

AGENDA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STANDING COMMITTEE – LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER – 4th FLOOR HEARING ROOM
1115 TRUXTUN AVE.
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

All agenda item supporting documentation is available for public review in the County Administrative Office, 1115 Truxtun Ave., 5th Floor, Bakersfield, 93301 during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, following the posting of the agenda. Any supporting documentation that relates to an agenda item for an open session of any regular meeting that is distributed after the agenda is posted and prior to the meeting will also be available for review at the same location.

August 11, 2025 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:

Please click the URL to join: [Microsoft Teams](#)

Meeting ID: 219 841 917 332

Passcode: 5TC9bw6b

Or join by Phone:

+1 831-296-3421

Phone conference ID: 407 001 615#

Remote participation options are provided as a convenience only. In the event of technical difficulties, the meeting will continue in person uninterrupted

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons desiring to address Committee Members on any matter not on this agenda, but under the jurisdiction of the Committee. Committee Members may respond briefly to statements made or questions posed. They may ask a question for clarification, make a referral to staff for factual information or request staff to report back to the Committee at a later meeting. Also, the Committee may take action to direct staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda. **SPEAKERS ARE LIMITED TO TWO MINUTES. PLEASE STATE AND SPELL YOUR NAME BEFORE MAKING YOUR PRESENTATION**

4. Approve minutes from the February 10, 2025 meeting, April 14, 2025 meeting, and June 9, 2025 meeting – APPROVE

5. Update on State issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary – RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION

6. Update on Federal issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary – RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION

7. Direction for new committee business at future meetings – DISCUSS; PROVIDE DIRECTION

8. ADJOURNMENT

Americans with Disabilities Act (Government Code Section 54954.2)

Disabled individuals who need special assistance to attend or participate in a meeting of the Board of Supervisors Standing Committee may request assistance at the County Administrative Office, Fifth Floor, 1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, California or by calling (661) 868-3198. Every effort will be made to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities by making meeting material available in alternative formats. Requests for assistance should be made five (5) working days in advance of a meeting whenever possible.

DISCLOSURE OF CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

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SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

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February 10, 2025 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:

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1. CALL TO ORDER:

2. ROLL CALL: 2 Present; Supervisor Peters & Supervisor Flores

3. Approve Legislative Program Committee meeting dates for calendar year 2025

Supervisor Flores and Supervisor Peters made a motion to hold meetings every other month instead of monthly.

Meeting for 2025 are as follows:

April 14th, 2025

June 10th, 2025

August 11th, 2025

October 13th, 2025

December 8th, 2025

Public Comment: Natalie Feinberg, Jeanine Adams, and Kathleen Stiles HEARD.

PETERS MOTION – FLORES SECOND

4. 2025 State and Federal Legislative Platform – DISCUSS; MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO APPROVE

Items recommended for future discussion per Supervisor Peters: Insurance (Fire)

Items recommended for future discussion per Supervisor Flores: Carbon Capture (Tax Incentives) and Veterans Clinic

Public Comment: Natalie Feinberg, Jeanine Adams, and Kathleen Stiles HEARD

PETERS MOTION – FLORES SECOND

- 5. Update on Federal issues of interest to the County and direct staff to act as necessary – RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION**
Public Comment: Kathleen Stiles: HEARD
BEN GOLDEEN, REPRESENTING TOWNSEND PUBLIC AFFAIRS GAVE PRESENTATION ON CURRENT EVENTS
PETERS MOTION – FLORES SECOND

- 6. Update on State issues of interest to the County and direct staff to act as necessary – RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION**
PAUL YODER, REPRESENTING SHAW YODER ANTWHI SCHMELZER & LANGE GAVE PRESENTATION ON CURRENT EVENTS
RECEIVED AND FILED: PETERS MOTION – FLORES SECOND

- 7. Consider direction for new committee business at future meetings – DISCUSS; PROVIDE DIRECTION**
RECEIVED AND FILED: PETERS MOTION – FLORES SECOND

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

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Public Comment: Robert Hooks HEARD

- 9. ADJOURNMENT: NEXT MEETING – APRIL 14, 2025, 2:00 – 3:30 PM**

**Americans with Disabilities Act
(Government Code Section 54954.2)**

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BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

April 14, 2025, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:

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1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL: 2 Present; Supervisor Peters & Supervisor Flores

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PUBLIC COMMENT:

TREVOR SMITH WITH CONGRESSMAN VINCE FONG, GUILLERMO GONZALES WITH CONGRESSMAN DAVID VALADAO, SONIA MIRANDA WITH CONGRESSMAN JAY OBERNOLTE, ELIZABETH WATSON WITH SENATOR SHANNON GROVE, AND AARON BRIENO WITH SENATOR MELISSA HURTADO GAVE BRIEF UPDATE ON CURRENT EVENTS.

4. **Update on Federal issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary – RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION**
BEN GOLDEEN, REPRESENTING TOWNSEND PUBLIC AFFAIRS GAVE PRESENTATION ON CURRENT EVENTS
PUBLIC COMMENT: JEANINE ADAMS - HEARD
5. **Update on State issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary – RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION**
DYLAN ELLIOTT, REPRESENTING SHAW YODER ANTWHI SCHMELZER & LANGE GAVE PRESENTATION ON CURRENT EVENTS
6. **Response to January 28, 2025, referral regarding election integrity matters – DISCUSS; PROVIDE DIRECTION**
STACY KUWAHARA GAVE PRESENTATION
RECOMMENDED ACTION TO BRING TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING – **PETERS MOTION – FLORES SECOND**
7. **Direction for new committee business at future meetings – DISCUSS; PROVIDE DIRECTION**
8. **ADJOURNMENT: NEXT MEETING – JUNE 9TH, 2025**

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BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

June 9, 2025 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:

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BOARD ACTION SHOWN IN CAPS

1. CALL TO ORDER: 2:05 PM

2. ROLL CALL

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4. Update on Federal issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary – RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION

BEN GOLDEEN, REPRESENTING TOWNSEND PUBLIC AFFAIRS GAVE PRESENTATION ON CURRENT EVENTS

PUBLIC COMMENT: ROSANNE WATTENVILLE & NATALIE FINEBERG - HEARD

- 5. Update on State issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary – RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION**
PAUL YODER REPRESENTING SHAW YODER ANTWHI SCHMELZER & LANGE
GAVE PRESENTATION ON CURRENT EVENTS
- 6. Direction for new committee business at future meetings – DISCUSS; PROVIDE DIRECTION**
- 7. ADJOURNMENT: NEXT MEETING – AUGUST 11TH, 2025**

