



RCRC 2025 LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LEGISLATION WITH SIGNIFICANT COUNTY IMPLIMENTATION IMPACTS

<i>AB 1 (Connolly): Residential property insurance: wildfire risk.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>AB 8 (Aguiar-Curry): Cannabis: cannabinoids: industrial hemp</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>AB 339 (Ortega): Local public employee organizations: notice requirements.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>AB 343 (Pacheco): California Public Records Act: elected or appointed officials</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>AB 370 (Carrillo): California Public Records: cyberattacks</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>AB 418 (Wilson): Property taxation: tax-defaulted property</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>AB 518 (Ward): Low-impact camping areas.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>AB 531 (Rogers): Geothermal powerplants and projects: certification and environmental review</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>SB 72 (Caballero): The California Water Plan: long-term supply targets</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>SB 131 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review): Public Resources</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>SB 254 (Becker): Energy</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>SB 283 (Laird): Energy storage systems</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>SB 346 (Durazo): Local agencies: transient occupancy taxes: short-term rental facilitator.</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>SB 415 (Reyes): Planning and zoning: logistics use developments: truck routes.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>SB 547 (Pérez): Commercial property insurance cancellation and nonrenewal.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>SB 707 (Durazo): Open meetings: meeting and teleconference requirements</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>SB 840 (Limón): Greenhouse gases: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: studies</i>	<i>4</i>
AGRICULTURE	4
<i>AB 312 (Alanis): Agricultural theft prevention: retention and sale of agricultural commodity: holding and deposit of proceeds</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>AB 928 (Rogers): Roosters: restrictions.....</i>	<i>5</i>
AIR QUALITY	5
<i>AB 513 (Gonzalez, Jeff): California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: scoping plan .</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>AB 555 (Jackson): Air resources: regulatory impacts: transportation fuel costs.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>AB 911 (Carrillo): Emergency telecommunications medium- and heavy-duty zero-emission vehicles.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>AB 1207 (Irwin): Climate change: market-based compliance mechanism: extension</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>SB 496 (Hurtado): Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation: appeals advisory committee: exemptions.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>SB 840 (Limón): Greenhouse gases: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: studies</i>	<i>5</i>

CEQA	6
<i>AB 66 (Tangipa): California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: egress route projects: fire safety</i>	6
<i>AB 130 (Committee on Budget): Housing</i>	6
<i>AB 404 (Sanchez): California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel reduction projects</i>	6
<i>AB 839 (Rubio, Blanca): California Environmental Quality Act: expedited judicial review: sustainable aviation fuel projects</i>	6
<i>AB 1227 (Ellis): Wildfire safety: fuels reduction projects</i>	6
<i>AB 1456 (Bryan): California Environmental Quality Act: California Vegetation Treatment Program</i>	6
<i>SB 131 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review): Public Resources</i>	7
<i>SB 426 (Alvarado-Gil): California Environmental Quality Act: defensible space</i>	8
<i>SB 607 (Wiener): California Science and Health Research Bond Act</i>	8
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	8
<i>AB 265 (Caloza): Small Business Recovery Fund</i>	9
<i>AB 417 (Carrillo): Local finance: enhanced infrastructure financing districts: community revitalization and investment authorities</i>	9
<i>AB 1039 (Hart): State-funded assistance grants and contracts: advance payments</i>	9
<i>SB 74 (Seyarto): Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation: Infrastructure Gap-Fund Program</i>	9
<i>SB 415 (Reyes): Planning and zoning: logistics use developments: truck routes</i>	9
<i>SB 769 (Caballero): The Golden State Infrastructure Corporation Act</i>	9
<i>Animals</i>	9
<i>AB 793 (Schultz): Potentially dangerous and vicious dogs: designation and disposition: burden of proof</i>	9
<i>AB 1482 (Castillo): Bowie’s Law: animals: adoption, shelter overcrowding, and breeding</i>	9
<i>SB 602 (Cortese): Veterinarians: veterinarian-client-patient relationship</i>	10
<i>Building Standards</i>	10
<i>AB 6 (Ward): Residential developments: building standards: review</i>	10
<i>AB 368 (Ward): Energy: building standards: passive house standards</i>	10
<i>AB 671 (Wicks): Accelerated restaurant building plan approval: California Retail Food Code: tenant improvements</i>	10

Community Colleges	10
<i>AB 240 (Alanis): Community colleges: study: Counties of Amador, Alpine, Mariposa, Modoc, and Sierra.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>AB 1400 (Soria): Community colleges: Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program ..</i>	<i>10</i>
Fairs	11
<i>AB 258 (Connolly): Fairs: allocation of revenues: gross receipts for sales and use tax</i>	<i>11</i>
Housing	11
<i>AB 36 (Soria): Housing elements: prohousing designation.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 249 (Ramos): Housing: Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention program: youth-specific processes and coordinated entry systems</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 253 (Ward): California Residential Private Permitting Review Act: residential building permits</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 610 (Alvarez): Housing element: governmental constraints: disclosure statement</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 726 (Ávila Farías): Planning and zoning: annual report: rehabilitated units</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 790 (Ávila Farías): Homelessness: single women with children.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 1021 (Wicks): Housing: local educational agencies</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 1061 (Quirk-Silva): Housing developments: urban lot splits: historical resources</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>AB 1154 (Carrillo): Junior accessory dwelling units</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>AB 1308 (Hoover): Residential building permits: inspections: Housing Accountability Act</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>SB 9 (Arreguín): Accessory Dwelling Units: ordinances</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>SB 625 (Wahab): Housing developments: disasters: reconstruction of destroyed or damaged structures</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>SB 838 (Durazo): Housing Accountability Act: housing development projects</i>	<i>12</i>
Land Use/Planning.....	12
<i>AB 52 (Aguiar-Curry): Native American resources.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>AB 301 (Schiavo): Planning and zoning: housing development projects: postentitlement phase permits: state agencies</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>AB 462 (Lowenthal): Land use: accessory dwelling units</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 507 (Haney): Adaptive reuse: streamlining: incentives</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 660 (Wilson): Planning and Zoning Law: postentitlement phase permits: Housing Accountability Act.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 670 (Quirk-Silva): Planning and zoning: housing element: converted affordable housing units.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 818 (Ávila Farías): Permit Streamlining Act: local emergencies.....</i>	<i>13</i>

<i>AB 1007 (Rubio, Blanca): Land use: development project review</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 1294 (Haney): Planning and zoning: housing development: standardized application form.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>SB 299 (Cabaldon): Local government: ordinances.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 340 (Laird): General plans: housing element: emergency shelter.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 358 (Becker): Mitigation Fee Act: mitigating vehicular traffic impacts</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 484 (Laird): Coastal resources: coastal development permits: infill area categorical exclusion.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 507 (Limón): Planning and zoning: regional housing needs allocation.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 543 (McNerney): Accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Property Tax</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 5 (Cabaldon): Enhanced infrastructure financing districts and community revitalization and investment areas: allocation of taxes: agricultural land exclusion.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Telecommunications</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 93 (Papan): Water resources: data centers.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 330 (Rogers): Local Prepaid Mobile Telephony Services Collection Act.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 353 (Boerner): Communications: broadband internet service providers: affordable home internet service.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 470 (McKinnor): Telephone corporations: carriers of last resort.....</i>	<i>15</i>
COUNTY OPERATIONS	15
<i>AB 518 (Ward): Low-impact camping areas.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 614 (Lee): Claims against public entities.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 632 (Hart): Local ordinances: administrative fines or penalties.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>AB 1022 (Kalra): Authority to remove vehicles.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>AB 1337 (Ward): Information Practices Act of 1977.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>AB 1430 (Bennett): County recorders: fees</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>SB 303 (Smallwood-Cuevas): Employment: bias mitigation training: unlawful discrimination.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>SB 757 (Richardson): Local government: nuisance abatement.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>SB 777 (Richardson): Abandoned cemeteries: report.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Brown Act.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>AB 343 (Pacheco): California Public Records Act: elected or appointed officials</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>AB 370 (Carrillo): California Public Records Act: cyberattacks.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>SB 239 (Arreguín): Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>SB 707 (Durazo): Open meetings: meeting and teleconference requirements.....</i>	<i>17</i>

Cannabis.....	17
<i>AB 8 (Aguiar-Curry): Cannabis: cannabinoids: industrial hemp</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>SB 378 (Wiener): Online marketplaces: illicit cannabis: reporting and liability</i>	<i>17</i>
County Finance.....	17
<i>SB 832 (Allen): State government.....</i>	<i>17</i>
Elections	17
<i>AB 1441 (Soria): County of Merced Citizens Redistricting Commission</i>	<i>17</i>
Labor and Employment.....	17
<i>AB 339 (Ortega): Local public employee organizations: notice requirements.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>AB 340 (Ahrens): Employer-employee relations: confidential communications</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>AB 465 (Zbur): Local public employees: memoranda of understanding.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 589 (Gallagher): Firefighters: personal protective equipment.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 692 (Kalra): Employment: contracts in restraint of trade</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 1018 (Bauer-Kahan): Automated decision systems</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 1109 (Kalra): Evidentiary privileges: union agent-represented worker privilege.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 1198 (Haney): Public works: prevailing wages.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 1331 (Elhawary): Workplace surveillance</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>SB 7 (McNerney): Employment: automated decision systems.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>SB 238 (Smallwood-Cuevas): Workplace surveillance tools.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>SB 464 (Smallwood-Cuevas): Employer pay data</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>SB 485 (Reyes): County public defender: appointment</i>	<i>19</i>
Mandates	19
<i>AB 964 (Hadwick): Commission on State Mandates: state mandates</i>	<i>19</i>
PERS/Pension	19
<i>AB 1383 (McKinnor): Public employees' retirement benefits</i>	<i>19</i>
Public Contracts.....	19
<i>AB 538 (Berman): Public works: payroll records.....</i>	<i>19</i>
Tax.....	19
<i>AB 418 (Wilson): Property taxation: tax-defaulted property</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>SB 359 (Niello): Use Fuel Tax Law: Diesel Fuel Tax Law: exempt bus operation</i>	<i>19</i>
Transient Occupancy Tax	19
<i>SB 346 (Durazo): Local agencies: transient occupancy taxes: short-term rental facilitator.....</i>	<i>19</i>
Workers Compensation.....	20

<i>AB 1293 (Wallis): Workers' compensation: qualified medical evaluators.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>SB 487 (Grayson): Workers' compensation.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>SB 632 (Arreguin): Workers' compensation: hospital employees.....</i>	<i>20</i>
ENERGY	20
<i>AB 39 (Zbur): General plans: Local Electrification Planning Act</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>AB 531 (Rogers): Geothermal powerplants and projects: certification and environmental review</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>AB 615 (Davies): Power facilities: emergency response and action plans.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>AB 716 (Carrillo): Fire safety standards: hydrogen facilities</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 738 (Tangipa): Energy: building standards: photovoltaic requirements.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 852 (Wallis): Air pollution: oxides of nitrogen: furnaces and water heaters.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 1016 (Gonzalez, Jeff): Power facility and site certifications: thermal powerplants: geothermal resources</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 1156 (Wicks): Solar-use easements: suspension of Williamson Act contracts: terms of easement: termination</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 1285 (Committee on Emergency Management): State Fire Marshal: lithium-ion battery facilities: guidance.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>SB 254 (Becker): Energy</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>SB 283 (Laird): Energy storage systems</i>	<i>21</i>
FOREST & PUBLIC LANDS STEWARDSHIP	21
<i>AB 763 (Ward): Timber harvesting: streambed agreement: waste discharge requirements.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>AB 900 (Papan): Environmental protection: 30x30 goals: land conservation: stewardship.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Wildfire</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>AB 261 (Quirk-Silva): Fire safety: fire hazard severity zones: State Fire Marshal.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>AB 441 (Hadwick): Wildfire prevention: Office of Wildfire Technology Research and Development: wildfire mitigation program</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>SB 223 (Alvarado-Gil): The Wildfire Smoke and Health Outcomes Data Act.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>SB 375 (Grove): Wildfire prevention activities: Endangered Species Act: California Environmental Quality Act: California Coastal Act of 1973</i>	<i>23</i>
HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL SERVICES	23
<i>AB 283 (Haney): In-Home Supportive Services Employer-Employee Relations Act.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>AB 416 (Krell): Involuntary commitment.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>AB 870 (Hadwick): California Children's Services Program: county designation</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>AB 1288 (Addis): Registered environmental health specialists.....</i>	<i>23</i>

