

Housing, Land Use & Transportation Committee Speaker Biographies

Assemblymember Anamarie Ávila Faría, Assembly District 15: Contra Costa County



Anamarie Ávila Farías proudly represents California’s 15th Assembly District, which includes parts of Contra Costa County and the East Bay. A lifelong public servant and advocate for working families, Ávila Farías brings decades of experience in affordable housing, economic development, and educational equity to her role in the State Assembly.

Ávila Farías’s leadership spans local, county, and state levels. She made history in 2012 as the first Latina elected to the Martinez City Council and later served on the Contra Costa County Board of Education. Her accomplishments include launching affordable housing programs, championing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) for multi-generational housing, and creating green housing developments that transform environmental threats into sustainable solutions. She also spearheaded workforce initiatives, such as pre-apprenticeship programs for at-risk and incarcerated youth.

Appointed by both Governor Brown and Governor Newsom to the California Housing Finance Agency Board, Ávila Farías has been a leading voice for housing equity, creating programs like the Building Black Wealth campaign to increase Black homeownership and an ADU grant program to expand housing opportunities. A proud third-generation Contra Costa County resident, Ávila Farías earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of San Francisco, becoming one of the first in her family to earn an advanced degree. She lives in Martinez with her husband, an architect, and their two children.

Gary Link, Manager, Marathon Petroleum



Gary Link is a manager with Marathon Petroleum (MPC). Prior to MPC, Gary worked for the Northern California Water Association where he advocated on behalf of landowners, farmers, wildlife, and water districts to provide safe, clean, and reliable drinking and Ag water to Northern California. Prior to NCWA, Link advocated for Ducks Unlimited where he pushed proactive policy on water, wetlands, waterfowl, and agriculture wildlife conservation policy in CA, OR, WA, AK, ID, UT, NV, AZ, and HI. One of his top priorities was to work on collaborative policy with the states, NGOs, and landowners on the multiple benefits provided by wetlands and

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agriculture conservation to migratory birds, fish, and hundreds of other species, especially threatened and endangered species. Link contributed proactive efforts of western Ag/wildlife policy for the Farm Bill and the USA Rice-Ducks Unlimited Rice Stewardship Partnership at the federal level. It was often said at DU that if the farm gates ever closed to conservation, then wildlife would be lost.

From 2007-2016 Link worked directly for California Assemblymembers, California Senators, was an appointee for Governor Schwarzenegger and Governor Brown and was focused on Natural Resources policy, Water policy, Business and Professions policy, Energy policy, Public Safety policy, Public Employment and Retirement policy, State Contracting policy, State Lands policy, and School Construction policy among other policy areas.

Link is a graduate of California State University, Sacramento where he studied American Social and Political History. Gary's devotion in life are the three young Link boys and his wife, Kara, who is a 7th grade teacher in Elk Grove. Gary loves coaching football for his boys and enjoying outdoor family excursions across the golden state and the western US. Every summer Gary is a whitewater rafting guide on California's wild and scenic rivers, as a Type 1 diabetic Gary is active with the American Diabetes Association and was a mentor (Big) for eleven years at Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Sacramento.

Paula M. Daneluk, Director, Department of Development Services, Butte County

Paula Daneluk is the Director of the Butte County Department of Development Services and a member of the California County Planning Directors Association

Chelsea Lee, Associate Planner, Sacramento Area Council of Governments



Chelsea is an Associate Planner at the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), where she specializes on California land use and housing issues. Her work is focused on the Regional Housing Needs Allocation and providing housing policy technical assistance to SACOG's member agencies, particularly on the implementation of Housing Elements.

Chelsea previously worked at the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), where she led on the statewide implementation of the Cycle 6 Housing Element Update and AB 686, or Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. During Cycle 6, Chelsea provided technical assistance to local governments in the SCAG and ABAG region during the Cycle 6 Housing Element update and oversaw the development of the Prohousing Designation and Prohousing Incentive planning grants, two programs that reward local governments for accelerating housing production and adopting local prohousing policies, which led to approximately \$50 million dollars in direct funding distributed to local governments.

Chelsea received her masters degree in urban planning from Harvard University. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her partner, reading and creative writing, and spending time outdoors.

Todd Smith, Planning Director, Planning and Environmental Review, Sacramento County

Todd Smith is the Planning Director for Sacramento County.

Chelsey Norton, Director of Urban Planning, Ascent



Chelsey Norton is an AICP-certified planner with 20 years of experience and leadership on long-range planning projects for local governments that span California, with an emphasis on general plans, specific plans, housing elements, and community engagement. She is highly regarded for her ability to lead multidisciplinary teams of planners, urban designers, and experts in CEQA, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, and other fields in the development of long-range plans that meet the requirements of state law, articulate community members' visions and priorities, and meet the needs and expectations of local policymakers.

Chelsey has significant experience overseeing comprehensive general plan updates, having prepared over a dozen general plans for cities and counties around the state. She also has specific expertise in state housing laws and has worked on the full spectrum of housing studies and plans for local agencies across California. She has prepared 70 housing elements for jurisdictions around the state and provides ongoing assistance to cities and counties striving to maintain their housing elements in compliance with state law.

Outside of work, she spends most of her time chasing two active kids, traveling around the beautiful state of California, and baking elaborate birthday cakes.



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