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MEMORANDUM

To: Kern County Board of Supervisors Legislative Program Committee
Supervisor Phillip Peters, District 1
Supervisor Jeff Flores, District 3

From: Paul Yoder, Partner, SYASL
Dylan Elliott, Advocate, SYASL

Date: August 11, 2025

Subject: Legislative Program Committee State Affairs Report

Proposed State Legislation

[Meadows Field Airport – SB 661 \(Hurtado\)](#)

SB 661 would, instead of directing sales tax revenue on jet fuel sales to the State's General Fund, redirect revenue to the Aeronautics Account for airport and aviation purposes, bringing California into federal compliance and providing a financial windfall for select airports. This bill proposes to allocate the redirected funding to specific types of airports based on their size and passenger boarding numbers, referred to as enplanements. The funds would be allocated for airports and aviation-related purposes. The formula contained in the bill would be advantageous to Meadows Field in Bakersfield. SB 661 made it out of the Senate, but the author decided to make it a two-year bill to be heard next year in the Assembly.

[SB 222 \(Wiener\): Affordable Insurance and Climate Recovery Act](#)

This bill would allow individuals and insurers to sue fossil fuel companies for damages caused by climate disasters. It fell just one vote shy in the Senate Judiciary Committee; however, reconsideration was granted so this is also a two-year bill, and the author could push the measure in 2026.

[AB 303 \(Addis\): Battery Energy Safety & Accountability Act](#)

This bill is technically a two-year bill, but – as currently written – seems to face a very uphill climb in 2026 if the author decides to try again. The bill to watch now is SB 283 (Laird), which would establish the Clean Energy Safety Act of 2025 and requires various provisions to address fire safety standards for energy storage systems.

[AB 283 \(Haney\): In-Home Supportive Services Employer-Employee Relations Act](#)

AB 283 has moved out of the Assembly with even a couple of republican votes on the floor. AB 283 would expand the definition of "public employer," to include an employer who is subject to the In-Home Supportive Services Employer-Employee Relations Act, which the bill would create. Additionally, it would establish a method for resolving disputes regarding wages, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment between the state and recognized employee organizations representing individual providers. This bill is still very much alive and the County should be aware that it may reach Governor Newsom's desk in 2025.

[Groundwater Legislation](#)

AB 1413 (Papan) and AB 1466 (Hart) are still the two bills to watch in this policy area. Both bills are awaiting floor votes in the Assembly. These bills are still alive; however, the previously mentioned broad coalition of interests, including Western Growers and the California Chamber of Commerce, continue to raise concerns with the bills,

especially AB 1413. Both bills must be heard in Senate Appropriations Committee after the summer recess and may go on the committee's suspense file, which will be reviewed on or about August 28-29. Procedurally, it is important to note that both bills – having been amended in the second house – will have to return to the Assembly for concurrence votes if they survive the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.

Wildfire Insurance

Nothing significant to report on this issue at this juncture.

Oil Production and Refining

As it is now being reported widely, SYASL can finally put in writing that there is the possibility of late-breaking legislation in 2025 that would greatly facilitate oil and gas production in Kern County. It has been a long road to get to this point, and there will undoubtedly be some twists and turns in late August / early September. Why? Because what has been proposed so far has many other provisions that relate to production and refining in California. There are many moving pieces, and each provision has its supporters and opponents. We will keep the County posted as events unfold upon the legislature's return August 18.

AB 470 – Carriers of Last Resort (COLR)

This bill establishes a process that requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to allow a telephone corporation to relinquish its status as a "carrier of last resort" (COLR). AB 470 is one of the more controversial bills in 2025, especially for Californians living in the rural areas. Basically, AB 470 would facilitate the pulling of copper wire "land lines" for telephone service, etc. Although CSAC has withdrawn its opposition, numerous counties remain opposed. This is another bill that must run the Senate Appropriations suspense file gauntlet in late August. SYASL continues to engage with interests on both sides as this bill – if it continues to move in 2025 – will most likely evolve further.

Budget Related Matters

Proposition 36 Implementation Funding

Lo and behold, the Governor and legislative leadership provided some funding in the FY 2025-26 State Budget for counties to implement Proposition 36: \$50 million for behavioral health, and \$15 million for public defenders. As the California State Association of Counties stated, *"This budget deal forces counties to implement Prop 36 for pennies on the dollar."*

VOCA Support for Ongoing State Funding

California's FY 2025-26 State Budget preserves \$100 million in state funding to backfill federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds to support organizations serving crime survivors.

Requested Earmarks

The County made several state earmark requests in 2025. The State's dismal fiscal situation is such that unfortunately none of the requests have been funded thus far. However, SYASL and the County's state legislative delegation will continue to pursue every funding opportunity available.

County Legislative Positions

[Establishing a Board Appointed Registrar of Voters: SB 858](#)

The County's sponsored proposal is SB 858, which is very far along in the legislative process. SYASL is hopeful that SB 858 will be on the Governor's desk soon.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

Phillip Peters District 1
Chris Parlier District 2
Jeff Flores District 3
David Couch District 4
Leticia Perez District 5



KATHLEEN KRAUSE
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

July 22, 2025

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 283 (Haney), IHSS Employer-Employee Relations Act – SUPPORT IF AMENDED

Dear Senator Caballero,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, in lockstep with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), to express our Support if Amended position on AB 283 (Haney), which proposes to transition collective bargaining for the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program from counties and Public Authorities to the state.

Kern County has long recognized the value of the IHSS program in enabling seniors and individuals with disabilities to remain safely in their homes while receiving necessary care. We have proudly administered IHSS locally under the realignment framework since 1991, working in partnership with the state to deliver essential services to thousands of residents while managing fiscal responsibilities and program integrity.

As drafted, AB 283 would create the IHSS Employer-Employee Relations Act, shifting the responsibility for collective bargaining to the state. While we acknowledge the intent of the bill to standardize and potentially streamline negotiations, the proposed change has significant fiscal and operational implications for counties. We appreciate the work of the author's office and the sponsors in collaborating with counties and associations to address several key concerns through recent amendments, particularly those included in the June 12 version of the bill. The following amendments are especially critical to securing our support:

- Clarifying that the state will assume full responsibility for the nonfederal share of wage and benefit increases resulting from statewide bargaining agreements, thereby protecting county budgets from unfunded mandates.
- Excluding core county and Public Authority administrative functions, such as provider registries, backup provider systems, and recruitment, from the scope of bargaining.