<i>AB 1460 (Rogers): Prescription drug pricing.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>SB 331 (Menjivar): Substance abuse.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>SB 483 (Stern): Mental health diversion</i>	<i>23</i>
PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	24
<i>AB 1 (Connolly): Residential property insurance: wildfire risk.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>AB 372 (Bennett): Office of Emergency Services: state matching funds: water system infrastructure improvements.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>AB 690 (Schultz): Criminal procedure: indigent defense compensation</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>AB 719 (Calderon): County emergency plans.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>AB 732 (Macedo): Agriculture: neglected or abandoned crops: public nuisances: pests..</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>SB 319 (Ashby): Criminal justice statistics: reporting.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>SB 413 (Allen): Juveniles: case file inspection.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>SB 499 (Stern): Residential projects: fees and charges.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>SB 525 (Jones): California FAIR Plan: manufactured homes</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>SB 547 (Pérez): Commercial property insurance cancellation and nonrenewal.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>SB 616 (Rubio): Community Hardening Commission: wildfire mitigation program.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>SB 629 (Durazo): Wildfires: fire hazard severity zones: post-wildfire safety areas</i>	<i>25</i>
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT	25
<i>AB 28 (Schiavo): Solid waste landfills: subsurface temperatures</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>AB 411 (Papan): Livestock carcasses: disposal: composting</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>AB 436 (Ransom): Composting facilities: zoning</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>AB 762 (Irwin): Disposable, battery-embedded vapor inhalation device: prohibition.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 993 (Hadwick): Hazardous materials management: Rural CUPA Reimbursement Account.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 998 (Hadwick): Household hazardous waste: vape pens.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 1046 (Bains): Short-lived climate pollutants: recovered organic waste product: agricultural crop preparation service</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 1304 (Schultz): Paint product recovery program: paint recovery: education and outreach.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 1325 (Rodriguez, Michelle): Lubricants and waste oil: producer responsibility</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>SB 279 (McNerney): Solid waste: compostable materials</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>SB 501 (Allen): Household Hazardous Waste Producer Responsibility Act.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>SB 561 (Blakespear): Hazardous waste: Emergency Distress Flare Safe Disposal Act...</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>SB 594 (Padilla): Waste discharge permits: landfills.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>SB 615 (Allen): Vehicle traction batteries.....</i>	<i>27</i>

TRANSPORTATION.....	27
<i>AB 390 (Wilson): Vehicles: highway safety.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>AB 394 (Wilson): Public transportation providers.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>AB 431 (Wilson): Advanced Air Mobility Infrastructure Act</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>AB 438 (Hadwick): Authorized emergency vehicles.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>AB 830 (Rogers): State highways: encroachment permits: relocating or removing encroachments: public utility districts: County of Mendocino</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>AB 1014 (Rogers): Traffic safety: speed limits.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>AB 1421 (Wilson): Vehicles: Road Usage Charge Technical Advisory Committee.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>SB 445 (Wiener): High-speed rail: third-party agreements, permits, and approvals: regulations</i>	<i>28</i>
WATER	28
<i>AB 263 (Rogers): Scott River: Shasta River: watersheds.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>AB 269 (Bennett): Dam Safety and Climate Resilience Local Assistance Program.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>AB 293 (Bennett): Groundwater sustainability agency: transparency</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>AB 430 (Alanis): State Water Resources Control Board: emergency regulations.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>AB 532 (Ransom): Water rate assistance program.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>AB 639 (Soria): Dams: exceptions.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>AB 709 (Gonzalez, Jeff): Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: groundwater sustainability plans.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>AB 794 (Gabriel): California Safe Drinking Water Act: emergency regulations.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>SB 31 (McNerney): Water quality: recycled water.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>SB 72 (Caballero): The California Water Plan: long-term supply targets</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>SB 224 (Hurtado): Department of Water Resources: water supply forecasting</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 317 (Hurtado): Wastewater surveillance</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 350 (Durazo): Water Rate Assistance Program</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 394 (Allen): Water theft: fire hydrants.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 463 (Alvarado-Gil): Drought planning: resiliency measures</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 601 (Allen): Water: waste discharge</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 697 (Laird): Determination of water rights: stream system.....</i>	<i>30</i>
WILDLIFE	30
<i>AB 846 (Connolly): Endangered species: incidental take: wildfire preparedness activities.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>AB 902 (Schultz): Transportation projects: barriers to wildlife movement.....</i>	<i>31</i>

RCRC 2025 LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

As a result of the 2025 legislative session California will see 794 new laws take effect in 2026, 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 2026 and beyond.

AB 1 (Connolly): Residential property insurance: wildfire risk, requires the California Department of Insurance (CDI) to consider whether to update the “Safer from Wildfire” regulations to include home hardening in the regulations on or before January 1, 2030. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 472, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 8 (Aguiar-Curry): Cannabis: cannabinoids: industrial hemp, makes important changes to regulate intoxicating hemp to protect the health and safety of our communities and prevent these untested, untaxed, and unregulated products from undercutting the licensed cannabis market. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 248, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 339 (Ortega): Local public employee organizations: notice requirements, requires the governing body of a local public agency (non-school) to provide written notice to the employee organization no less than 60 days prior to issuing any request for proposals, request for quotes, or renewing or extending an existing contract to perform services that are within the scope of work of the job classifications represented by the recognized employee organization, and to engage in potentially extensive and lengthy negotiations regarding each of those actions upon request. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 687, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 343 (Pacheco): California Public Records Act: elected or appointed officials, California law prohibits the online posting of an elected or appointed official's home address, telephone number, and parcel number without their permission. AB 343 extends the definition of elected or appointed official to retired state, federal, and tribal judges, court commissioners, and federal defenders. **Signed, (Chapter 142, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 370 (Carrillo): California Public Records: cyberattacks, amends the definition of “unusual circumstances,” in the California Public Records Act (PRA) to include the inability of an agency to access its electronic servers due to a cyberattack, providing some narrow, limited relief to counties when they receive PRA requests that are inaccessible due to a cyberattack. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 34, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 418 (Wilson): Property taxation: tax-defaulted property, preserves the ability of California counties to utilize Chapter 8 sales of tax-defaulted properties. Ensures that the

owners of such properties are able to participate in an administrative process if they disagree with the tax sale value established by the tax collector and proposed for approval by the Board of Supervisors. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 149, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 518 (Ward): Low-impact camping areas, exempts a “low-impact camping area” from having to receive a state permit as required by the Special Occupancy Parks Act (SOPA) under certain circumstances to allow counties discretion to permit such facilities. Requires an online hosting platform to include the name of the county where the low-impact camping area is located and a field for the operator to enter a license, permit, or registration. Also, requires the online hosting platform to remove any listing for a low-impact camping area from the platform within seven days of receiving a notification by the authorizing county when certain conditions are met. **Signed, (Chapter 157, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 531 (Rogers): Geothermal powerplants and projects: certification and environmental review, expands the authority of the California Energy Commission (CEC) to override local control and permit smaller geothermal energy facilities under 50MW. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 372, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 72 (Caballero): The California Water Plan: long-term supply targets, updates the California Water Plan to manage and develop water resources for current and future generations in the state. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 210, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 131 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review): Public Resources, provides much needed CEQA relief, including:

- Declares that CEQA should not be used primarily for economic interests, to stifle competition, gain competitive advantage, or delay projects for reasons unrelated to environmental protection.
- Vests responsibility for determining whether a project is exempt from CEQA in the lead agency.
- Allows housing projects that would otherwise be exempt from CEQA, but for a single condition, to focus the project’s environmental review on the effects caused by that single condition. For these “near miss” projects, the bill states that environmental impact reports are not required to discuss alternatives to or growth-inducing impacts of the projects.
- Narrows the scope of documents that must be included in the administrative record under CEQA.
- Exempts from CEQA:
 - Rezoning that implement the actions contained in an approved housing element, except for construction within the boundaries of any natural and protected lands, as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21067.5.
 - New agricultural employee housing projects meeting certain requirements.
 - Repair or maintenance of existing farmworker housing projects.
 - Until 2032, projects to provide sewer service to a disadvantaged community served by inadequate sewage treatment systems, provided that the project meets certain labor standards. Also extends, for four years, an existing CEQA exemption for drinking water projects that meet certain labor standards.

- Until 2030, community water system projects funded by Proposition 4 or the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) program.
- Wildfire risk reduction projects, including:
 - Prescribed fire or fuel reduction projects under 50 acres and located within ½ mile of a subdivision of 30 or more units after consulting with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to avoid or minimize impacts on protected species and wildlife nursery sites.
 - Clearance of defensible space 100' from the centerline of a public roadway identified as an egress and evacuation route for a subdivision or community of 30 or more dwelling units.
 - Establishment or enhancement of residential home hardening and defensible space within 200' of a legal structure located in a high or very high wildfire hazard zone.
 - Construction of a fuel break that extends up to 200' from structures, including clearance of trees less than 12" in diameter at chest height.
- Broadband projects along or within 30' of the right of way of any public road or highway.
- Updates to the state's climate adaptation strategy.
- Actions and approvals related to planning, design, site acquisition, construction, operation or maintenance of a public park or nonmotorized recreational trail funded by Proposition 4.
- Day care centers not located in a residential area.
- Rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers less than 50,000 square feet.
- Nonprofit food banks and food pantries.
- Advanced manufacturing facilities, as defined in PRC 26003, located on industrial sites.
- Construction or operation of a heavy maintenance facility or passenger rail station that serves high-speed rail.

RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 24, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 254 (Becker): Energy, among many other things, increases the authority for the California Energy Commission to approve controversial renewable energy projects that are inconsistent with local laws and regulations and over local objections. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 119, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 283 (Laird): Energy storage systems, requires the state to update the California Building Standards Code to adopt provisions at least as protective as the most recently published National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 855 standards regarding battery energy storage systems (BESS). RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 407, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 346 (Durazo): Local agencies: transient occupancy taxes: short-term rental facilitator, will strengthen local tools to ensure compliance with local ordinances regarding the collection and remittance of transient occupancy taxes (TOT) applicable to short-term rentals. The bill authorizes a local agency to require short-term rental facilitators to report the physical address of the short-term rental property and, if that information is insufficient for the local

agency, additional identifying information. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 751, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 415 (Reyes): Planning and zoning: logistics use developments: truck routes, makes a number of clean-up changes to facilitate implementation of AB 98 (Carrillo), which established unworkable and arbitrary requirements for siting and design of warehouse projects. Increases flexibility and time for jurisdictions to comply with new requirement to develop truck routes. Protects jurisdictions making a good faith effort to comply with AB 98's truck route planning requirements from enforcement by the Attorney General. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 316, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 547 (Pérez): Commercial property insurance cancellation and nonrenewal, extends the moratorium on insurance non-renewals for residential properties located in a ZIP Code within or adjacent to the fire perimeter for one year after the declaration of a state of emergency to commercial properties. **Signed, (Chapter 544, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 707 (Durazo): Open meetings: meeting and teleconference requirements, represents the most extensive changes to the Brown Act in decades, with a variety of changes designed to improve public participation in local government meetings, expand accessibility for both members of Brown Act bodies and the public (remote participation, accessibility, language access, and public engagement), and includes several provisions that address the needs of local governments. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 327, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 840 (Limón): Greenhouse gases: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: studies, allocates funds from the state's Cap-and-Invest program for 2025-26 and beyond, including a continuous appropriation of \$200 million annually for forest resilience programs. **Signed, (Chapter 121, Statutes of 2025)**

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

This year, the Legislature attempted to create a process through which property owners could suspend Williamson Act restrictions to facilitate the construction and operation of utility scale solar energy projects on degraded or water constrained lands. The measure, AB1156, would have ultimately left final decision-making authority with the host local jurisdiction in which the project is located, but the measure stalled over strong opposition from some agricultural associations. *See AB 1156 on page 21.*

AB 312 (Alanis): Agricultural theft prevention: retention and sale of agricultural commodity: holding and deposit of proceeds, would change the requirement that a County Agricultural Commission hold the proceeds of the sale of a commodity for at least 3 months,

rather than 6 months, if the commodity is seized and not rightfully obtained by the owner. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 928 (Rogers): Roosters: restrictions, would prohibit a person from keeping or raising more than 25 roosters and would subject a person who violates this prohibition to a civil penalty not to exceed \$2,500 for each violation, as provided. **Two-Year Bill**

AIR QUALITY

RCRC engaged on several measures to address local implementation of air quality mandates, including two bills that would have streamlined or exempted vehicles used during emergencies from the state's Advanced Clean Fleets mandate. The Administration and the Legislature reauthorized and extended California's cap-and-trade auction, and RCRC worked with a broad coalition of stakeholders to protect the annual appropriations to wildfire mitigation that were committed by the Legislature in previous sessions.

AB 513 (Gonzalez, Jeff): California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: scoping plan, would require the California Air Resources Board to include greenhouse gas emissions from wildlands and forest fires in the AB 32 scoping plan. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 555 (Jackson): Air resources: regulatory impacts: transportation fuel costs, would require the State Air Resources Board, on a quarterly basis, to submit to the relevant policy committees of the Legislature a report providing data and describing the impacts of its regulations of transportation fuels on the prices of those fuels to California consumers. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 911 (Carrillo): Emergency telecommunications medium- and heavy-duty zero-emission vehicles, would exempt certain telecommunications vehicles used by emergency telecommunications providers from the provisions of the Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) regulations. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1207 (Irwin): Climate change: market-based compliance mechanism: extension, recasts the state's cap-and-trade auction program as "Cap-and-Invest" and extends the program to January 1, 2046. **Signed, (Chapter 117, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 496 (Hurtado): Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation: appeals advisory committee: exemptions, would ensure disaster service workers are able to effectively respond to emergency situations; create an Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) Appeals Advisory Committee; and provide some much needed reforms for compliance. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 840 (Limón): Greenhouse gases: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: studies, allocates funds from the state's Cap-and-Invest program for 2025-26 and beyond, including a continuous appropriation of \$200 million annually for forest resilience programs. **Signed, (Chapter 121, Statutes of 2025)**

CEQA

This year the Legislature spent a great deal of time on a handful of CEQA measures. RCRC co-sponsored SB 607 (Wiener), which would have made significant changes to reduce administrative burdens and the risk of CEQA abuse. While that bill was strongly supported by Governor Newsom and Speaker Rivas, Senate President Pro Tempore McGuire had major concerns about key aspects that would have had the greatest impact on CEQA abuse. As a result, a different CEQA package that consisted of a number of different exemptions and minor procedural improvements was integrated into a budget trailer bill, SB 130, and signed into law. The Legislature also created a significant new CEQA exemption for infill housing projects of up to 20 acres that meet specified criteria. It is anticipated that the Legislature may try to unwind some of these limited CEQA reforms next year and also revise the tribal consultation requirements embedded in the law.

AB 66 (Tangipa): California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: egress route projects: fire safety, would expedite fire safety improvements for subdivisions that are at significant fire risk and lack a secondary egress route by exempting those projects from the California Environmental Quality Act. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 130 (Committee on Budget): Housing, among other things, exempts from the California Environmental Quality Act a housing development project that is not more than 20 acres, located within the boundaries of a city or Census Bureau-defined "urban area", is located on a site that was previously developed with an urban use and surrounded by similar uses, and meets other specified requirements. The bill also establishes a statewide vehicle miles traveled (VMT) mitigation bank program that may be used by local jurisdictions for compliance with CEQA. **Signed, (Chapter 22, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 404 (Sanchez): California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel reduction projects, would remove the sunset date for current exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for wildfire prevention projects done on federal lands that have already been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). **Two-Year Bill**

AB 839 (Rubio, Blanca): California Environmental Quality Act: expedited judicial review: sustainable aviation fuel projects, would provide streamlined judicial review for projects for the manufacture, processing, storage, distribution, or transportation of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1227 (Ellis): Wildfire safety: fuels reduction projects, would have created a temporary California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption for wildfire prevention projects that remove small diameter non-native species. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1456 (Bryan): California Environmental Quality Act: California Vegetation Treatment Program, would update the California Vegetation Treatment Program Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) to expand the area of the state suitable for vegetation treatment and recognize cultural burning as a covered treatment activity. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 131 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review): Public Resources, provides much needed CEQA relief, including:

- Declares that CEQA should not be used primarily for economic interests, to stifle competition, gain competitive advantage, or delay projects for reasons unrelated to environmental protection.
- Vests responsibility for determining whether a project is exempt from CEQA in the lead agency.
- Allows housing projects that would otherwise be exempt from CEQA, but for a single condition, to focus the project's environmental review on the effects caused by that single condition. For these "near miss" projects, the bill states that environmental impact reports are not required to discuss alternatives to or growth-inducing impacts of the projects.
- Narrows the scope of documents that must be included in the administrative record under CEQA.
- Exempts from CEQA:
 - Rezonings that implement the actions contained in an approved housing element, except for construction within the boundaries of any natural and protected lands, as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21067.5.
 - New agricultural employee housing projects meeting certain requirements.
 - Repair or maintenance of existing farmworker housing projects.
 - Until 2032, projects to provide sewer service to a disadvantaged community served by inadequate sewage treatment systems, provided that the project meets certain labor standards. Also extends, for four years, an existing CEQA exemption for drinking water projects that meet certain labor standards.
 - Until 2030, community water system projects funded by Proposition 4 or the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) program.
 - Wildfire risk reduction projects, including:
 - Prescribed fire or fuel reduction projects under 50 acres and located within ½ mile of a subdivision of 30 or more units after consulting with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to avoid or minimize impacts on protected species and wildlife nursery sites.
 - Clearance of defensible space 100' from the centerline of a public roadway identified as an egress and evacuation route for a subdivision or community of 30 or more dwelling units.
 - Establishment or enhancement of residential home hardening and defensible space within 200' of a legal structure located in a high or very high wildfire hazard zone.
 - Construction of a fuel break that extends up to 200' from structures, including clearance of trees less than 12" in diameter at chest height.
 - Broadband projects along or within 30' of the right of way of any public road or highway.
 - Updates to the state's climate adaptation strategy.
 - Actions and approvals related to planning, design, site acquisition, construction, operation or maintenance of a public park or nonmotorized recreational trail funded by Proposition 4.
 - Day care centers not located in a residential area.

- Rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers less than 50,000 square feet.
- Nonprofit food banks and food pantries.
- Advanced manufacturing facilities, as defined in PRC 26003, located on industrial sites.
- Construction or operation of a heavy maintenance facility or passenger rail station that serves high-speed rail.

RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 24, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 426 (Alvarado-Gil): California Environmental Quality Act: defensible space, would exempt from CEQA projects undertaken or approved by a public agency for purposes of maintaining defensible space. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 607 (Wiener): California Science and Health Research Bond Act, would have made a number of transformative changes to the California Environmental Quality Act to refocus it on the Act's intended purposes of information disclosure and mitigation and reduce the risk of abuse. Would have replaced the "fair argument standard", reduced the complexity of the administrative record, streamlined housing projects and projects that almost qualify for an CEQA exemption. Several components included in budget trailer bill. **Failed Passage**

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This year saw several attempts to establish new mechanisms to finance infrastructure programs throughout the state, including Senate Bill 769 (Caballero) and Senate Bill 74 (Seyarto). RCRC supported these measures as a means to build new tools for financing essential projects in rural areas. Furthermore, RCRC worked on several successful measures, including Assembly Bill 417 (Carrillo) and Assembly Bill 258 (Connolly), which will streamline Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts and increase revenue to county fairs throughout the state, respectively. RCRC will continue to focus on efforts that increase revenues to rural communities and that equip those communities with tools to build infrastructure and workforce development programs.

The Legislature continues to focus on addressing the ongoing housing affordability crisis with measures aimed at removing barriers to housing development. This session, legislative members and the Governor focused much of their efforts on streamlining the development approval process, specifically taking aim at the CEQA review process. Many housing and land use measures were made two-year bills early in the process and are expected to move in this upcoming session. However, a few monumental policy changes were successful, including the enactment of a six-year moratorium on building code updates (Senate Bill 130). Consistent with previous years, the Legislature continued to tinker with Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) law, making it easier to build these second units, as well as expediting the local permitting and approval process with streamlining and shot clock requirements for all types of construction.

Legislative engagement on telecommunication policy centered primarily on stopping the continued efforts by industry to remove Carrier of Last Resort Obligations from current

providers of basic telephone service through Assembly Bill 470 (McKinnor). Although that bill failed to pass out of the second house by legislative deadline, it remains a viable vehicle for movement next year.

