fire: state contracts: maps**, streamlines the process for CAL FIRE to enter into contracts for prescribed fire operations for the purpose of fuels treatment projects. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 778, Statutes of 2024)**

## **HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL SERVICES**

Legislation introduced this year covered a wide range of issues including behavioral health, rural hospital seismic compliance, emergency medical services, CARE Court, foster family agencies (FFA) and expanding educational access for nurses in rural regions. At the end of session, Senate Bill 1400 (Stern), was substantially amended to expand tracking and reporting requirements for the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act. (Existing provisions in the bill relate to misdemeanor incompetent to stand trial procedures.) RCRC along with our county partners we able to negotiate amendments to improve the bill and will continue to advocate for additional implementation funding and clean-up.

**AB 366 (Petrie-Norris) County human services agencies: workforce development**, would have required the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) to permit local agencies that are not administering their own merit systems to use alternate processes until January 1, 2029, for screening applications and establishing eligibility lists for recruitment. In his veto message, the Governor raised concerns that the bill could result in lost federal funding, noting “Further, under current law, any county that would like independent authority in its employee selection process may petition CalHR, and CalHR offers the identified alternate selection process in any county where conditions warrant.” **Vetoed**

**AB 869 (Wood) Hospitals: seismic safety compliance**, expands the Small and Rural Hospital Relief Program for seismic; establishes a relief program for health care district hospitals; and provides for extensions of seismic safety requirement deadlines. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 801, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 1975 (Bonta) Medi-Cal: medically supportive food and nutrition interventions**, would have established medically supportive food and nutrition interventions as a Medi-Cal covered benefit when medically necessary in treating a patient’s medical condition. The Governor cited fiscal concerns in his veto message. RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

**AB 2104 (Soria) Community colleges: Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program**, would have required the California Community College Chancellor’s Office to establish a Community College Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program that would authorize 10 community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree. The Governor issued identical veto messages on AB 2104 and SB 895, stating: “All segments of higher education should continue to focus on building these [nursing] programs together, and I am concerned this bill could inadvertently undermine that collaboration. Additionally, in recent years, both the CCC and the CSU have been provided with expanded authority to offer independent programs. Given these major changes, a pause should be taken to understand their full impact before additional authorities are granted.” RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

**AB 2496 (Pellerin) Foster family agencies and noncustodial adoption agencies**, enacts short-term provisions to address the impact of foster family agency (FFAs) losing insurance, which is anticipated to occur for some FFAs this fall. Specifically, the bill authorizes the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to temporarily waive provisions in order to expedite the transfer of an approval of a resource family from an FFA to a county. The bill includes provision restricting indemnification language within county contracts with FFA, which will sunset in two years. **Signed (Chapter 403, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 895 (Roth) Community colleges: Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program**, would have required the California Community College Chancellor’s Office to establish a Community College Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program that would authorize 10 community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree. The Governor issued identical veto messages on SB 895 and AB 2104, stating: “All segments of higher education should continue to focus on building these [nursing] programs together, and I am concerned this bill could inadvertently undermine that collaboration. Additionally, in recent years, both the CCC and the CSU have been provided with expanded authority to offer

independent programs. Given these major changes, a pause should be taken to understand their full impact before additional authorities are granted.” RCRC supported this measure.

**Vetoed**

**SB 1238 (Eggman) Health facilities**, expands the definition of a psychiatric health facility to include a facility that provides inpatient care for people with severe substance use disorders or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders (SUDs). The bill also requires the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) develop regulations to include, in addition to the existing two levels of disorder, a third level for involuntary ambulatory patients receiving treatment for a severe SUD. **Signed (Chapter 644, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1396 (Alvarado-Gil) CalWORKs: Home Visiting Program**, would have extended the timeframe in which children may be enrolled and the period in which CalWORKs families are eligible to participate in Home Visiting Programs (HVPs). This bill will help to maximize the health and developmental benefits of this highly effective program for families in need across the state. RCRC supported this measure. **Failed Passage**

**SB 1400 (Stern) Criminal procedure: competence to stand trial**, expands tracking and reporting requirements for the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act, among other provisions. This measure was a late gut and amend in the final week of session, with no feedback by counties prior to introduction. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed (Chapter 647, Statutes of 2024)**

**PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

While the Legislature was relatively quiet on property insurance affordability and availability in 2024, RCRC continued to engage with the California Insurance Commissioner and the California Department of Insurance as they introduced regulatory language to implement the Administration's Sustainable Insurance Strategy.