- Ensuring counties and Public Authorities are represented on the advisory committee and that their input is meaningfully considered before a statewide MOU is finalized.
- Maintaining the existing employment relationship structure, affirming that this bill does not alter the roles of counties or Public Authorities beyond bargaining responsibilities.

Furthermore, we understand and support the proposed additional amendments to Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 12306.16(e) and 12306.16(b)(3)(B), which would explicitly shield counties from fiscal exposure tied to state-level MOUs and reaffirm the state's obligation to cover administrative costs stemming from statewide agreements.

These amendments are not simply technical clarifications, they are necessary protections. Without them, counties would be placed in the untenable position of bearing financial obligations over which they have no authority or ability to influence.

IHSS is a critical safety-net program, and counties remain committed to ensuring its continued success. With the amendments identified in this letter, AB 283 offers a viable path to shifting bargaining responsibilities to the state while preserving the fiscal sustainability of counties and the quality of services IHSS consumers rely on.

We thank you for your continued engagement with counties on this important legislation and respectfully urge that the remaining amendments be adopted as the bill moves forward.

Sincerely,



Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
California State Association of Counties
Kern County Aging and Adult Services
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

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July 31, 2025

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 340 (Ahrens), Public employer investigations – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Caballero,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our serious concerns with AB 340 (Ahrens), which would significantly restrict the ability of counties and other public employers to conduct internal workplace investigations. If enacted, this bill would compromise public safety, reduce government accountability, and expose local governments to new and unnecessary liability.

AB 340 would prohibit public agencies from questioning employees or union representatives about communications deemed “confidential” between the two, except under narrow and limited exceptions. While the bill is intended to protect sensitive conversations, it effectively creates a privilege that mirrors those for attorney-client or spousal communications without the legal safeguards or balancing standards those privileges require.

Counties are responsible for investigating a wide range of workplace complaints, including harassment, misconduct, retaliation, and threats of violence. AB 340 would interfere with the ability to interview key witnesses and gather relevant facts, undermining the integrity of investigations and delaying corrective action. Even when employees are willing to come forward, the bill could prohibit agencies from asking important follow-up questions, placing both staff and the public at greater risk.

This restriction would also interfere with implementation of laws such as Senate Bill 553 (Cortese, 2023), which requires public employers to conduct investigations into workplace violence and develop effective prevention plans. Counties cannot meet those obligations if their investigative tools are arbitrarily constrained by broad and unclear confidentiality rules.

By limiting who counties can speak with during investigations, AB 340 increases the likelihood of incomplete findings and unresolved complaints. This will lead to more costly litigation, increased

reliance on third-party reviews, and a higher risk of liability for failing to act on credible threats or misconduct. Counties are already required to steward public funds responsibly, and this bill would force them to expend more resources on navigating legal ambiguity instead of resolving workplace issues efficiently.

Furthermore, the bill could trigger more disputes before the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) as counties attempt to understand and comply with vague or conflicting standards, again diverting time and resources away from core public services.

AB 340 claims to align with the PERB decision in *William S. Hart Union High School District* (2018), but in fact it departs significantly from that precedent. The decision emphasized a case-by-case, fact-specific approach that balanced the rights of employees with the operational needs of employers. AB 340 discards this balance and imposes a categorical prohibition on employer questioning, removing necessary discretion from county administrators.

Kern County is committed to maintaining safe, fair, and responsive workplaces for our employees and the public we serve. Simply put, AB 340 prevents counties from fulfilling those obligations. For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that you vote **NO on AB 340**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Leticia Perez', with a stylized, cursive script.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Kern County Human Resources Division
Kern County Counsel
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

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July 31, 2025

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 538 (Berman), Public works payroll records – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Caballero,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our concerns with AB 538 (Berman), which would impose unnecessary, costly, and duplicative administrative burdens on local governments without giving them the authority or resources to carry out these new responsibilities.

Under current law, public works contractors and subcontractors are required to maintain and provide certified payroll records upon request. Enforcement of those requirements lies with the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE), not local governments. AB 538 would inappropriately shift that burden to local agencies, requiring them to seek out payroll records they may not possess, without providing any enforcement authority to ensure contractor compliance.

This bill sets up local agencies to fail. It assigns new responsibilities but withholds the tools to do the job. If a contractor refuses to provide records, local governments have no mechanism to compel compliance. Only DLSE holds that authority, yet the bill is silent on requiring DLSE to act when contractors do not respond.

In addition, the bill's claim that it does not create a reimbursable state mandate is both misleading and legally questionable. AB 538 mandates new activities by local governments such as requesting, redacting, and distributing payroll records. These activities incur real costs. The assertion that these costs are exempt from reimbursement under Government Code Section 17556(g) is constitutionally flawed. Article XIII B, Section 6 of the California Constitution only exempts changes related to crimes or criminal penalties, not administrative procedures like those proposed in this bill.

Counties like Kern are already stretched thin, managing increasing state mandates, emergency response needs, and uncertainty in federal funding. AB 538 would add another unfunded,

time-consuming burden to our local operations, without any clear public benefit.
In short, this bill:

- Shifts state enforcement duties onto local governments without authority to enforce them
- Imposes new, unreimbursed costs on local agencies
- Relies on legally questionable reasoning to avoid state responsibility
- Adds bureaucracy without improving outcomes

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that you vote **NO on AB 538**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Leticia Perez', with a stylized, cursive script.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Kern County Public Works Department
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

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KATHLEEN KRAUSE
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

July 8, 2025

The Honorable Maria Elena Durazo
Chair, Senate Local Government Committee
State Capitol, Room 407
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1108 (Hart), Outsourcing coroner review of in-custody deaths – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Durazo,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong opposition to AB 1108 (Hart), which would prohibit sheriff-coroners in counties where the offices are consolidated from determining the cause, manner, and circumstances of in-custody deaths and would instead mandate the outsourcing of these cases to a third-party or external medical examiner.

This bill represents a significant and costly state mandate that undermines the professional and functional integrity of our existing Sheriff-Coroner model, which has served Kern County effectively for over three decades. In 1994, the County merged the Coroner and Public Administrator offices with the Sheriff's Office to improve operational efficiency, create fiscal savings, and ensure better service delivery. This system is intentionally structured to maintain independence and neutrality—our forensic pathologists determine the cause and manner of death, not sworn officers, and our deputy coroners conduct investigations independently from our deputy sheriffs.

Mandating outsourcing for in-custody deaths, regardless of circumstances, would impose logistical challenges, increased costs, and delays for grieving families. With the closest independent medical examiner's office over 100 miles away, Kern County residents could be forced to bear significant financial and emotional burdens, including high transportation costs and service delays. Furthermore, AB 1108 lacks clarity on what constitutes a conflict of interest, leaving counties exposed to inconsistent application and potential legal challenges.