AB 265 (Caloza): Small Business Recovery Fund Act, would have established the Small Business and Nonprofit Recovery Fund Act. RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

AB 417 (Carrillo): Local finance: enhanced infrastructure financing districts: community revitalization and investment authorities, will make several operational improvements to Enhanced Infrastructure Districts (EIFDs) and streamline the process for creating Community Revitalization Investment Authorities (CRIAs). RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 260, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1039 (Hart): State-funded assistance grants and contracts: advance payments, would change requirements for advance payments made by administering state agencies for grants and contracts on or after January 1, 2026. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 74 (Seyarto): Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation: Infrastructure Gap-Fund Program, would establish the Infrastructure Gap-Fund Program to provide grants to local agencies to develop and construct infrastructure projects. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 415 (Reyes): Planning and zoning: logistics use developments: truck routes, makes a number of clean-up changes to facilitate implementation of AB 98 (Carrillo), which established unworkable and arbitrary requirements for siting and design of warehouse projects. Increases flexibility and time for jurisdictions to comply with new requirement to develop truck routes. Protects jurisdictions making a good faith effort to comply with AB 98's truck route planning requirements from enforcement by the Attorney General. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 316, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 769 (Caballero): The Golden State Infrastructure Corporation Act, would have enacted the Golden State Infrastructure Corporation Act and established the Golden State Infrastructure Corporation, within the State Treasurer's Office, as a not-for-profit corporation for the purpose of administering the act and financing infrastructure projects. **Failed Passage**

Animals

AB 793 (Schultz): Potentially dangerous and vicious dogs: designation and disposition: burden of proof, would end discretion of local officials to order a dog euthanized following a "provoked" bite or attack, without considering the severity of the damage done by the dog, the dog's intent, and the ability of the owner to manage that dog. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1482 (Castillo): Bowie's Law: animals: adoption, shelter overcrowding, and breeding, would require an animal shelter to provide, on its internet website or a third-party website, a list of all animals that are available for adoption or being held by the animal shelter and would require the Department of Food and Agriculture to conduct a study on animal shelter overcrowding and the feasibility of a statewide database of dogs and cats. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 602 (Cortese): Veterinarians: veterinarian-client-patient relationship, clarifies that a registered veterinary technician (RVT) may act as an agent of a veterinarian for purposes of establishing the veterinarian client patient relationship (VCPR) in a registered veterinary premise that is a public animal control agency or shelter, private animal shelter, humane society shelter, or society for the prevention of cruelty to animals shelter. **Signed, (Chapter 589, Statutes of 2025)**

Building Standards

AB 6 (Ward): Residential developments: building standards: review, would have required the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to convene a working group to research and consider recommendations for amendments to state building standards to allow residential developments of three to 10 units to be built under the California Residential Code, and to provide a report of its findings to the Legislature by December 31, 2028. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 368 (Ward): Energy: building standards: passive house standards, requires the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of passive house energy efficiency standards by California climate zone, using commission-adopted metrics such as long-term system cost, and to evaluate the use of the 2 passive house energy models currently required for passive house certification in its analysis and the cost-effectiveness of passive house construction compared to existing construction, as specified. Requires the commission, on or before July 1, 2028, to submit a report to the Legislature documenting its findings and recommendations. **Signed, (Chapter 145, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 671 (Wicks): Accelerated restaurant building plan approval: California Retail Food Code: tenant improvements, requires a local building department to allow an applicant to have a qualified professional certifier to certify that the plans for a tenant improvement relating to a restaurant comply with applicable building, health, and safety codes. **Signed, (Chapter 470, Statutes of 2025)**

Community Colleges

AB 240 (Alanis): Community colleges: study: Counties of Amador, Alpine, Mariposa, Modoc, and Sierra, would have required the California Research Bureau (CRB) to conduct a study evaluating the educational needs and opportunities that exist for the five rural counties that are not included in a California Community College (CCC) district. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1400 (Soria): Community colleges: Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program, would have required the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to develop a pilot program to allow up to 10 community college districts to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

Fairs

AB 258 (Connolly): Fairs: allocation of revenues: gross receipts for sales and use tax, will increase the amount of 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, from $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1% to 2%. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 683, Statutes of 2025)**

Housing

AB 36 (Soria): Housing elements: prohousing designation, will integrate the application for the Prohousing Designation Program (PDP) with the housing element update cycle to help small prohousing local governments with limited resources better qualify for state housing and infrastructure programs. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 485, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 249 (Ramos): Housing: Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention program: youth-specific processes and coordinated entry systems, would direct the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to require a Continuum of Care (CoC) to annually certify, as a requirement under the Homelessness Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) Program, that the CoC creates or maintains a youth-specific process for its Coordinated Entry System (CES). **Two-Year Bill**

AB 253 (Ward): California Residential Private Permitting Review Act: residential building permits, allows, until January 1, 2036, an applicant for certain residential building permits to use a private professional to check plans and specifications if the county or city estimates a timeframe for this plan-checking function that exceeds 30 days, or does not complete this plan-checking function within 30 days. **Signed, (Chapter 487, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 610 (Alvarez): Housing element: governmental constraints: disclosure statement, requires a local government's housing element to include a potential and actual governmental constraints disclosure statement containing specified potential constraints that the local government can anticipate adopting during the first three years of the subsequent planning period. **Signed, (Chapter 494, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 726 (Ávila Farías): Planning and zoning: annual report: rehabilitated units, authorizes a city or county to include in the annual progress report that it is required to submit to the state Department of Housing and Community Development, the number of units of deed-restricted affordable housing that have been substantially rehabilitated. **Signed, (Chapter 704, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 790 (Ávila Farías): Homelessness: single women with children, adds "women with children" to the Homeless Equity for Left Behind Populations (HELP) Act and requires cities, counties, and continuums of care (CoCs) to provide all analyses or goals required by the HELP Act to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness. **Signed, (Chapter 499, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1021 (Wicks): Housing: local educational agencies, makes numerous changes to the provisions that make housing developments an allowable use on land owned by a local

educational agency (LEA) and exempts these housing developments from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), among other substantial changes to this type of development. **Signed, (Chapter 503, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1061 (Quirk-Silva): Housing developments: urban lot splits: historical resources, modifies historic resource designations that limit the single-family parcels eligible for ministerial approval of an urban-lot split or a duplex development under the previous authorizing legislation (SB 9, Atkins, Chapter 162, Statutes of 2021). **Signed, (Chapter 505, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1154 (Carrillo): Junior accessory dwelling units, limits owner-occupancy requirements for junior accessory dwelling units. **Signed, (Chapter 507, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1308 (Hoover): Residential building permits: inspections: Housing Accountability Act, requires a building department to conduct an inspection of permitted work within 10 business days of receiving a notice of the completion of the permitted work authorized by a building permit issued for specified housing projects. **Signed, (Chapter 509, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 9 (Arreguín): Accessory Dwelling Units: ordinances, specifies that a local ordinance implementing Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Law is null and void if the local agency adopting the ordinance fails to submit a copy of the ordinance to the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) or if the local agency has not responded to HCD's findings that the ordinance is not compliant. **Signed, (Chapter 510, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 625 (Wahab): Housing developments: disasters: reconstruction of destroyed or damaged structures, extends key elements of the Governor's executive orders issued in response to the Los Angeles fires by establishing a statutory, ministerial approval process for rebuilding residential structures destroyed in declared disasters, including provisions that waive local discretionary review, streamline permitting timelines, and allow reconstruction up to 110% of the prior structure's size. **Signed, (Chapter 548, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 838 (Durazo): Housing Accountability Act: housing development projects, revises the definition of housing development project in the Housing Accountability Act to exclude projects that include any hotel or motel space in the commercial portion of a project and allows local agencies to approve the residential and non-hotel/motel commercial portion of a mixed-use project as a housing development project. **Signed, (Chapter 789, Statutes of 2025)**

Land Use/Planning

AB 52 (Aguilar-Curry): Native American resources, seeks to significantly enhance tribal consultation and mitigation requirements under CEQA. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 301 (Schiavo): Planning and zoning: housing development projects: postentitlement phase permits: state agencies, extends the requirements that local agencies must comply with when they receive and review a post-entitlement phase permit application to state

agencies involved in governmental reviews or approvals associated with a housing development project. **Signed, (Chapter 488, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 462 (Lowenthal): Land use: accessory dwelling units, requires coastal development permits (CDP) for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to be approved or denied within 60 days, eliminates the ability to appeal a CDP for an ADU issued by a local government to the California Coastal Commission, among other provisions. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 491, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 507 (Haney): Adaptive reuse: streamlining: incentives, enacts the Office to Housing Conversion Act, which creates a streamlined, ministerial approval process for adaptive reuse projects and provides certain financial incentives for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings. **Signed, (Chapter 493, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 660 (Wilson): Planning and Zoning Law: postentitlement phase permits: Housing Accountability Act, would amend the penalty provisions of the Housing Accountability Act (HAA) to specify that failure to comply with any provision of post-entitlement phase permit law constitutes a violation of the HAA and amends post entitlement phase permit law in various ways, including establishing limiting parameters regarding a local agency's review of a complete building permit application. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 670 (Quirk-Silva): Planning and zoning: housing element: converted affordable housing units, adds a number of requirements, in relation to demolished and replacement housing units, to the annual progress report (APR) that local cities and counties are required to submit to the state Department of Housing and Community Development, and allows a city or county to report specified housing units that were converted to affordable housing for up to 25% of its regional housing need allocation (RHNA) for lower income units. **Signed, (Chapter 701, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 818 (Ávila Farías): Permit Streamlining Act: local emergencies, requires local agencies and utility providers to expedite certain aspects of the approval process and waives specified green energy standards for residential developments on properties that were destroyed in a disaster. **Signed, (Chapter 534, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1007 (Rubio, Blanca): Land use: development project review, reduces the time period that a responsible agency is required to approve or disapprove a project, as described above, from 90 days to 45, except for the California Coastal Commission and SF Bay Conservation and Development, and for either an individual waste discharge requirement or any certificate or statement required by any federal agency pursuant to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act or any other federal water quality control law. **Signed, (Chapter 502, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1294 (Haney): Planning and zoning: housing development: standardized application form, would require cities and counties to deem an application for a housing development entitlement complete once the applicant submits specified information, and directs the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop a standardized housing entitlement application that cities and counties must accept. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 299 (Cabaldon): Local government: ordinances, would repeal the requirement that an ordinance be enacted at least five days after it is introduced and allows a local government to deem certain zoning ordinances to be subject to a streamlined, ministerial process. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 340 (Laird): General plans: housing element: emergency shelter, revises the definition of interim interventions under "emergency shelter" in housing element law to include all services provided onsite at a shelter, including the addition or expansion of services that are consistent with any written, objective standards. **Signed, (Chapter 514, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 358 (Becker): Mitigation Fee Act: mitigating vehicular traffic impacts, revises the criteria a proposed housing development near transit must meet to qualify for a reduced traffic mitigation fee and authorizes a local agency to charge the full fee if it makes written findings, supported by substantial evidence in the record, that the housing development would not generate fewer automobile trips. **Signed, (Chapter 515, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 484 (Laird): Coastal resources: coastal development permits: infill area categorical exclusion, requires the California Coastal Commission, in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development, by July 1, 2027, to identify infill areas within at least three local jurisdictions that do not have a certified local coastal program for a categorical exclusion from the coastal development permitting requirement. **Signed, (Chapter 416, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 507 (Limón): Planning and zoning: regional housing needs allocation, authorizes voluntary agreements between local governments and federally recognized tribes to allow new tribal housing developments to count toward a local government's regional housing needs allocation (RHNA) if specified conditions are met. **Signed, (Chapter 519, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 543 (McNerney): Accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units, makes numerous organizational, technical, and clarifying changes to Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Law and Junior ADU (JADU) Law, including specifying that the obligation of a local agency to ministerially approve an application for a building permit for an ADU or JADU applies to any combination of ADU or JADU, and that ADUs and JADU approval are subject to post entitlement permitting time limits governing local government reviews and approval of housing development permits. **Signed, (Chapter 520, Statutes of 2025)**

Property Tax

SB 5 (Cabaldon): Enhanced infrastructure financing districts and community revitalization and investment areas: allocation of taxes: agricultural land exclusion, would have prohibited enhanced infrastructure financing districts (EIFDs) and community revitalization and investment authorities (CRIAs) from including taxes levied upon parcels enrolled in a Williamson Act or farmland security zone contract. **Vetoed**

Telecommunications

AB 93 (Papan): Water resources: data centers, would have required a data center operator to provide its estimated or actual water use to its water supplier as a condition of obtaining or renewing a business license issued by a city or county. **Vetoed**

AB 330 (Rogers): Local Prepaid Mobile Telephony Services Collection Act, extends the sunset date of the Local Prepaid Mobile Telephony Services Collection Act (Act) from January 1, 2026, to January 1, 2031. The Act authorizes local agencies to impose utility users' taxes (UUTs) on wireless telephone services carriers. **Signed, (Chapter 553, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 353 (Boerner): Communications: broadband internet service providers: affordable home internet service, would ensure new municipal entrants can cover the costs associated with construction, maintenance, and operation of broadband networks in California. Would provide a pathway for a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to offer internet services plans outside of the requirements of the bill, and would allow public networks to continue with infrastructure construction in unserved and underserved rural areas of the state. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 470 (McKinnor): Telephone corporations: carriers of last resort, would have made changes to the Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) obligation to provide landline telephone service in well-served and no population areas of the state. **Two-Year Bill**

COUNTY OPERATIONS

This year, introduced legislation 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 code enforcement. Labor relations remains a hot topic in Sacramento, with lawmakers introducing several bills to change state labor laws. RCRC engaged on numerous labor bills impacting local labor negotiations, workplace safety, county operations, and critical public services. The issues included labor agreements, AI in hiring practices, public sector contracting, employer communications, workplace safety, pensions, and facility security and surveillance. A number of high-priority bills were amended to address local government concerns or were stopped during the legislative process.