**AB 2871 (Maienschein) Overdose fatality review teams**, allows California counties to create Overdose Fatality Review Teams to engage in system-wide team review when there is a drug fatality and to promote information sharing between county agencies as well as local stakeholders and experts. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed (Chapter 639, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2882 (McCarty) California Community Corrections Performance Incentives** would have amended the composition of the local Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) and the CCP Executive Committee as well as recast the community corrections plan development and processing requirements. RCRC along with CSAC and UCC successfully stopped this bill in the Senate. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 3179 (Carrillo, Juan) Emergency telecommunications medium- and heavy-duty zero-emission vehicles**, would have exempted certain telecommunications vehicles used by emergency telecommunications providers from the provisions of the Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) regulations until January 1, 2030. RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

**SB 1057 (Menjivar) Juvenile justice coordinating council**, would have required at least 50 percent community representation for local Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils (JJCCs) as well as a co-chair leadership model under which the chief probation officer and a community member would have shared chair responsibilities, among other provisions. RCRC, along with CSAC and UCC, successfully stopped this bill in the Senate. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

**SB 1060 (Becker) Property insurance underwriting: risk models**, would have encouraged companies offering property insurance in California and utilizing risk assessment models in their underwriting to account for home hardening, defensible space, and community wildfire risk mitigation measures in their models. RCRC supported this measure. **Failed Passage**

## **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

The Legislature considered and passed a large number of solid waste-related measures in 2024. Of the roughly dozen SB 1383 organic waste related measures that were introduced, a handful were signed into law. Most of the organic waste related measures seek to provide the state and local governments with more flexibility in implementing SB 1383 or streamlining the process for permitting new small and medium-sized composting facilities. Other measures impose new producer responsibility programs for the recycling of textiles and paints or phase out the sale of small, single-use disposable propane cylinders.

**AB 2346 (Lee) Organic waste reduction regulations: procurement of recovered organic waste products**, provides additional flexibility for local governments to meet CalRecycle's SB 1383 organic waste procurement requirements by allowing jurisdictions to claim credit for organic waste procured from community compost operations, vermicomposting operations, and investments made by jurisdictions to establish or expand the capacity of compostable materials handling operations or community composting operations. This measure also allows jurisdictions to satisfy a portion of procurement obligations by purchasing mulch produced from tree trimming operations conducted by the jurisdiction or contractor at facilities that do not currently qualify under the existing regulations. RCRC supported this measure, which was sponsored by Stopwaste (Alameda County Waste Management Authority). **Signed (Chapter 712, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2902 (Wood) Solid waste: reduction and recycling**, provides additional flexibility to local governments implementing the CalRecycle's SB 1383 organic waste diversion objectives, including by: 1) Extending the existing rural exemption for the 19 counties with fewer than 70,000 residents; 2) Providing flexibility and financial assistance to reduce the risk of adverse human/bear interactions related to organic waste management; 3) Increasing local benefits from edible food recovery programs; 4) Promoting the use of organics in animal feed operations; 5) Clarifying that mulch and compost give aways and rebate programs are not gifts of public funds; and, 6) Providing information on state grants and low-interest loans that may be available to reduce emissions from landfills and compost facilities. RCRC sponsored this measure. **Signed (Chapter 421, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 707 (Newman) Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024**, requires textile manufacturers to establish stewardship organizations for the collection, transportation, and

recycling of used textiles that are no longer suitable for reuse by consumers, thereby ensuring that consumers throughout the state – including rural areas - will have convenient access to free takeback and recycling opportunities. Under the new law, the stewardship organization shall include as a collection site any local jurisdiction that offers to participate in the program. RCRC supported the measure. **Signed (Chapter 864, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 972 (Min) Methane emissions: organic waste: landfills**, would have required CalRecycle to develop a process for local governments to request technical assistance on how to comply with, and implement, SB 1383's organic waste recycling requirements. The bill would have also required CalRecycle to consider providing technical assistance before exercising its enforcement authority against the local jurisdiction. RCRC supported the measure, which was sponsored by the League of California Cities. **Vetoed**