Additionally, the bill exacerbates an existing shortage of qualified forensic pathologists, a nationwide concern, and could require counties to hire or contract with scarce and expensive professionals to fulfill the new mandate, all without any state funding.

Kern County strongly believes that local governance is best equipped to determine the appropriate structure and oversight for death investigations. Imposing a one-size-fits-all mandate from Sacramento disregards the demonstrated success and accountability of our current model and erodes local control.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully urges you to vote **NO on AB 1108**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Leticia Perez', with a stylized, cursive script.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Local Government Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Kern County Sheriff's Office
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

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Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

July 31, 2025

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1331 (Elhawary), Workplace surveillance – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Caballero,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our serious concerns with AB 1331 (Elhawary), which would vastly complicate the routine work of local governments, endanger our ability to perform essential public services, impede our ability to manage and respond to workplace violence threats, and make local governments vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse of public resources.

This bill is wrongly applied to local governments and should be amended to fully exempt local agencies. AB 1331 imposes unnecessary security risks for local agencies, schools, and the public we serve. The right of public employees to organize is well protected from the types of behavior this bill intends to address.

Even with the proposed amendments, AB 1331 would needlessly interfere with the ability of local agencies to protect foster children, keep kids safe in schools, and maintain the safety of their workforce or the communities they serve, including election facilities, libraries, and shelters for the unhoused. The author's proposed amendments would allow for the use of surveillance tools if "required by state and federal law or regulations". While this amendment may allow some facilities to continue to use necessary security tools, it is unclear the extent to which this amendment will allow public agencies to protect critical infrastructure and government facilities. State and federal laws are rarely prescriptive about the use of security tools, the need for security is implicit. Furthermore, this attempt to exclude certain locations, including airports, from the law's provisions is a clear acknowledgement that AB 1331 creates security gaps for critical facilities.

We understand there are reasonable concerns about the slow creep of surveillance tools into every aspect of daily life and appreciate that appropriate limits are needed to prevent employers from snooping into the private lives of their employees. However, the scope of this bill is vast and would deem basic security tools used for everyday work, including security cameras, collaboration tools

like Teams or Slack, or GPS tools used to track fleets, to be “surveillance tools” whose use would be constricted. Under AB 1331, any device that collects or facilitates collection of data of an employee’s movements, actions, communications, or behaviors, is deemed a surveillance tool that cannot be used when employees are off duty or in “employee only” areas.

Additionally, AB 1331 will needlessly endanger public workforces and severely impair our ability to prevent and investigate instances of workplace violence. The bill restricts the ability for public agencies to review data collected through a surveillance tool in any “off-duty area,” defined to include breakrooms and cafeterias unless directed by a court order or upon request by either a court, law enforcement, or by an employee. These restrictions needlessly inhibit the use of tools that can be used to keep employees safe from workplace violence incidents or, worse, provide the worst actors with a roadmap of locations where they can more easily hide bad behavior, including abuse of vulnerable populations like children, the elderly, or those experiencing mental health crises.

Under AB 1331, employees must be allowed to leave behind surveillance tools during off-duty hours or when they are entering off-duty areas. It’s unclear how these rules would apply to a variety of tools that public employees may be required to use, including emergency alarms for teachers, body cameras for law enforcement, or tools used for public vehicle fleets, including dash cameras, speed monitors, or GPS tracking. Consider election workers, who could be allowed to leave behind tracking tools used to track the delivery and pickup of ballots. The ability for an employee to claim they had simply been “at rest,” will give those who are rightfully required to wear surveillance tools an easy out for any behavior that conflicts with laws or agreements that require wearable tools for public and employee safety.

Similarly, the ability for employees to request video footage also raises critical privacy concerns about the disclosure of those in the footage, placing public agencies in the difficult position of potentially violating an employee’s privacy or incurring considerable costs to blur or pixelate the images of those in the footage.

To compound all of these concerns, AB 1331 would also impose severe financial penalties for noncompliance. For public agencies, these penalties can be staggering and severely impact funds needed to provide essential public services. At a time of significant budget constraints at the state and local level, now is not the time to subject public agencies to punitive fines for providing basic security measures.

We understand the sponsors are advancing this bill to address activities by private employers that use security tools to undermine efforts to organize a union, influence union elections, or retaliate against union leaders. Existing law already provides significant protections for public employee union activities. For example, Government Code § 3550 provides that a public employer shall not deter or discourage public employees, or applicants to be public employees, from becoming or remaining members of an employee organization. Section 3551.5 imposes significant penalties for violations of § 3550 and grants employee organizations standing to bring the claims.

Simply put, public agencies use surveillance tools to protect public resources, not to influence employee organization activities. This bill is another example of a narrowly focused mandate from Sacramento that unintentionally disrupts a broad range of public services and agencies, hindering their ability to effectively serve the public. For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors

respectfully requests that you vote **NO on AB 1331**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LP' or 'Leticia Perez', written in a cursive style.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
 Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
 Kern County Human Resources Division
 Kern County Counsel
 Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

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Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

July 8, 2025

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1376 (Bonta), Juvenile probation and youth treatment reform – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Caballero,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our concerns with AB 1376 (Bonta), which would significantly limit judicial discretion and local flexibility in managing juvenile probation cases by capping probation terms, restricting available accountability tools, and removing mandated rehabilitative conditions.

Kern County is committed to the rehabilitation of youth involved in the justice system, but we believe this bill undermines the ability of courts and probation departments to apply appropriate interventions. Arbitrarily limiting probation to 9 months, with extensions only allowed in restrictive increments and under heightened burdens, places artificial constraints on the court's ability to support meaningful rehabilitation. Many youth require more time to complete school, counseling, treatment programs, or make meaningful behavioral changes while under probation supervision. Mechanisms currently exist to petition the courts to review and consider discharge from probation. The courts also currently have the authority to set review hearings at their discretion on an individual case basis. This bill, however, moves away from individualized approaches and attempts to mandate discharge absent extension by preponderance of evidence.

Wardship probation is already reserved for circumstances involving more serious offenses and when deemed necessary and appropriate for the safety of the youth and the community. Youth who have been made wards of the court have been determined by the court to need focused services, programming and treatment that may extend beyond 9 months. It is important to highlight that wardship can include the most serious and violent 707(b) offenses and therefore the ability for individualized approaches is paramount. This bill establishes a probation term for wardship, which is deemed at the higher end of the juvenile continuum, for shorter durations than diversion or DEJ.