AB 518 (Ward): Low-impact camping areas, exempts a "low-impact camping area" from having to receive a state permit as required by the Special Occupancy Parks Act (SOPA) under certain circumstances to allow counties discretion to permit such facilities. Requires an online hosting platform to include the name of the county where the low-impact camping area is located and a field for the operator to enter a license, permit, or registration. Also, requires the online hosting platform to remove any listing for a low-impact camping area from the platform within seven days of receiving a notification by the authorizing county when certain conditions are met. **Signed, (Chapter 157, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 614 (Lee): Claims against public entities, would extend the timeframe, from six months to one year, for a person to file a tort claim for damages related to death or injury, personal property damage, or damage to growing crops. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 632 (Hart): Local ordinances: administrative fines or penalties, would have given local governments more tools to retrieve penalties for violations of important housing and safety ordinances. RCRC sponsored this measure. **Vetoed**

AB 1022 (Kalra): Authority to remove vehicles, would delete critical tools necessary to uphold parking laws and maintain order in our communities. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1337 (Ward): Information Practices Act of 1977, would impose the requirements of the Information Practices Act on local governments, adding significant costs and liability without any clear benefits for the communities we serve. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1430 (Bennett): County recorders: fees, would have allowed county recorders to update fees for providing printed documents for the first time since 2009. RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

SB 303 (Smallwood-Cuevas): Employment: bias mitigation training: unlawful discrimination, provides that an employee's assessment, testing, admission, or acknowledgment of their own personal bias, which was made in good faith and solicited or required as part of a bias mitigation training, does not constitute unlawful discrimination. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 216, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 757 (Richardson): Local government: nuisance abatement, would have given code enforcement officers the authority to recover fines through non-judicial mechanisms. RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

SB 777 (Richardson): Abandoned cemeteries: report, convenes a workgroup to consider options for addressing abandoned cemeteries. **Signed, (Chapter 658, Statutes of 2025)**

Brown Act

AB 343 (Pacheco): California Public Records Act: elected or appointed officials, California law prohibits the online posting of an elected or appointed official's home address, telephone number, and parcel number without their permission. Extends the definition of elected or appointed official to retired state, federal, and tribal judges, court commissioners, and federal defenders. **Signed, (Chapter 142, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 370 (Carrillo): California Public Records Act: cyberattacks, amends the definition of "unusual circumstances," in the California Public Records Act (PRA) to include the inability of an agency to access its electronic servers due to a cyberattack, providing some narrow, limited relief to counties when they receive PRA requests that are inaccessible due to a cyberattack. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 34, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 239 (Arreguín): Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body, would expand opening meeting teleconference regulations to advisory commissions. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 707 (Durazo): Open meetings: meeting and teleconference requirements, represents the most extensive changes to the Brown Act in decades, with a variety of changes designed to improve public participation in local government meetings, expand accessibility for members of Brown Act bodies and the public (remote participation, accessibility, language access, and public engagement), and includes several provisions that address the needs of local governments. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 327, Statutes of 2025)**

Cannabis

AB 8 (Aguiar-Curry): Cannabis: cannabinoids: industrial hemp, makes important changes to regulate intoxicating hemp to protect the health and safety of our communities and prevent these untested, untaxed, and unregulated products from undercutting the licensed cannabis market. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 248, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 378 (Wiener): Online marketplaces: illicit cannabis: reporting and liability, protects public health and safety and the legal cannabis market against the threat of unlicensed cannabis businesses and intoxicating hemp products. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 411, Statutes of 2025)**

County Finance

SB 832 (Allen): State government, would make urgently needed changes to help local governments address the debilitating financial burden related to civil actions against an employer, including school districts, public agencies, and others, where there has been a claim against a (former) employee of that organization. **Two-Year Bill**

Elections

AB 1441 (Soria): County of Merced Citizens Redistricting Commission, requires the County of Merced to form an independent redistricting commission following the 2030 census and pursue cost recovery through the Commission on State Mandates, despite the county's history of compliance with all state and federal redistricting statutes. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 730, Statutes of 2025)**

Labor and Employment

AB 339 (Ortega): Local public employee organizations: notice requirements, requires the governing body of a local public agency (non-school) to provide written notice to the employee organization no less than 60 days prior to issuing any request for proposals, request for quotes, or renewing or extending an existing contract to perform services that are within the scope of work of the job classifications represented by the recognized employee organization, and to engage in potentially extensive and lengthy negotiations regarding each of those actions upon request. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 687, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 340 (Ahrens): Employer-employee relations: confidential communications, would restrict an employer's ability to conduct internal investigations to the detriment of the safety and

well-being of employees and the public, adding new costs and liability for public employers. Moreover, the substantive provisions of the bill create restrictions mirroring a privilege. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 465 (Zbur): Local public employees: memoranda of understanding, would make significant changes to the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA) which would decrease accountability for law enforcement officers and other public employees, increase local government costs, and disrupt the stability of collective bargaining statewide. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 589 (Gallagher): Firefighters: personal protective equipment, would exempt small volunteer fire departments from some equipment purchasing requirements at Cal OSHA's discretion. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 692 (Kalra): Employment: contracts in restraint of trade, eliminates or limits voluntary incentive programs like hiring incentives, advances, signing bonuses, assistance with relocation costs, loan forgiveness programs, and more. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 703, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1018 (Bauer-Kahan): Automated decision systems, would place significant financial burdens on local governments using Automated Decision Systems (ADS) in routine operations. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1109 (Kalra): Evidentiary privileges: union agent-represented worker privilege, would put communications with a union agent on equal footing of privileged communications with one's spouse, priest, physician or attorney. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1198 (Haney): Public works: prevailing wages, would allow prevailing wage on a project to change in the middle of a project, creating unanticipated cost pressures. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1331 (Elhawary): Workplace surveillance, would impose significant costs and complexity while undermining safety for public agencies, requiring rapid compliance audits, changes to hardware and software, and subjecting agencies to fines for noncompliance. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 7 (McNerney): Employment: automated decision systems, would have imposed burdensome reporting requirements on the use of broadly defined Automated Decision Systems (ADS) for routine work done by public agencies. RCRC opposed this measure. **Vetoed**

SB 238 (Smallwood-Cuevas): Workplace surveillance tools, would place burdensome requirements on public agencies using surveillance tools to protect public resources, employees, students, and the public at large. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 464 (Smallwood-Cuevas): Employer pay data, requires an employer to collect and store any demographic information gathered by an employer or labor contractor for the purpose of submitting the pay data report separately from employee personnel records. **Signed, (Chapter 760, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 485 (Reyes): County public defender: appointment, would have changed the employment status of an appointed public defender from being at-will. **Vetoed**

Mandates

AB 964 (Hadwick): Commission on State Mandates: state mandates, would require the Commission on State Mandates to notify a claimant in writing within 30 days of any adjustment that results from an audit or review. **Two-Year Bill**

PERS/Pension

AB 1383 (McKinnor): Public employees' retirement benefits, would make several significant changes to public employees' retirement benefits, which would ultimately lead to increased pension liability for public agencies. **Two-Year Bill**

Public Contracts

AB 538 (Berman): Public works: payroll records, places a significant administrative burden on counties by potentially requiring them to provide a contractor's payroll records on prevailing wage projects in response to a records request. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 616, Statutes of 2025)**

Tax

AB 418 (Wilson): Property taxation: tax-defaulted property, preserves the ability of California counties to utilize Chapter 8 sales of tax-defaulted properties. Ensures that the owners of such properties are able to participate in an administrative process if they disagree with the tax sale value established by the tax collector and proposed for approval by the Board of Supervisors. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 149, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 359 (Niello): Use Fuel Tax Law: Diesel Fuel Tax Law: exempt bus operation, clarifies that sales and tax exemptions for fuels such as diesel and compressed natural gas (CNG) apply to county governments providing public transit services. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 217, Statutes of 2025)**

Transient Occupancy Tax

SB 346 (Durazo): Local agencies: transient occupancy taxes: short-term rental facilitator, strengthens local tools to ensure compliance with local ordinances regarding the collection and remittance of transient occupancy taxes (TOT) applicable to short-term rentals. Authorizes a local agency to require short-term rental facilitators to report the physical address of the short-term rental property and, if that information is insufficient for the local agency, additional identifying information. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 751, Statutes of 2025)**

Workers Compensation

AB 1293 (Wallis): Workers' compensation: qualified medical evaluators, improves the quality of medical-legal evaluations necessary to resolve disputes in the workers' compensation system. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 298, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 487 (Grayson): Workers' compensation, limits the right of public agency employers, including the State of California, to recover the cost of providing workers' compensation benefits when a law enforcement officer or firefighter is injured at work and a third party is partially or entirely responsible. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 763, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 632 (Arreguín): Workers' compensation: hospital employees, would create a troubling precedent for the workers' compensation system in general by creating a legal presumption that blood-borne infectious disease, tuberculosis, meningitis, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), COVID-19, cancer, musculoskeletal injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, or respiratory disease are presumptively workplace injuries for up to 10 years for all hospital employees that provide direct care. **Two-Year Bill**

ENERGY

This year, the Legislature signaled a strong interest in the topic of permit reform for renewable energy projects. What ultimately crossed the finish line was a combination of measures to update fire codes and planning related to battery energy storage facilities (AB1285 and SB283), creation of a programmatic environmental review process for select renewable energy projects (SB254), and expansion of the Energy Commission's AB 205 opt-in permitting process for smaller geothermal energy projects under 50MW (SB254). The Legislature also streamlined the process for the Energy Commission to permit renewable energy projects under AB205 to better facilitate overriding conflicting local laws and regulations.

