

July 29, 2026

The Honorable Sabrina Cervantes
Senate Appropriations Committee, Chair
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento CA, 95814

RE: Senate Appropriations Committee Suspense File Recommendations

Dear Chair Cervantes,

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), proudly representing all 58 California counties, writes to share the county perspective on pending legislation before your committee.

Counties are facing heightened fiscal uncertainty due, in large part, to the fiscal impacts of H.R. 1 and increasing demands for critical public services, threatening counties' ability to effectively serve California's communities, especially our most vulnerable residents. Given these challenges, counties require a long-term partnership with the state that prioritizes fiscal sustainability, starting with the careful consideration of the impacts of legislation that erodes local control and diverts resources from core safety net programs and essential county services. CSAC remains committed to advocating for fiscally responsible legislation that does not impose additional unfunded costs on counties.

CSAC's recommendations are based on the need to maintain county fiscal stability while improving the delivery of essential services to California's communities. Therefore, we respectfully submit the following recommendations for the Senate Appropriations Committee's Suspense Hearing for its consideration.

Opposed Bills

Counties respectfully request the following bills be held on the committee's suspense file.

CSAC Officers

President
Susan Ellenberg
Santa Clara County

**1st Vice
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Luis Alejo
Monterey County

**2nd Vice
President**
Kent Boes
Colusa County

Past President
Jeff Griffiths
Inyo County

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Graham Knaus

Environmental Quality

- **AB 28 (Schiavo) Solid waste landfills: subsurface temperatures.**

Establishes a duplicative and conflicting regulatory process for responding to subsurface elevated temperature (SET) events at landfills, creating overlapping requirements with the California Air Resources Board's recently updated Landfill Methane Regulation (LMR). This measure would also impose fines of up to \$100,000 per day for failing to notify several state and local environmental, public health, and regulatory agencies of a SET event or for failing to develop a corrective action plan. This measure does not provide reimbursement for county health department implementation costs, among other concerns.

Governmental Organization

- **AB 1754 (Pacheco) State general obligation bonds: requirements.**

Creates an extensive set of new performance metrics, data collection rules, and reporting requirements for state agencies administering bond funding. These new requirements would lead to prolonged dispersal of project funds, substantial new duties for staff within every agency that administers bond funding and put an additional strain on agency budgets. Counties receiving bond funding will be impacted by additional and often duplicative data reporting requirements to the administering agency.

Judiciary and Natural Resources and Water

CSAC opposes the following measures as part of a wide coalition of local government and water agencies, including the League of California Cities, Association of California Water Agencies, California Municipal Utilities Association and others. While we support efforts to include tribal governments as part of land use and water decision making, these bills would result in substantial legal exposure to counties and create delays and barriers across almost all relevant permitting programs, while also creating uncertainty in existing permits such as established water rights.

- **AB 1881 (Ramos) California American Indian Freedom Act of 2026.**

Establishes a private right of action, allowing tribes and individual tribal members to challenge state decisions involving state lands and waterways, thereby increasing potential litigation risk. The measure further prioritizes tribal governmental interests through a strict scrutiny standard and overlaps with, or conflicts with, existing state and federal frameworks that already govern tribal consultation and protections.

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- **AB 2218 (Kalra) Water policy: California Native American Tribes.**

Seeks to address longstanding inequities faced by California Native American Tribes due to the loss of access to and control over water resources. However, the bill's policy statement and directive introduces substantial uncertainty into existing water management processes by establishing a broad policy framework without providing clear direction, safeguards, or limitations to ensure the continued reliability of water supplies. This measure would also have unclear, but potentially far-reaching impacts on surface water rights.

Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement

- **AB 1383 (McKinnor) Public employees' retirement benefits.**

Amends the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) by reducing retirement age for law enforcement and firefighters and increases pension benefits for highly compensated public employees. This measure is estimated to increase the present value of future benefits for CalPERS member agencies between at least \$4.8 – 8.2 billion. This does not include the 21 county-run retirement systems or independent systems statewide.

- **AB 1859 (Ortega) Public Works.**

Grants third-party Joint Labor-management Committee's a statutory right of access to public works job sites, private right of action, civil penalties, and attorney's fees against public agencies for alleged denial of access, substantially increasing risk of litigation for counties. This increased exposure could divert limited public resources from critical infrastructure and community services, disproportionately burden smaller counties with limited staffing and legal capacity, and increase project costs as public agencies and contractors are forced to incorporate higher risk.

- **AB 2656 (Petrie-Norris) Public employees: notice: artificial intelligence performing service within scope of work.**

Requires public agencies to notify employees within 45 days of developing, purchasing, or requiring the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to perform a service within an employee's scope of work. This measure would regulate tools used to streamline routine activities when existing law already provides a robust framework for determining when particular uses of generative AI may have a significant and adverse effect on the employment relationship. In such cases, employee notifications, bargaining obligations, and other protections are already required under the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA) and Ralph C. Dills Act.

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Local Government

- **AB 1820 (Schiavo) Electric vehicle charging stations: permit fees.**

Undermines the fundamental cost-recovery framework that enables local governments to efficiently and safely permit critical electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This measure departs from longstanding principles by imposing a \$500 cap, plus limited per-kilowatt adders that fall below the actual cost of permit processing, plan review, and inspection that counties incur which can reach several thousand dollars for complex installations. Some cost estimates indicate that this cap could result in \$12 million in lost recovery revenue, reducing resources that would support the inspection workload associated with the installation of the chargers.

Public Safety

- **AB 690 (Schultz) Criminal procedure: indigent defense compensation.**

Imposes numerous changes and requirements on the contracts counties use in providing and administering public defense services and prohibits flat fees. This measure would result in significant cost pressures to counties statewide.

Support Bills

Counties respectfully request the following bills be removed from the committee's suspense file and move to the Senate floor for a vote.

Local Government

- **AB 2640 (Hadwick) Commission on State Mandates: state mandates.**

Authorizes local government agencies, upon receiving a written notification of claim adjustments from the State Controller, to elect to offset any reduced reimbursement from other unpaid reimbursement claims occurring on or after January 1, 2027, or adjust the payment of claims for underpayments or overpayments that occurred in previous years. This change ensures local governments can retain critical funding and obtain needed financial relief.

Natural Resources and Water

- **AB 2051 (Wicks) Public resources: Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group.**

Directs the California Natural Resources Agency to convene an interagency Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group to identify administrative improvements and develop a clear roadmap for streamlining permitting for coastal resilience projects. This measure would help accelerate critical climate adaptation projects while upholding California's environmental protections, protecting coastal communities and ecosystems.

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CSAC appreciates the continued engagement to strengthen state and local relationships, and to realize the opportunities to safeguard fiscal resources to best support the people we collectively serve. In addition to these comments, we have sent individual letters on each bill with more detail. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at krodriguez@counties.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Kimberly Rodriguez
Chief Legislative Advocate, CSAC

CC: Honorable Monique Limón, President pro Tempore, California State Senate
Honorable Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Mariana Corona Sabeniano, Chief of Staff, President pro Tempore Monique Limón
Misa Lennox, Policy Director, President pro Tempore Monique Limón
Mark McKenzie, Staff Director, Senate Appropriations Committee

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