We are concerned that by setting a presumption for mandatory discharge at 9 months, even with the potential to extend, that it will have unintended public safety consequences. It is important to note that while courts in some counties have established timelines for reviewing, there are none that require the outcome of that review to be a discharge from probation, nor are there any that have adopted a presumption of discharge from probation. This is because the system is premised on individualized probation terms designed to best meet the rehabilitative and criminogenic needs of each youth and young adult served.

Additionally, the removal of the court's authority to impose modest fines or assign work programs limits options for promoting accountability in ways that are often less punitive and more constructive than other interventions. While the intent may be to reduce the financial impact on families, this blanket restriction eliminates tools that local courts can apply judiciously and compassionately.

Finally, removing mandatory rehabilitative conditions for certain offenses erodes longstanding practices that help address the root causes of juvenile misconduct. Rehabilitative mandates like counseling, community service, or restitution foster responsibility and support youth development when properly applied.

Kern County urges the Legislature to reject this bill in its current form and preserve local discretion in juvenile justice to ensure the safety, rehabilitation, and long-term well-being of our youth and communities. For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that you vote **NO on AB 1376**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Leticia Perez', with a stylized, cursive script.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Kern County Probation Department
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

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Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

June 24, 2025

The Honorable Isaac Bryan
Chair, Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 581 (McGuire), CAL FIRE permanent firefighter classification – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Bryan,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for SB 581 (McGuire), which would require the Department of Human Resources, the State Personnel Board, and other relevant state agencies to take the necessary actions to transition the Firefighter I classification within the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to a permanent firefighter employment classification.

California and the Western United States are experiencing unprecedented wildfire destruction. Over the past five years, eight of the most devastating wildfires in the state's history have occurred, including two of the deadliest that destroyed more than 16,000 structures in Los Angeles County just two weeks after Christmas. Despite significant state investments that have doubled CAL FIRE's workforce over the past eight years, additional strategic support is crucial.

The state now faces an escalating wildfire crisis, defined by fires that burn longer, hotter, faster, and more frequently than ever before. This new reality has fundamentally changed the firefighting landscape, stretching emergency resources to their limits and increasing the risks for both firefighters and the communities they serve. California cannot simply suppress or insure its way out of this crisis.

SB 581 offers a proactive and strategic approach. By transitioning CAL FIRE's Firefighter I classification to permanent status, the state can better leverage this trained and experienced workforce to not only respond to wildfires, but also carry out critical, year-round prevention work that is needed to protect vulnerable communities and reduce long-term wildfire risk. Strengthening this workforce will also help stabilize the broader insurance market by directly addressing the underlying threats that drive fire-related losses.

Kern County has experienced firsthand the devastating impact of wildfires, particularly in our rural and mountainous communities. A professional, permanent CAL FIRE workforce will enhance the

state's capacity to respond effectively, reduce turnover, and ensure long-term readiness. This bill is a practical, forward-thinking step toward building a more resilient California.

For these reasons, we commend the author's leadership on this issue and respectfully urge you to vote **YES on SB 581**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LP' or 'L Perez', written in a cursive style.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Kern County Fire Department
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

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Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

July 1, 2025

The Honorable Pilar Schiavo
Chair, Assembly Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs
1020 N Street, Room 389
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 694 (Archuleta), Veterans Benefits Protection Act of 2025 – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Schiavo,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for SB 694 (Archuleta), which strengthens consumer protections for California veterans by ensuring that only accredited individuals may charge for assistance in filing claims for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits.

Kern County is proud to be home to a large and vibrant community of veterans. These individuals have made tremendous sacrifices in service to our country, and they deserve trustworthy and qualified assistance when seeking the benefits they have earned. Unfortunately, a growing number of unaccredited and often predatory actors, commonly referred to as “claim sharks”, are taking advantage of veterans by charging illegal or excessive fees while providing little to no legitimate support. These bad actors lack VA accreditation, operate without oversight, and often compromise sensitive personal information.

SB 694 will provide critical protection by:

1. **Prohibiting unaccredited individuals** from charging for the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of VA benefit claims.
2. **Enhancing penalties** for unauthorized access to veterans’ data in secure VA systems.
3. **Establishing clear and enforceable fee standards** under the Consumer Legal Remedies Act, aligning with those required of VA-accredited representatives.

This important legislation builds on the framework of SB 1124 (Menjivar, 2024) and takes further steps to eliminate unethical practices that exploit vulnerable veterans. By ensuring accountability and transparency, SB 694 helps reinforce the integrity of the VA claims process and strengthens existing consumer protections.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors commends the author's leadership on this issue and respectfully urges the Legislature to vote **YES on SB 694**. We are committed to protecting our veterans and ensuring they receive the qualified assistance they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LP' or similar initials, with a stylized flourish.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs
 Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
 Kern County Veterans Service Department
 Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange



MEMORANDUM

To: Kern County Board of Supervisors Legislative Program Committee
Supervisor Phillip Peters, District 1
Supervisor Jeff Flores, District 3

From: Ben Goldeen, Federal Advocacy Director, Townsend Public Affairs
Spencer Street, Senior Associate, Townsend Public Affairs
Cori Takkinen, Vice President, Townsend Public Affairs
Christopher Townsend, President, Townsend Public Affairs

Date: August 11, 2025

Subject: Legislative Program Committee Federal Affairs Report

FEDERAL UPDATES

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act Becomes Law, California Impacts Become Clearer

On July 4, President Donald Trump signed HR 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) into law. This budget reconciliation package fulfills key campaign commitments, including extending provisions of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, eliminating federal taxes on tips and overtime, and increasing funding for national defense and immigration enforcement.

To help balance the cost of these initiatives, the OBBBA includes provisions that shift a portion of the financial responsibility for certain federal social programs, such as SNAP/CalFresh and Medicaid/Medi-Cal, to states and local governments. Under the new law, California could face a 15% cost share on SNAP benefits and a reduction in federal reimbursement for administrative costs from 50% down to 25%. The legislation also introduces more frequent eligibility re-verifications and enhanced work requirements for recipients. Additionally, it discontinues pilot programs and rule changes that allowed information from one application to be reused in another.

Because counties manage a large share of application and verification processes, they will bear much of the administrative impact. Some SNAP education programs may also see funding reductions. Local governments could experience increased demand for social services due to changes in federal support.

Preliminary estimates suggest the OBBBA could cost California more than \$20 billion. The current state budget framework did not account for these changes, which are set to begin taking effect next year. Discussions are ongoing in Washington regarding a potential second reconciliation package later this fall, which may include additional spending reductions. Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) has stated that the President and Congressional leadership assured him that further efforts to reduce social spending are forthcoming.