AB 39 (Zbur): General plans: Local Electrification Planning Act, establishes the Local Electrification Planning Act and requires each city, county, or city and county, on or after January 1, 2027, but no later than January 1, 2030, to prepare and adopt a specified plan, or integrate a plan in the next adoption or revision of the general plan, that includes locally based goals, objectives, policies, and feasible implementation measures. A city, county, or city and county, with a population of 75,000 or less is exempt from the requirements of this bill. **Signed, (Chapter 356, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 531 (Rogers): Geothermal powerplants and projects: certification and environmental review, expands the authority of the California Energy Commission (CEC) to override local control and permit smaller geothermal energy facilities under 50MW. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 372, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 615 (Davies): Power facilities: emergency response and action plans, would have required energy storage facility developers seeking permitting through the California Energy

Commission to include an emergency response and action plan, which shall include feedback from local emergency management agencies. **Vetoed**

AB 716 (Carrillo): Fire safety standards: hydrogen facilities, would require the State Fire Marshal to appoint a hydrogen fire expert to answer questions and provide clarification on the implementation of hydrogen production. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 738 (Tangipa): Energy: building standards: photovoltaic requirements, would have exempted homes being rebuilt in areas affected by wildfire from requirements to install rooftop solar on rebuilt homes. RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

AB 852 (Wallis): Air pollution: oxides of nitrogen: furnaces and water heaters, would exempt gas-fired appliances installed with a propane conversion kit from restrictions on sales of gas-fired appliances. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1016 (Gonzalez, Jeff): Power facility and site certifications: thermal powerplants: geothermal resources, would streamline geothermal powerplant permitting by allowing local governments to permit projects that are currently only subject to permitting by the California Energy Commission. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1156 (Wicks): Solar-use easements: suspension of Williamson Act contracts: terms of easement: termination, would facilitate the installation of solar projects on degraded or water-constrained Williamson Act lands by temporarily suspending the Act upon the state government making certain findings and the host jurisdiction approving the suspension. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1285 (Committee on Emergency Management): State Fire Marshal: lithium-ion battery facilities: guidance, requires the State Fire Marshal to develop fire prevention, response, and recovery measures for lithium-ion battery storage facilities. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 637, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 254 (Becker): Energy, among many other things, increases the authority for the California Energy Commission to approve controversial renewable energy projects that are inconsistent with local laws and regulations and over local objections. RCRC opposed this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 119, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 283 (Laird): Energy storage systems, requires the state to update the California Building Standards Code to adopt provisions at least as protective as the most recently published National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 855 standards regarding battery energy storage systems (BESS). RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 407, Statutes of 2025)**

FOREST & PUBLIC LANDS STEWARDSHIP

RCRC continued to actively advocate in 2025 for policies and legislation that increase the pace and scale of fuels treatment, expand woody biomass utilization, and enhance wildfire mitigation opportunities for communities and property owners. RCRC supported attempts to extend sunsets for important programs such as the state's home hardening pilot efforts, as well as

efforts to expand forest resilience projects on federal lands. The most significant of these measures is the *Fix Our Forests Act*, which provides needed exemptions and categorical exclusions for federal land managers. RCRC also advocated for exemptions to advance the use of prescribed fire, as well as advancing issues related to the use of fire retardant by the USDA Forest Service to the federal Administration.

RCRC also remained active in helping shape the state's forest resilience strategy at the state 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 763 (Ward): Timber harvesting: streambed agreement: waste discharge requirements, would require the Department of Fish and Wildlife to issue an agreement within 5 working days of the approval of a timber harvesting plan by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Would require, for a regional board that has adopted general waste discharge requirements for timber harvesting, the regional board to authorize timber harvesting operations performed consistent with an approved timber harvesting plan subject to those general waste discharge requirements within 5 working days of receiving a complete request. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 900 (Papan): Environmental protection: 30x30 goals: land conservation: stewardship, requires the state to provide pathways through its 2027 annual report on its 30x30 policies for more robust management of easements and other conservation lands acquired by the state. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 385, Statutes of 2025)**

Wildfire

AB 261 (Quirk-Silva): Fire safety: fire hazard severity zones: State Fire Marshal, would strengthen the development of California's Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) maps by authorizing the State Fire Marshal to confer with individuals and entities, including public agencies, nonprofits, and tribes, regarding actions affecting fire hazard severity zones between official reviews. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 441 (Hadwick): Wildfire prevention: Office of Wildfire Technology Research and Development: wildfire mitigation program, would extend two programs related to home hardening and wildfire mitigation. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 223 (Alvarado-Gil): The Wildfire Smoke and Health Outcomes Data Act, would require the State Department of Public Health, in consultation with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, to create, operate, and maintain a statewide integrated wildfire smoke and health data platform. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 375 (Grove): Wildfire prevention activities: Endangered Species Act: California Environmental Quality Act: California Coastal Act of 1973, would streamline certain permitting requirements for wildfire prevention projects in moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones as identified by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. **Two-Year Bill**

HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL SERVICES

RCRC engaged on a range of Health and Human Services issues in 2025, including behavioral health, mental health diversion, In-Home Supportive Services, environmental health staffing, and expanding educational access for nurses in rural regions. Several high-priority bills were amended to address county concerns or were stopped during the legislative process.

AB 283 (Haney): In-Home Supportive Services Employer-Employee Relations Act, would allow the state to assume collective bargaining responsibility over In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) workers. RCRC anticipates further discussion regarding IHSS responsibilities in 2026. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 416 (Krell): Involuntary commitment, requires a county behavioral health director to include an emergency physician in developing the training for professionals making determinations about LPS Act holds. RCRC worked closely with the Author and committee staff to ensure consistency with County LPS responsibilities. **Signed, (Chapter 691, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 870 (Hadwick): California Children's Services Program: county designation, will authorize the County of Alpine to designate another county to administer its California Children's Services (CCS) program. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 167, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1288 (Addis): Registered environmental health specialists, will strengthen California's environmental health workforce and ease some of the recruitment and retention challenges currently facing local health/environmental departments. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 297, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1460 (Rogers): Prescription drug pricing, would protect the ability of community health centers to utilize contract pharmacies to dispense 340B medications to their patients in underserved communities. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 331 (Menjivar): Substance abuse, would add chronic alcoholism to the definition of "gravely disabled" for purposes of the LPS Act. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 483 (Stern): Mental health diversion, would require that an individual in a pretrial diversion program must agree that the treatment plan meets their specialized needs, and the court must determine the program aligns with the goals of mental health diversion. **Two-Year Bill**

PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Legislature passed a package of bills to address insurance affordability and availability in 2025, which were signed by Governor Gavin Newsom. RCRC actively supported a number of these measures, which ranged from including Zone 0 mitigations in the Insurance Commissioner's Sustainable Insurance Strategy regulations to extending the one-year moratorium on non-renewals after a declared disaster to commercial properties.

Indigent defense was another hot topic this year, with legislation being introduced to limit county contracting authority for indigent defense (AB 690) and to create a new employment status for Public Defender department heads. The indigent defense standards and contracting discussion will continue into 2026, while the proposed changes to the employment status of Public Defender department heads (SB 485) were vetoed by the Governor.

AB 1 (Connolly): Residential property insurance: wildfire risk, requires the California Department of Insurance (CDI) to consider whether to update the “Safer from Wildfire” regulations to include home hardening in the regulations on or before January 1, 2030. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 472, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 372 (Bennett): Office of Emergency Services: state matching funds: water system infrastructure improvements, would establish the Wildfire Resilience Program within the California Office of Emergency Services. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 690 (Schultz): Criminal procedure: indigent defense compensation, would remove local control over indigent legal defense. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 719 (Calderon): County emergency plans, would require each county to review and update its emergency plan at least every two years. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 732 (Macedo): Agriculture: neglected or abandoned crops: public nuisances: pests, allows County Agricultural Commissioners to issue civil penalties against negligent property owners who fail to manage their land to the detriment of neighboring properties. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 440, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 319 (Ashby): Criminal justice statistics: reporting, would require the Department of Justice to collect and publish annual statistical reports providing monthly information for each county related to certain criminal convictions. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 413 (Allen): Juveniles: case file inspection, expedites access to relevant juvenile case records protected in the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC), while maintaining confidentiality protections for the juvenile case records. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 221, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 499 (Stern): Residential projects: fees and charges, authorizes local agencies to collect impact fees before issuance of the certificate of occupancy if the fees are for parkland or recreational facilities that serve an emergency purpose. **Signed, (Chapter 543, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 525 (Jones): California FAIR Plan: manufactured homes, adds manufactured homes to the types of properties that can be covered under the California FAIR Plan. **Signed, (Chapter 476, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 547 (Pérez): Commercial property insurance cancellation and nonrenewal, extends the moratorium on insurance non-renewals for residential properties located in a ZIP Code within or adjacent to the fire perimeter for one year after the declaration of a state of emergency to commercial properties. **Signed, (Chapter 544, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 616 (Rubio): Community Hardening Commission: wildfire mitigation program, would have created the Community Hardening Commission within the California Department of Insurance (CDI). RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

SB 629 (Durazo): Wildfires: fire hazard severity zones: post-wildfire safety areas, would have required the Office of Emergency Services and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to consider revising the California wildfire mitigation financial assistance program to align with new community hardening standards aimed at enhancing fire resistance in buildings. **Vetoed**

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

This year, the Legislature worked to create new pathways for the local management of organic waste-particularly through allowing the on-site composting of livestock carcasses (AB411) and food waste/agricultural waste (SB 279). RCRC-sponsored measures to facilitate proper management of vapes confiscated from students by schools and to reduce costs of household hazardous waste disposal ultimately stalled for the year (AB 998 and SB 501). A Legislative effort to enhance monitoring and safety of landfills (AB 28) became a two-year bill while the Air Resources Board pursues complimentary regulatory updates.

AB 28 (Schiavo): Solid waste landfills: subsurface temperatures, would require landfill operators to continuously monitor and disclose landfill gas temperatures and take corrective measures if gas temperatures exceed specified levels for certain periods of time. This measure would also impose substantial penalties for failure to notify, report, or post information online. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 411 (Papan): Livestock carcasses: disposal: composting, allows the on-site composting of limited quantities of livestock carcasses. **Signed, (Chapter 613, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 436 (Ransom): Composting facilities: zoning, would have required the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation to develop sample general plan goals, policies, and implementation measures and a model ordinance that reflects best practices for the siting of composting facilities. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 762 (Irwin): Disposable, battery-embedded vapor inhalation device: prohibition, would prohibit sales of a disposable single-use vape device. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 993 (Hadwick): Hazardous materials management: Rural CUPA Reimbursement Account, expands eligibility for CalEPA's Rural Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) Reimbursement program to the remaining 12 counties with a population under 150,000 that are not currently eligible. RCRC and the California Association of Environmental Health Administrators (CAEHA) (on behalf of the CUPA Forum) co-sponsored this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 176, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 998 (Hadwick): Household hazardous waste: vape pens, would have allowed household hazardous waste collection facilities to safely disassemble household hazardous wastes to reduce safety risks and costs associated with management and disposal. Would have required the Department of Toxic Substances Control to identify ways to increase safety and convenience related to the management and disposal of vape pens confiscated from students by a school. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1046 (Bains): Short-lived climate pollutants: recovered organic waste product: agricultural crop preparation service, exempts food processing facilities from CalRecycle's SB 1383 edible food recovery regulations. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 719, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1304 (Schultz): Paint product recovery program: paint recovery: education and outreach, would have directed funding from consumer fees that fund California's paint care stewardship program to labor training programs. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 1325 (Rodriguez, Michelle): Lubricants and waste oil: producer responsibility, would abolish the state's existing oil recycling program and replace it with a new program through which an industry-run stewardship organization would collect, recycle, and appropriately dispose of used automotive fluids and their packaging. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 279 (McNerney): Solid waste: compostable materials, would expand the "excluded activity" exemption for composting activities by eliminating the maximum square-foot condition and authorizing a total amount of feedstock and compost onsite at any one time of up to 200 cubic yards, or 500 cubic yards for a composting activity owned by a public agency, as defined. **Signed, (Chapter 651, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 501 (Allen): Household Hazardous Waste Producer Responsibility Act, would create an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and require the producer of certain products that become HHW to provide a convenient collection and management system for covered products. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 561 (Blakespear): Hazardous waste: Emergency Distress Flare Safe Disposal Act, would have created a producer responsibility program for end-of-life management of emergency distress flares. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 594 (Padilla): Waste discharge permits: landfills, would have prohibited a state agency from issuing a waste discharge permit for a new Class III landfill unless the county board of supervisors for the county in which the proposed project resides has held a separate publicly noticed hearing. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 615 (Allen): Vehicle traction batteries, would assign responsibility to battery suppliers and other parties (like secondary users and handlers) for the proper disposal of used vehicle traction batteries. **Two-Year Bill**

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation measures were largely focused on one-off district bills or making incremental changes to policy, given budget constraints. A small push for progress on the Road Usage Charge (RUC) Technical Advisory Committee occurred, but did not generate enough interest to move through the process. Further RUC discussions are anticipated in 2026 and RCRC is taking part in the Fair Transportation Funding Coalition to help facilitate that process from the rural perspective.