**SB 1045 (Blakespear) Composting facilities: zoning**, would have required the Office of Planning and Research to develop sample general plan goals, policies, and implementation measures and a model ordinance that reflects best practices for the siting of composting facilities. The bill would have required local governments to consider those best practices when they perform the next substantive revision of their land use elements on or after January 1, 2028. Local governments would have also been required to consider updating land use elements to identify areas where composting facilities may be appropriate as an allowable use. RCRC supported the bill after recrafting it into something that would be useful (and not harmful) to local governments. **Failed Passage**

**SB 1046 (Laird) Organic waste reduction: program environmental impact report: small and medium compostable material handling facilities or operations**, seeks to expedite the construction of compost facilities by requiring CalRecycle to develop a programmatic environmental impact report (EIR) for small and medium-sized organic waste compost facilities. Once complete, local governments could use this program EIR to reduce the time, complexity, and potential for litigation when reviewing proposed small and medium-sized compost facilities. RCRC supported the measure. **Signed (Chapter 452, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1066 (Blakespear) Hazardous waste: marine flares: manufacturer responsibility**, would have required manufacturers to create, fund, and implement a producer responsibility program for the end-of-life management of expired marine flares. RCRC supported the measure as a way to reduce local hazardous waste management costs and increase consumer convenience for the safe and proper collection of explosive materials. **Vetoed**

**SB 1143 (Allen) Paint products: stewardship program**, as originally drafted, would have required manufacturers of certain types of products that become household hazardous wastes at the end of their useful lives to participate in a producer responsibility program to provide a free and convenient collection and management system for those products. Products impacted included a wide variety of cleaners, adhesives, electronics, lubricants, flammable materials, pool chemicals, and universal wastes that are collected and managed by local household hazardous waste collection facilities. RCRC supported the measure in this form; however, it was subsequently narrowed to simply expand the state's paint stewardship program to include a wider variety of paint products. **Signed (Chapter 989, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1175 (Ochoa Bogh) Organic waste: reduction goals: local jurisdictions: waivers**, would have provided more flexibility to CalRecycle and to local governments to allow for consideration of alternative boundaries and methodologies for determining eligibility for low-population waivers under SB 1383's organic waste recycling law. RCRC supported the measure. **Failed Passage**

**SB 1280 (Laird) Waste management: propane cylinders: reusable or refillable**, requires one pound propane cylinders sold in the state to be reusable or refillable by January 1, 2028. By requiring small propane cylinders to be reusable or refillable, the bill will significantly reduce the amount of waste from single-use propane cylinders, thereby substantially reducing local hazardous waste management costs. RCRC supported the measure. **Signed (Chapter 466, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1359 (Wilk) Illegal dumping**, would have increased penalties for illegal dumping of solid waste. The bill would have also closed a loophole to allow prosecution of those who are engaged in, or allow the illegal dumping of, waste matter upon their own property where a permit or license for those activities was required by a state or local agency but was not obtained. RCRC supported the measure. **Failed Passage**

**SB 1426 (Blakespear) Waste reduction: undiverted materials**, sought to provide a pathway for alternative providers to collect unspecified waste materials for recycling, but in doing so would have undermined and preempted local authority to regulate the collection and management of solid and organic waste, obstructed local efforts to achieve the state's solid and organic waste diversion and recycling goals, and overridden local execution of franchise agreements with haulers. RCRC opposed the measure. **Failed Passage**

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation proposals largely split between two lanes of policy: (1) imposing new requirements on large funding programs to condition or deny monies to projects determined to be contrary to the state's climate goals, and (2) restricting the discretion of local transportation authorities to plan and organize their streets and lanes according to their local need. Under the former category, the most ambitious bills died under their own weight and lack of direction, particularly due to local and labor opposition who were able to forecast the significant impacts from those bills as proposed. Under the latter, RCRC and other local advocates worked to pare back bill language to regain or retain as much local discretion as possible.