Senate Committee Advances Housing Policy Legislation

The Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs held a markup of the Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream (ROAD) to Housing Act of 2025 and unanimously advanced the bill to the full Senate. The bipartisan legislation, introduced by Senators Tim Scott (R-SC) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), incorporates several previously introduced bills and would bolster affordable housing development and rental assistance programs.

The legislation would increase the Public Welfare Investment Cap, incentivize further affordable housing development with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, increase housing incentives in Opportunity Zones, streamline environmental reviews for affordable housing projects, amend Capital Investment Grants (CIG) scoring to give a bonus in areas that establish pro-housing policy near public transportation routes, change incentives for tenants using HUD rental assistance programs, and make Federal Housing Authority (FHA) loans and projects more accessible. The legislation also contains enhancements for services to veterans and mandates reviews of enhanced work requirements, homelessness programs, and mortgage fee limits.

The legislation is the most significant housing policy proposal in the last few years with a substantial chance of passing in the Senate.

President Signs Executive Order Focused on Involuntary Commitment for the Homeless

On July 24, President Trump signed Executive Order (EO) 14321 titled Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets, affecting homelessness and social services. The order adopts a policy focus on civil commitment for mentally ill homeless individuals to reduce street homelessness.

The order specifically directs the Attorney General and Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development to challenge previous court rulings affecting the ability of the government to civilly commit an individual, provide grants and technical assistance to state and local governments in civil commitment efforts, enforce prohibitions on urban squatting, camping, and open illicit drug use, and expand the use of federal funding for forensic (mental health/substance abuse) bed capacity at jails or hospitals.

In addition, the order specifically seeks to withhold funding and change federal standards related to housing first, harm reduction, and safe consumption policies. It also seeks to integrate HUD data with other services to track the health of affordable housing recipients. The EO also asks the Attorney General to prioritize funding for the expansion of drug and mental health courts (e.g. California CARE Act diversions).

The EO does not provide deadlines for implementation guidance, and as the FY26 appropriations process is still pending, the availability of funding to support the initiative remains unclear.

EPA Proposes Revoking the “Endangerment Finding,” Undoing Their Authority to Regulate Greenhouse Gas Emissions

On July 29, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed the rescission of the “Endangerment Finding,” the 2009 regulatory basis for the EPA to restrict greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions under the [1970 Clean Air Act](#) (CAA). The Endangerment Finding is the agency

declaration that GHG emissions (specifically carbon dioxide) endanger public welfare and forms the legal basis for the agency to regulate motor vehicle, power plant, and other industrial emissions.

The finding was subsequent to a 2007 Supreme Court decision in [Massachusetts v. EPA](#) that pushed the EPA to regulate GHGs by qualifying them as air pollutants. In 2022, the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) further codified GHG emissions as subject to regulation as pollutants by labelling them in statutory authorizations for certain funding programs.

The combination of these bases for the finding will make it difficult to fully rescind without Congress. The EPA will likely have to open a public comment period and engage in litigation with environmental groups seeking to uphold the finding. The Administration is arguing against the regulations based on the finding that they are overly burdensome and inhibit energy infrastructure development.

If the rescission is successful, it would mostly eliminate the EPA's ability to regulate GHGs under the Clean Air Act and could further affect California's Clean Air Act Preemption Waivers. It would be one of the most significant environmental regulatory rollbacks since the agency's inception.

DOT Solicits Input on Next Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill

The Department of Transportation (DOT) [opened](#) a solicitation for public comment on the upcoming Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act as the development process for the new legislation continues. The current Surface Transportation Reauthorization is set to expire at the end of Fiscal Year 2026 on September 30, 2026.

Authorizations provide agencies with the authority to execute on certain goals and provide the conditions for funding specific programs, including eligibility, restrictions on the use of funds, overall program goals, and which subagency will administer each program under what authority. Authorization bills provide Congress with the opportunity to modify existing programs or create new ones to meet particular goals and raise suggested funding limits on programs. They generally come up within a five-year window of the previous authorization.

Prior testimony from Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy and initial statements from Congressional leaders in transportation and infrastructure indicate a lack of support for public transportation, instead favoring the consolidation of programs into block grants to states, lowering the total amount of available transportation funding. Currently, COVID-Era operating subsidies meant to float public transportation agencies until they regain pre-COVID ridership numbers are set to expire on October 1 of this year.

DOJ Requests Criminal Detainee Immigration Status Information from County Sheriffs

The Department of Justice (DOJ) submitted a [request](#) on July 17 for lists of inmates in county jails that are undocumented, along with their "crimes of arrest or conviction, and their scheduled release dates." DOJ stated they would pursue compulsory actions such as subpoenas if county sheriffs refused to comply.

Complying with the request would likely be a [breach](#) of California's own laws preventing local participation in immigration enforcement initiatives, and the CA Attorney General Rob Bonta is likely to sue in defense of the state's provision, which the first Trump Administration [unsuccessfully](#) challenged. Some sheriffs pointed out that some fingerprinting and booking technology is integrated with federal databases and that the state will already turn over undocumented immigrants if the Department of Homeland Security obtains a judicial warrant for the individual's arrest, in accordance with federal law, though sheriffs generally do not collect immigration status information from individuals in their custody.

AG Bonta's office pointed out that the letter requests information on individuals whether or not they had been convicted, and that state law "allows county jails to transfer an individual into ICE custody if ICE presents a criminal arrest warrant for a violation of a federal criminal immigration law, it does not allow for the wholesale notification to DOJ of individuals housed in county jails, regardless of whether or not they have even been found guilty of a crime."

DOT Seeks to Cancel California High Speed Rail Funding

On July 16, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) at the Department of Transportation (DOT) [terminated](#) the cooperative agreements that provided the federal funding for the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA). These agreements represent roughly \$4 billion in federal spending towards the state's \$135 billion projected total cost.

While a [lawsuit](#) against terminations progresses, a group of Congressional Republicans from the California Delegation sent a [letter](#) to Department of Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy asking the funds be redirected to expanding or repairing State Route 99 and 65; and Interstate 15, 5, 395, and 80 across the state.

The authors argue the expansion projects are already underway but are awaiting federal investment and need to be completed to repair infrastructure damaged in fires or in preparation for the 2028 Olympics.

Departments of Education and Labor Announced New Partnership for Education and Workforce Initiatives

On July 15, the Departments of Education (DOEd) and Labor (DOL) [announced](#) a new workforce development partnership aimed at creating an integrated federal education and workforce system. Under the agreement, DOL will take on a larger role in administering adult education and family literacy programs funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and career and technical education (CTE) programs funded by the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V).