A measure expanding State authority regarding electric aviation technology was introduced (AB 431, Wilson) but ultimately was pared down and pushed into 2026. The major measure of concern in transportation was SB 445 (Weiner), which RCRC strongly opposed with a coalition of local governments and special districts. This measure was originally pitched as a "shot clock" on development but was steered toward project completion of the High-Speed Rail Authority near the end of session. The measure is now a two-year bill and will return in 2026.

AB 390 (Wilson): Vehicles: highway safety, expands the requirement that a driver approaching a stationary vehicle slow down and move over to include any stationary vehicles, including marked highway maintenance vehicles, displaying flashing hazard lights or another warning device. **Signed, (Chapter 58, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 394 (Wilson): Public transportation providers, expands the elevated penalties that apply to persons that commit battery against certain transit workers to include public transportation provider employees and contractors. **Signed, (Chapter 147, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 431 (Wilson): Advanced Air Mobility Infrastructure Act, would require the Department of Transportation to develop/update the statewide aviation plan to include vertiports, electric aviation, charging, and infrastructure needs related to aviation technology. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 438 (Hadwick): Authorized emergency vehicles, authorizes the Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol to issue an emergency vehicle permit to any vehicle owned by a county, city, or city and county office of emergency services only while that vehicle is being used by a public employee who is employed by the office in responding to any disaster. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 152, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 830 (Rogers): State highways: encroachment permits: relocating or removing encroachments: public utility districts: County of Mendocino, would have required

Caltrans to pay for relocating or removing the encroachment of a public utility district (PUD) with a ratepayer base of 5,000 households or fewer in the County of Mendocino. RCRC supported this measure. **Vetoed**

AB 1014 (Rogers): Traffic safety: speed limits, gives the Department of Transportation greater discretion to lower speed limits on state highways. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 287, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 1421 (Wilson): Vehicles: Road Usage Charge Technical Advisory Committee, would extend provisions requiring the Chair of the California Transportation Commission to create a Road Usage Charge Technical Advisory Committee in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of a pilot program assessing the potential for mileage-based revenue collection as an alternative to the gas tax system until January 1, 2035, from January 1, 2027. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 445 (Wiener): High-speed rail: third-party agreements, permits, and approvals: regulations, would govern how the High-Speed Rail authority engages with utilities on coordination and cooperation in relocating utility infrastructure affecting the delivery of the high-speed rail project. **Two-Year Bill**

WATER

Water measures focused once again on Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) implementation, including cleanup and clarification measures. The California Water Plan is also undergoing substantial changes through the passage of SB 72 (Caballero), which changes how water supply targets are determined and requires updates to the Legislature regarding process and public outreach. A measure requiring data center operators to provide their estimated/actual water use (AB 93, Papan) was vetoed by the Governor.

The major measure of concern in water was SB 601 (Allen), which would challenge the ability of local governments around the state to reliably and affordably deliver essential public services to Californians, such as vital water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities, as well as incentivize and increase predatory and frivolous litigation, all without improving water quality protection. This measure is now a two-year bill and RCRC will work with a coalition to either pare down the impact or to stop the measure.

AB 263 (Rogers): Scott River: Shasta River: watersheds, provides that emergency in-stream flow regulations adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board for the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds shall remain in effect until January 1, 2031, or until the Board adopts permanent rules establishing and implementing long-term instream flow requirements for those watersheds, whichever occurs first. **Signed, (Chapter 130, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 269 (Bennett): Dam Safety and Climate Resilience Local Assistance Program, would alter the list of project facilities eligible to receive funding under the Dam Safety and Climate

Resilience Local Assistance Program operated by the Department of Water Resources. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 293 (Bennett): Groundwater sustainability agency: transparency, requires each groundwater sustainability agency to publish the membership of its board of directors on its internet website, or on the local agency's internet website, as provided. Also requires each GSA to publish a link to its internet website or its local agency's internet website to the location of the Fair Political Practices Commission's internet website, where the statements of economic interests, filed by the members of the board and executives of the agency, can be viewed. **Signed, (Chapter 359, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 430 (Alanis): State Water Resources Control Board: emergency regulations, would require the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to conduct a comprehensive economic study assessing the impacts associated with putting emergency regulations into place following a finding by the board that a nonfee emergency regulation is no longer necessary. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 532 (Ransom): Water rate assistance program, would make changes to the Low-Income Household Drinking Water and Wastewater Emergency Assistance Program by defining public urban retail water supplier and authorizing that supplier to provide water rate assistance to its ratepayers. Would require public urban water suppliers to provide a report on whether they provided water rate assistance and details of that assistance. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 639 (Soria): Dams: exceptions, removes agricultural impounding facilities, commonly referred to as “weirs”, from state jurisdiction. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 617, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 709 (Gonzalez, Jeff): Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: groundwater sustainability plans, specifies that groundwater sustainability agencies that have developed multiple groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) for a basin are not prohibited from amending the coordination agreement following the Department of Water Resources’ assessment of the GSPs. **Signed, (Chapter 439, Statutes of 2025)**

AB 794 (Gabriel): California Safe Drinking Water Act: emergency regulations, would have required, on or before January 1, 2026, the State Water Resources Control Board to adopt an emergency regulation and initiate a primary drinking water standard for the perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 31 (McNerney): Water quality: recycled water, redefines “recycled water” and provides that water discharged from a decorative body of water during storm events is not to be considered an unauthorized discharge, if recycled water was used to restore levels due to evaporation. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 736, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 72 (Caballero): The California Water Plan: long-term supply targets, updates the California Water Plan to manage and develop water resources for current and future generations in the state. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 210, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 224 (Hurtado): Department of Water Resources: water supply forecasting, would have required the Department of Water Resources to update its water supply forecasting models and procedures to address the effects of climate change, and to implement a formal policy and procedures for documenting its operational plans and rationale for its operating procedures. **Vetoed**

SB 317 (Hurtado): Wastewater surveillance, would have codified the existing California Surveillance of Wastewaters Program by requiring the California Department of Public Health, in consultation with participating wastewater treatment facilities, local health departments, and other subject matter experts, to maintain the network to test for pathogens, toxins, or other public health indicators in wastewater. **Vetoed**

SB 350 (Durazo): Water Rate Assistance Program, would establish the Water Rate Assistance Program, administered by the State Water Board, to provide rate assistance for drinking water and wastewater services to low-income residential ratepayers. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 394 (Allen): Water theft: fire hydrants, allows a utility to take civil action for tampering with or taking water from a fire hydrant without permission. RCRC supported this measure. **Signed, (Chapter 540, Statutes of 2025)**

SB 463 (Alvarado-Gil): Drought planning: resiliency measures, would exempt a small water supplier from metering and monitoring requirements if it is in the process of applying for state funding, has been determined to be ineligible for state funding, or is not able to obtain state funding because there is no funding available in applicable state programs, and has made a finding that increasing its rates to raise revenue locally is not a feasible option. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 601 (Allen): Water: waste discharge, would challenge the ability of local governments around the state to reliably and affordably deliver essential public services to Californians, such as vital water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities, as well as incentivize and increase predatory and frivolous litigation, all without improving water quality protection. **Two-Year Bill**

SB 697 (Laird): Determination of water rights: stream system, provides the State Water Resources Control Board flexibility in the manner used to investigate a stream system, rather than requiring a detailed field investigation, and, when conducting these investigations, authorizes the State Water Board to issue an information order to any person or entity that diverts or uses water or claims a water right. **Signed, (Chapter 422, Statutes of 2025)**

WILDLIFE

Predatory species took center stage in the wildlife discussion in 2025, as the gray wolf population continued to grow and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife implemented new programs to address the impacts on livestock. RCRC weighed in on important policy issues and began developing policy to further address the impacts of predators on community safety and livestock producers.

AB 846 (Connolly): Endangered species: incidental take: wildfire preparedness activities, would develop a voluntary, streamlined process for local agencies to submit wildfire preparedness programs to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and seek approval to avoid the take of an endangered species, incidental to conducting vegetative management activities in fire hazard severity zones located near urban areas across the state. **Two-Year Bill**

AB 902 (Schultz): Transportation projects: barriers to wildlife movement, would require inclusion of wildlife passages into transportation infrastructure projects, while exempting projects led by Caltrans. **Two-Year Bill**



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INDEX

<i>AB 1 (Connolly): Residential property insurance: wildfire risk.....</i>	<i>1, 24</i>
<i>AB 6 (Ward): Residential developments: building standards: review</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>AB 8 (Aguiar-Curry): Cannabis: cannabinoids: industrial hemp</i>	<i>1, 17</i>
<i>AB 28 (Schiavo): Solid waste landfills: subsurface temperatures.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>AB 36 (Soria): Housing elements: prohousing designation.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 39 (Zbur): General plans: Local Electrification Planning Act.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>AB 52 (Aguiar-Curry): Native American resources</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>AB 66 (Tangipa): California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: egress route projects: fire safety.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>AB 93 (Papan): Water resources: data centers</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 130 (Committee on Budget): Housing.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>AB 240 (Alanis): Community colleges: study: Counties of Amador, Alpine, Mariposa, Modoc, and Sierra .</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>AB 249 (Ramos): Housing: Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention program: youth-specific processes and coordinated entry systems</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 253 (Ward): California Residential Private Permitting Review Act: residential building permits.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 258 (Connolly): Fairs: allocation of revenues: gross receipts for sales and use tax.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 261 (Quirk-Silva): Fire safety: fire hazard severity zones: State Fire Marshal.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>AB 263 (Rogers): Scott River: Shasta River: watersheds.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>AB 265 (Caloza): Small Business Recovery Fund</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>AB 269 (Bennett): Dam Safety and Climate Resilience Local Assistance Program</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>AB 283 (Haney): In-Home Supportive Services Employer-Employee Relations Act</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>AB 293 (Bennett): Groundwater sustainability agency: transparency.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>AB 301 (Schiavo): Planning and zoning: housing development projects: postentitlement phase permits: state agencies</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>AB 312 (Alanis): Agricultural theft prevention: retention and sale of agricultural commodity: holding and deposit of proceeds.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>AB 330 (Rogers): Local Prepaid Mobile Telephony Services Collection Act.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 339 (Ortega): Local public employee organizations: notice requirements.....</i>	<i>1, 17</i>
<i>AB 340 (Ahrens): Employer-employee relations: confidential communications.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>AB 343 (Pacheco): California Public Records Act: elected or appointed officials.....</i>	<i>1, 16</i>
<i>AB 353 (Boerner): Communications: broadband internet service providers: affordable home internet service.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 368 (Ward): Energy: building standards: passive house standards</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>AB 370 (Carrillo): California Public Records Act: cyberattacks.....</i>	<i>1, 16</i>