**AB 6 (Friedman) Transportation planning: regional transportation plans: reduction of greenhouse gas emissions**, would have amended local reporting and transportation project review requirements, under SB 375 (2008), for the state's 18 metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), for project information pertaining to climate and greenhouse gas emissions impacts. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 7 (Friedman) Transportation: planning: project selection processes**, would have required transportation projects funded with state or federal dollars, at least in part, to

incorporate several, specified principles that include improving road safety, conformity with federal project streamlining, ADA compliance, water and air quality impacts, climate impacts, and access to disadvantaged communities, among others. Would also require State Transportation Agency to submit a report to the legislature on how all funded projects conform to the requirements of this legislation. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2037 (Papan) Weights and measures: electric vehicle chargers**, authorizes a county sealer to test and verify as correct any electric vehicle charger operated by a public agency, as defined, that is located in the county in which the sealer has jurisdiction, beginning 2026. The bill would require a county sealer, upon testing and finding that an electric vehicle charger operated by a public agency is incorrect, as defined, to cause it to be marked with the words “out of order” and require the charger to be repaired or corrected, as specified. The bill would authorize a county board of supervisors to charge an annual registration fee for the cost of inspecting and testing an electric vehicle charger operated by a public agency, as specified. **Signed (Chapter 692, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 2261 (Garcia) Transportation: federal funding: tribes**, requires a federally recognized Native American tribe to be eligible for federal funding for a transportation project and authorize the tribe to be the lead agency for a transportation project that receives federal funding. This bill takes effect immediately upon signature as an urgency statute. **Signed (Chapter 102, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1193 (Menjivar) Airports: leaded aviation gasoline**, prohibits an airport operator or aviation retail establishment, as defined, from selling, distributing, or otherwise making available leaded aviation gasoline to consumers on or after January 1, 2031. Because these provisions would be part of the State Aeronautics Act, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. RCRC opposed this measure unless amended. **Signed (Chapter 460, Statutes of 2024)**

## **WATER**

After several years of far-reaching legislative proposals in response to multi-year drought, Water Policy was quieter this year. Nonetheless, several proposed measures would have extended or expanded restrictions to domestic water use, or limited the ability of local permitting authorities to control groundwater development decisions. There was also a strain of bills seeking to expand the authority of State Water Board to regulate, fine, and penalize a variety of activities. Fortunately, most of the aforementioned legislation was defeated during the legislative process. For those bills that did make it to the Governor’s desk, most were significantly amended to limit their impact.

**AB 460 (Bauer-Kahan) State Water Resources Control Board: water rights and usage: civil penalties**, authorizes State Water Resources Control Board to adjust for inflation, by January 1 of each year, beginning in 2026, the amounts of civil and administrative liabilities or penalties imposed by the board or in water right actions brought at the request of the board. Increases the amount of civil liability to \$1000 per violation per day for violations of board orders or enforcement of regulations. **Signed (Chapter 342, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 560 (Bennett) Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: groundwater adjudication**, would have required parties to a groundwater adjudication action to submit a proposed settlement agreement determining rights to water to the board for a nonbinding advisory determination as to whether the proposed settlement agreement will substantially impair the ability of a groundwater sustainability agency, the board, or the department to achieve sustainable groundwater management before filing the proposed settlement agreement with the court. **Failed Passage**

**AB 828 (Connolly) Sustainable groundwater management: managed wetlands**, would have defined managed wetland and small community system under SGMA, and would have imposed new monitoring and reporting requirements in relation to both. **Vetoed**

**AB 1272 (Wood) State Water Resources Control Board: drought planning**, would have required State Water Board to establish a program, in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, to adopt principles and guidelines for diversion and use of water in coastal watersheds, as specified, during times of water shortage for drought preparedness and climate resiliency. The bill would have required that the principles and guidelines provide for the development of watershed-level plans to support public trust uses, public health and safety, and the human right to water in times of water shortage, among other things. **Vetoed**