The partnership follows an interagency agreement signed on May 21, 2025, which was temporarily halted by a preliminary injunction but later allowed to proceed by the Supreme Court. The agreement will enable DOL to manage these programs alongside its existing workforce initiatives, providing states with a unified state plan portal and consistent timelines for submitting required state plans. DOEd will maintain oversight and policy authority over these programs.

This initiative is part of a broader effort in DOEd to reduce the number of programs they administer as the Administration looks to [dismantle](#) DOEd to the maximum extent allowed under law. We expect DOEd to continue to transfer non-statutory programs/requirements to other agencies. Reporting indicates Secretary of Education Linda McMahon is looking to formalize an agreement with the Department of the Treasury to assume administration of federal student loans after repayment systems were ordered to be consolidated under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Sec. McMahon in interviews has also suggested that special education programs could be shifted to the Department of Health and Human Services, and DOEd's civil rights functions could be moved to the Department of Justice.

President Signs Executive Order Seeking to Rapidly End Clean Energy Tax Credits in OBBBA

On July 7, days after the President signed [HR 1](#), the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), the President signed an [Executive Order](#) (EO) detailing how the Administration intends to enforce the provisions phasing out the Biden-Era clean energy tax credits for wind and solar projects.

Under the OBBBA, solar and wind facilities must be placed in service by the end of 2027 to qualify, unless construction begins within one year of the OBBBA's enactment and meets existing "beginning of construction" standards.

The EO directs the Secretary of the Treasury to take actions within 45 days to enforce the new credit termination deadlines. This includes narrowing the interpretation of "beginning of construction." The order aims to curtail reliance on safe harbor provisions that have historically allowed developers to qualify for credits with minimal initial investment, unless a substantial portion of the project is demonstrably complete.

Additionally, the order instructs the Secretary of the Interior to review and revise any regulations or practices that may give preferential treatment to wind and solar projects over dispatchable energy sources. While discussions around tightening eligibility standards have been ongoing, it is still unclear how the Treasury will adjust the current rules in response to the directive. The outcome will have material implications for how renewable energy projects are planned, financed, and executed moving forward.

Department of Energy's Spending Plan Indicates More Frozen Funds

The Department of Energy's (DOE) FY26 appropriations [request](#) is being challenged on Capitol Hill as it reports lower FY25 (current year) expenditures than were Congressionally appropriated under [HR 1968](#), the full-year continuing resolution enacted in March.

Department of Energy Secretary Wright previously denied freezing or withholding DOE funding for renewable energy projects, though the decreased numbers are drawing additional scrutiny on what funding has been obligated and how much remains 10 months into the fiscal year. In May, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), a legislative-branch watchdog, found that DOE had [violated](#) the 1974 Impoundment Control Act by suspending new obligations under the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program. Other reports indicate DOE has not begun issuing

continuations or extensions for projects that exceed statutory performance periods set to end on September 30, a relatively common practice for projects already underway.

The Department of Transportation has faced similar scrutiny as it continues to review projects for compliance with Administration priorities and has faced court challenges. Additionally, the current appropriations proposal for the GAO would cut their budget by nearly 50%, a move sought by Congressional Republicans.

OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL EARMARK APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

The return of earmarks in FY 2022 marked a significant shift in the appropriations process after an 11-year break. Earmarks are known officially as Community Project Funding in the U.S. House of Representatives and Congressionally Directed Spending in the U.S. Senate. The 119th Congress has continued the practice of earmarking funds in FY 2026 and for the upcoming FY 2027. TPA is working with Kern County to prepare for the upcoming FY 2027 application cycle by identifying projects and developing a strategy.

Key requirements include eligibility (government or nonprofit entities), readiness of projects (preferably shovel-ready), and the necessity for funds to be obligated within the fiscal year. Projects with strong local support and alignment with account requirements are more likely to succeed.

A successful earmark request hinges on thorough vetting and strong community backing. House and Senate staff assess eligibility, account fit, matching fund readiness, and governance standards before Members make final selections. House Members are limited to 15 projects, while Senators face fewer restrictions but favor projects with regional impact. Letters of support from elected officials and community leaders are essential and should be gathered early. Understanding the differences in eligible accounts between the House and Senate is critical, as each chamber has distinct requirements and expectations. Tailoring submissions accordingly will improve the chances of securing funding.

Tailoring the County's Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending asks to the individual legislator helps align priorities. From meetings in June, we learned that Congressman Vince Fong places a strong emphasis on foundational investments that have the potential to catalyze long-term development and attract additional funding to the region. He favors projects that represent a significant undertaking and promise substantial impact. For FY 2026, the selected projects fell into four primary categories: water infrastructure, defense, transportation, and structural public safety needs and infrastructure (excluding equipment).

For FY 2026 Rep. David Valadao resubmitted projects from the previous fiscal year and did not accept new submissions for FY26. Rep. Jay Obernolte aims to distribute earmarks as evenly as possible across his expansive congressional district which includes portions of eastern Kern, including the area surrounding California City. He allocated one earmark to the City of California City and will similarly seek to select a project within that region in FY 2027.

ACCOUNTS OVERVIEW	
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies	
• Agricultural Research Service, Buildings and Facilities • Rural Utilities Service, ReConnect Grants	• Rural Development: Rural Community Facility Grants
<i>Project Examples Include:</i> Rural broadband infrastructure, rural community facilities such as libraries and fire stations (Rural is defined as communities with a population below 20,000)	
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies	
• Byrne Justice Assistance Grants • COPS Technology and Equipment	• NOAA • NASA
<i>Project Examples Include:</i> STEM programming, policing equipment, and law enforcement programming	
Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies	
• Corps of Engineers Investigations • Corps of Engineers Operation and Maintenance	• Corps of Engineers Construction • Bureau of Reclamation Water and Related Resources
<i>Project Examples Include:</i> For eligible entities with authorized projects through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or Bureau of Reclamation	
Homeland Security	
• Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants • Nonprofit Security Grants	• Emergency Operations Center Grants
<i>Project Examples Include:</i> Emergency Operation Centers, seismic retrofits, microgrid installation, wildfire/flood mitigations, other disaster mitigation efforts	
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies	
• Federal land acquisitions through the Land and Water Conservation Fund • Environmental Protection Agency State and Tribal Assistance Grants for certain water infrastructure projects	• Certain State and Private Forestry projects within the U.S. Forest Service.
<i>Project Examples Include:</i> Drinking water and wastewater system improvements eligible through the Drinking and Clean Water Revolving Funds, urban forestry, hazardous fuels management, trail restoration	
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies **	
• DOL—Employment and Training Administration—Training and Employment Services • HHS—Health Resources and Services Administration—Program Management	• HHS—SAHMSA—Health Surveillance and Program Support • Department of Education—elementary, secondary, and higher education
<i>Project Examples Include:</i> workforce development/job training, supportive social services, community health center equipment and facility improvement, mental health crisis units, mobile whole care services, K-12 supplemental education programming, afterschool programming, higher-ed programming and equipment	
Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies	
• DOT Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) • DOT Transit Infrastructure Projects	• DOT Airport Improvement Program (AIP) • HUD Economic Development Initiative (EDI)
<i>Project Examples Include:</i> Airport improvements, Highway improvements, transit improvements, affordable housing investments, community facilities improvements, other projects eligible for funding through the Community Development Block Grant program	