<i>AB 372 (Bennett): Office of Emergency Services: state matching funds: water system infrastructure improvements</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>AB 390 (Wilson): Vehicles: highway safety</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>AB 394 (Wilson): Public transportation providers</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>AB 404 (Sanchez): California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel reduction projects</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>AB 411 (Papan): Livestock carcasses: disposal: composting</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>AB 416 (Krell): Involuntary commitment</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>AB 417 (Carrillo): Local finance: enhanced infrastructure financing districts: community revitalization and investment authorities.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>AB 418 (Wilson): Property taxation: tax-defaulted property.....</i>	<i>1, 19</i>
<i>AB 430 (Alanis): State Water Resources Control Board: emergency regulations.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>AB 431 (Wilson): Advanced Air Mobility Infrastructure Act</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>AB 436 (Ransom): Composting facilities: zoning.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>AB 438 (Hadwick): Authorized emergency vehicles.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>AB 441 (Hadwick): Wildfire prevention: Office of Wildfire Technology Research and Development: wildfire mitigation program</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>AB 462 (Lowenthal): Land use: accessory dwelling units</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 465 (Zbur): Local public employees: memoranda of understanding.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 470 (McKinnor): Telephone corporations: carriers of last resort</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 507 (Haney): Adaptive reuse: streamlining: incentives</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 513 (Gonzalez, Jeff): California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: scoping plan</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>AB 518 (Ward): Low-impact camping areas.....</i>	<i>2, 15</i>
<i>AB 531 (Rogers): Geothermal powerplants and projects: certification and environmental review.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>AB 531 (Rogers): Geothermal powerplants and projects: certification and environmental review.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>AB 532 (Ransom): Water rate assistance program</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>AB 538 (Berman): Public works: payroll records.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>AB 555 (Jackson): Air resources: regulatory impacts: transportation fuel costs</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>AB 589 (Gallagher): Firefighters: personal protective equipment.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 610 (Alvarez): Housing element: governmental constraints: disclosure statement</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 614 (Lee): Claims against public entities</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>AB 615 (Davies): Power facilities: emergency response and action plans.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>AB 632 (Hart): Local ordinances: administrative fines or penalties.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>AB 639 (Soria): Dams: exceptions.....</i>	<i>29</i>

<i>AB 660 (Wilson): Planning and Zoning Law: postentitlement phase permits: Housing Accountability Act.</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 670 (Quirk-Silva): Planning and zoning: housing element: converted affordable housing units</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 671 (Wicks): Accelerated restaurant building plan approval: California Retail Food Code: tenant improvements</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>AB 690 (Schultz): Criminal procedure: indigent defense compensation</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>AB 692 (Kalra): Employment: contracts in restraint of trade</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 709 (Gonzalez, Jeff): Sustainable Groundwater Management Act: groundwater sustainability plans...</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>AB 716 (Carrillo): Fire safety standards: hydrogen facilities.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 719 (Calderon): County emergency plans</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>AB 726 (Ávila Farías): Planning and zoning: annual report: rehabilitated units.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 732 (Macedo): Agriculture: neglected or abandoned crops: public nuisances: pests</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>AB 738 (Tangipa): Energy: building standards: photovoltaic requirements</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 762 (Irwin): Disposable, battery-embedded vapor inhalation device: prohibition</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 763 (Ward): Timber harvesting: streambed agreement: waste discharge requirements</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>AB 790 (Ávila Farías): Homelessness: single women with children.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 793 (Schultz): Potentially dangerous and vicious dogs: designation and disposition: burden of proof....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>AB 794 (Gabriel): California Safe Drinking Water Act: emergency regulations.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>AB 818 (Ávila Farías): Permit Streamlining Act: local emergencies.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 830 (Rogers): State highways: encroachment permits: relocating or removing encroachments: public utility districts: County of Mendocino.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>AB 839 (Rubio, Blanca): California Environmental Quality Act: expedited judicial review: sustainable aviation fuel projects</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>AB 846 (Connolly): Endangered species: incidental take: wildfire preparedness activities</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>AB 852 (Wallis): Air pollution: oxides of nitrogen: furnaces and water heaters.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 870 (Hadwick): California Children’s Services Program: county designation</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>AB 900 (Papan): Environmental protection: 30x30 goals: land conservation: stewardship.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>AB 902 (Schultz): Transportation projects: barriers to wildlife movement.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>AB 911 (Carrillo): Emergency telecommunications medium- and heavy-duty zero-emission vehicles.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>AB 928 (Rogers): Roosters: restrictions</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>AB 964 (Hadwick): Commission on State Mandates: state mandates.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>AB 993 (Hadwick): Hazardous materials management: Rural CUPA Reimbursement Account.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 998 (Hadwick): Household hazardous waste: vape pens.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 1007 (Rubio, Blanca): Land use: development project review.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 1014 (Rogers): Traffic safety: speed limits.....</i>	<i>28</i>

<i>AB 1016 (Gonzalez, Jeff): Power facility and site certifications: thermal powerplants: geothermal resources</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 1018 (Bauer-Kahan): Automated decision systems</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 1021 (Wicks): Housing: local educational agencies</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>AB 1022 (Kalra): Authority to remove vehicles</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>AB 1039 (Hart): State-funded assistance grants and contracts: advance payments.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>AB 1046 (Bains): Short-lived climate pollutants: recovered organic waste product: agricultural crop preparation service.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 1061 (Quirk-Silva): Housing developments: urban lot splits: historical resources</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>AB 1109 (Kalra): Evidentiary privileges: union agent-represented worker privilege.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 1154 (Carrillo): Junior accessory dwelling units</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>AB 1156 (Wicks): Solar-use easements: suspension of Williamson Act contracts: terms of easement: termination.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 1198 (Haney): Public works: prevailing wages.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 1207 (Irwin): Climate change: market-based compliance mechanism: extension.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>AB 1227 (Ellis): Wildfire safety: fuels reduction projects</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>AB 1285 (Committee on Emergency Management): State Fire Marshal: lithium-ion battery facilities: guidance.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>AB 1288 (Addis): Registered environmental health specialists.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>AB 1293 (Wallis): Workers' compensation: qualified medical evaluators</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>AB 1294 (Haney): Planning and zoning: housing development: standardized application form.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>AB 1304 (Schultz): Paint product recovery program: paint recovery: education and outreach</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 1308 (Hoover): Residential building permits: inspections: Housing Accountability Act</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>AB 1325 (Rodriguez, Michelle): Lubricants and waste oil: producer responsibility.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>AB 1331 (Elhawary): Workplace surveillance</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>AB 1337 (Ward): Information Practices Act of 1977.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>AB 1383 (McKinnor): Public employees' retirement benefits.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>AB 1400 (Soria): Community colleges: Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>AB 1421 (Wilson): Vehicles: Road Usage Charge Technical Advisory Committee.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>AB 1430 (Bennett): County recorders: fees.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>AB 1441 (Soria): County of Merced Citizens Redistricting Commission</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>AB 1456 (Bryan): California Environmental Quality Act: California Vegetation Treatment Program</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>AB 1460 (Rogers): Prescription drug pricing.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>AB 1482 (Castillo): Bowie's Law: animals: adoption, shelter overcrowding, and breeding.....</i>	<i>9</i>

<i>SB 5 (Cabaldon): Enhanced infrastructure financing districts and community revitalization and investment areas: allocation of taxes: agricultural land exclusion.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 7 (McNerney): Employment: automated decision systems</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>SB 9 (Arreguín): Accessory Dwelling Units: ordinances</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>SB 31 (McNerney): Water quality: recycled water.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>SB 72 (Caballero): The California Water Plan: long-term supply targets.....</i>	<i>2, 29</i>
<i>SB 74 (Seyarto): Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation: Infrastructure Gap-Fund Program</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>SB 131 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review): Public Resources</i>	<i>2, 7</i>
<i>SB 223 (Alvarado-Gil): The Wildfire Smoke and Health Outcomes Data Act.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>SB 224 (Hurtado): Department of Water Resources: water supply forecasting.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 238 (Smallwood-Cuevas): Workplace surveillance tools.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>SB 239 (Arreguín): Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>SB 254 (Becker): Energy</i>	<i>3, 21</i>
<i>SB 279 (McNerney): Solid waste: compostable materials.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>SB 283 (Laird): Energy storage systems</i>	<i>3, 21</i>
<i>SB 299 (Cabaldon): Local government: ordinances</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 303 (Smallwood-Cuevas): Employment: bias mitigation training: unlawful discrimination.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>SB 317 (Hurtado): Wastewater surveillance</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 319 (Ashby): Criminal justice statistics: reporting</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>SB 331 (Menjivar): Substance abuse.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>SB 340 (Laird): General plans: housing element: emergency shelter</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 346 (Durazo): Local agencies: transient occupancy taxes: short-term rental facilitator</i>	<i>3, 19</i>
<i>SB 350 (Durazo): Water Rate Assistance Program</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 358 (Becker): Mitigation Fee Act: mitigating vehicular traffic impacts</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 359 (Niello): Use Fuel Tax Law: Diesel Fuel Tax Law: exempt bus operation</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>SB 375 (Grove): Wildfire prevention activities: Endangered Species Act: California Environmental Quality Act: California Coastal Act of 1973.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>SB 378 (Wiener): Online marketplaces: illicit cannabis: reporting and liability</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>SB 394 (Allen): Water theft: fire hydrants.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 413 (Allen): Juveniles: case file inspection.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>SB 415 (Reyes): Planning and zoning: logistics use developments: truck routes</i>	<i>4, 9</i>
<i>SB 426 (Alvarado-Gil): California Environmental Quality Act: defensible space.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>SB 445 (Wiener): High-speed rail: third-party agreements, permits, and approvals: regulations.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>SB 463 (Alvarado-Gil): Drought planning: resiliency measures.....</i>	<i>30</i>

<i>SB 464 (Smallwood-Cuevas): Employer pay data.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>SB 483 (Stern): Mental health diversion</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>SB 484 (Laird): Coastal resources: coastal development permits: infill area categorical exclusion.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 485 (Reyes): County public defender: appointment</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>SB 487 (Grayson): Workers’ compensation</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>SB 496 (Hurtado): Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation: appeals advisory committee: exemptions</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>SB 499 (Stern): Residential projects: fees and charges.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>SB 501 (Allen): Household Hazardous Waste Producer Responsibility Act.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>SB 507 (Limón): Planning and zoning: regional housing needs allocation</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 525 (Jones): California FAIR Plan: manufactured homes.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>SB 543 (McNerney): Accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>SB 547 (Pérez): Commercial property insurance cancellation and nonrenewal</i>	<i>4, 25</i>
<i>SB 561 (Blakespear): Hazardous waste: Emergency Distress Flare Safe Disposal Act</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>SB 594 (Padilla): Waste discharge permits: landfills.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>SB 601 (Allen): Water: waste discharge</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 602 (Cortese): Veterinarians: veterinarian-client-patient relationship</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>SB 607 (Wiener): California Science and Health Research Bond Act.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>SB 615 (Allen): Vehicle traction batteries.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>SB 616 (Rubio): Community Hardening Commission: wildfire mitigation program</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>SB 625 (Wahab): Housing developments: disasters: reconstruction of destroyed or damaged structures</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>SB 629 (Durazo): Wildfires: fire hazard severity zones: post-wildfire safety areas</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>SB 632 (Arreguín): Workers’ compensation: hospital employees</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>SB 697 (Laird): Determination of water rights: stream system.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>SB 707 (Durazo): Open meetings: meeting and teleconference requirements</i>	<i>4, 17</i>
<i>SB 757 (Richardson): Local government: nuisance abatement</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>SB 769 (Caballero): The Golden State Infrastructure Corporation Act.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>SB 777 (Richardson): Abandoned cemeteries: report.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>SB 832 (Allen): State government.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>SB 838 (Durazo): Housing Accountability Act: housing development projects</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>SB 840 (Limón): Greenhouse gases: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: studies.....</i>	<i>4, 5</i>