**AB 1337 (Wicks) State Water Resources Control Board: water diversion curtailment**, would have expanded the instances when the diversion or use of water is considered a trespass, and would direct State Water Board to adopt regulations for various water conservation purposes, including, but not limited to, to prevent the waste, unreasonable use, unreasonable method of use, or unreasonable method of diversion of water, and to implement these regulations through orders curtailing the diversion or use of water under any claim of right. **Failed Passage**

**AB 1563 (Bennett) Groundwater sustainability agency: groundwater extraction permit: verification**, would have required a county, city, or any other water well permitting agency to obtain a written verification from the groundwater sustainability agency that manages the basin or area of the basin where the well is proposed to be located determining that, among other things, the extraction by the proposed well is consistent with any sustainable groundwater management program. RCRC opposed this measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 1573 (Friedman) Water conservation: landscape design: model ordinance**, would have required State Water Board to update their local model ordinance to include provisions that require that plants included in a landscape design plan be selected based on their adaptability to climatic, geological, and topographical conditions of the project site, as specified. **Failed Passage**

**AB 1597 (Alvarez) Water quality: California-Mexico cross-border watersheds**, sought to improve water quality and public health by allowing the state to provide funds to the North American Development Bank for loans, grants, and direct expenditures to address water quality problems arising in the California-Mexico cross-border rivers. Funding would only be available for water quality projects for the Tijuana River and for projects consistent with the New River



Water Quality, Public Health, and River Parkway Development Plan. RCRC supported this measure. **Failed Passage**

**AB 1827 (Papan) Local government: fees and charges: water: higher consumptive water parcels**, provides local governments the authority to impose or increase certain fees or charges for property-related water service to include the incrementally higher costs of water service due to specified factors, including the higher water usage demand of parcels. **Signed (Chapter 359, Statutes of 2024)**

**AB 1851 (Holden) Drinking water: schoolsites: lead testing pilot program**, would have required the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a pilot program to test for and remediate lead contamination in drinking water at participating local educational agency facilities with plumbing that was installed before January 1, 2010. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2079 (Bennett) Groundwater extraction: large-diameter, high-capacity water wells: permits**, would have required local enforcement authorities (LEAs) to provide notice by electronic posting over mail and to all affected parties w/n a quarter mile of a proposed well site seeking permit. Requires LEAs to deny permits for large diameter wells if that well would result in subsidence and the lowering of local groundwater levels as specified in the bill. RCRC opposed this measure unless amended. **Failed Passage**

**AB 2599 (Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials, ) Water: public beaches: discontinuation of residential water service**, authorizes local health officers, when testing coastal and surface waters for microbial contamination, to meet the testing requirements by utilizing test results from other parties conducting microbiological contamination testing of the waters under their jurisdiction only if the data from test results from other parties meets the same quality requirements that apply to local agencies pursuant to specified regulations and standards. Also requires that test results used by the local health officer be made available to the public. **Signed (Chapter 411, Statutes of 2024)**

**SB 1156 (Hurtado) Groundwater sustainability agencies: conflicts of interest: financial interest disclosures**, requires members of the board of directors of a groundwater sustainability agency (GSA) and its executive, as defined, to file statements of economic interests, according to the filing requirements described above, with the Fair Political Practices Commission using the Commission's online system for filing statements of economic interests. **Signed (Chapter 458, Statutes of 2024)**

## **WILDLIFE**

**AB 2330 (Holden) Endangered species: incidental take: wildfire preparedness activities**, would have streamlined the process for fuels treatment projects for local governments that require an incidental take of a candidate species. RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**



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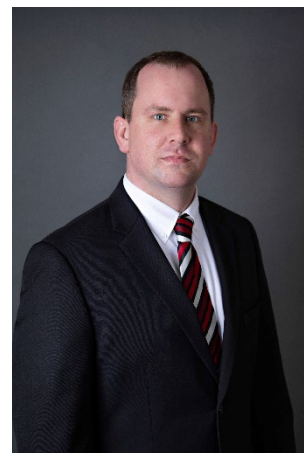
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