COUNTY FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

Bill Number	Bill Title	Sponsor	Position	Summary	Latest Major Action
H.R. 3944	Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2026	Rep. John Carter	Support	A bill to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs and military construction projects for Fiscal Year 2026.	Amended in the Senate, passed the Senate by Yea-Nay vote 81-15 8/1/2025 On passage passed the House by the Yeas and Nays: 218 – 206 6/25/2025
H.R. 3132	CHOICE for Veterans Act of 2025	Rep. Jack Bergman	Oppose	To amend title 38, United States Code, to allow for certain fee agreements for services rendered in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of initial claims and supplemental claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.	Ordered to be Reported by the House Committee on Veterans Affairs by the Yeas and Nays: 12 - 11. 5/6/2025
H.R. 2499	To Codify Executive Order 14248	Rep. Abraham Hamadeh	Support	The bill would codify Executive Order 14248 entitled “Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections,” giving it the full effect of law.	Introduced and referred to the Committees on House Administration, Judiciary, and Ways and Means. 3/31/2025

Bill Number	Bill Title	Sponsor	Position	Summary	Latest Major Action
S. 1240	Defending America's Future Elections Act	Sen. Alex Padilla	Oppose	S. 1240 seeks to repeal Executive Order 14248, entitled "Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections", and prohibit federal coordination and use of certain data sources to verify voter eligibility.	Introduced and referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration 4/1/2025
H.R. 22/S. 128	SAVE Act	Rep. Chip Roy/Sen. Mike Lee	Support	A bill to require documentary proof of US citizenship when registering to vote in federal elections.	H.R. 22 Received in the Senate 4/10/2025 House. On passage Passed by the Yeas and Nays: 220 - 208 (Roll no. 102) 4/10/2025
H.R. 471	Fix Our Forests Act	Rep. Bruce Westerman	Support	This bill establishes requirements for managing forests on federal land, including requirements concerning reducing wildfire threats, expediting the review of certain forest management projects, and implementing forest management projects and other activities.	Hearing Held, Senate Agriculture Committee 3/6/2025 Received in the Senate 1/28/2025 House, passed 279-141 1/23/2025

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Chris Parlier..... District 2
Jeff Flores..... District 3
David Couch District 4
Leticia Perez..... District 5



KATHLEEN KRAUSE
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

June 30, 2025

The Honorable Vince Fong
U.S. House of Representatives
243 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20003

The Honorable David Valadao
U.S. House of Representatives
2465 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jay Obernolte
U.S. House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: H.R. 3132 (Bergman), CHOICE for Veterans Act of 2025 – OPPOSE

Dear Kern Delegates,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our opposition to H.R. 3132, the Certified Help Options in Claims Expertise (CHOICE) for Veterans Act of 2025, as currently written. While we appreciate the intent to protect veterans from fraud and ensure competent representation in their benefits claims, the bill introduces provisions that, in practice, may increase costs and legal complexity for vulnerable claimants while shifting administrative burdens onto already overwhelmed veterans.

According to estimates from the California Department of Veterans Affairs, Kern County is home to approximately 40,000 veterans, many of whom rely on VA-accredited services for assistance in navigating an often complex and bureaucratic system. By expanding access to fee-based representation in initial and supplemental claims, this bill risks undermining long-standing protections designed to keep the VA system accessible and free at the earliest stages. For low-income or disabled veterans, even “regulated” fees up to \$12,500, as authorized in this bill, could become a financial barrier to benefits they earned through service.

Additionally, while the bill outlines new compliance requirements, knowledge testing, and reporting mechanisms for agents and attorneys, it also provides pathways for temporary and conditional recognition of unverified representatives. This contradiction could expose veterans to bad actors under the appearance of legitimacy, especially in rural areas like ours where oversight is limited.

The legislation also opens the door to federal preemption over state consumer protection laws, stripping states of their ability to enforce stronger safeguards or recourse options when misconduct or abuse occurs. This raises serious concerns about accountability, particularly in a system already struggling to monitor unscrupulous practices in veterans' representation.

While we support the goal of increasing awareness of accredited assistance and penalizing predatory behavior, we strongly believe those protections should not come at the cost of increasing the commercialization of veterans' benefits claims. Instead, Congress should focus on increasing funding and staffing for VA-recognized Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), expanding access to no-cost legal clinics, and enhancing internal VA claims processing capacity.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully urges you and your colleagues to vote **NO on H.R. 3132**. Veterans deserve seamless access to their earned benefits without the risk of incurring debt from private companies. Thank you for your commitment to serving our community and honoring our veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Leticia Perez', with a stylized, cursive script.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Jose Lopez, Kern County Veterans Services Director
Townsend Public Affairs

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1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

June 25, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman, Senate Committee on Armed
Services
Room 228, Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
Room 412, Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for H.R. 3944 – Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026

Dear Senator Collins, Senator Wicker, and Senator Moran,

On behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 3944, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2026.

Kern County is home to a large and proud community of veterans, active-duty service members, and military families, supported in part by nearby installations such as Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake and Edwards Air Force Base. Federal investments through this appropriations bill directly support the infrastructure, services, and quality of life for our military community, both on base and in our neighborhoods.

This legislation ensures vital funding for military construction projects, modernization of base infrastructure, and robust support for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, including medical care, mental health services, and housing assistance for veterans. These investments are especially important in rural and underserved areas like ours, where access to VA facilities and services can often be limited.

We are particularly encouraged by continued support for addressing the needs of homeless veterans, expanding access to care through VA Community Care programs, and investing in mental health and suicide prevention services.

Kern County is committed to working with our federal partners to ensure veterans and military families receive the respect, care, and support they have earned. We respectfully urge swift passage of H.R. 3944 and thank you for your leadership on these important priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LP' or 'L Perez', written in a cursive style.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Kern County Congressional Delegation
Jose Lopez, Kern County Veterans Services Director
Townsend Public Affairs