

AGENDA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STANDING COMMITTEE – LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER – 5th FLOOR CAO LARGE CONFERENCE 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.

February 9, 2026 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: 271 027 752 932 88

Passcode: cv7kU9ET

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 December 8, 2025 meeting – APPROVE

5. Response to January 6, 2026 referral regarding federal trade policy and impacts on U.S. Borax – DISCUSS; PROVIDE DIRECTION

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

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

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

9. 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

Pursuant to Government Code section 84308, members of the Board of Supervisors are disqualified and not able to participate in any agenda item involving contracts (other than competitively bid, labor, or personal employment contracts), franchises, discretionary land use permits and other entitlements if the Board member received more than \$500 in campaign contributions from the applicant or contractor, an agent of the applicant or contractor, or any financially interested participant who actively supports or opposes the County's decision on the agenda item within the 12 months prior to the final decision; and for 12 months following the date of the final decision, members of the Board of Supervisors shall not accept, solicit, or direct a campaign contribution of \$500 or more from the applicant or contractor, their agent, or any financially interested participant. Members of the Board of Supervisors who have received, and applicants, contractors or their agents who have made, campaign contributions totaling more than \$500 to a Board member in the last 12 months, are required to disclose that fact for the official record of the subject proceeding. Disclosures must include the amount of the campaign contribution and identify the recipient Board member and may be made either in writing to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors prior to the subject hearing or by verbal disclosure at the time of the hearing.

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STANDING COMMITTEE – LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM
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December 8, 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#

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4. Approve minutes from the October 27, 2025 meeting – APPROVE: FLORES FIRST – PETERS SECOND

5. Approve Legislative Program Committee meeting dates for calendar year 2026 – APPROVE:

- FEBRUARY 9, 2026
- MARCH 9, 2026
- MAY 11, 2026
- JULY 13, 2026
- SEPTEMBER 14, 2026
- NOVEMBER 9, 2026

FLORES FIRST – PETERS SECOND

6. Update on Federal 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

7. Update on State 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 - CHARLES SHINN HEARD

8. Direction for new committee business at future meetings – DISCUSSED; NO NEW DIRECTION PROVIDED

9. ADJOURNMENT

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ITEM #5

February 9, 2026

Legislative Program Committee
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

RESPONSE TO REFERRAL REGARDING FEDERAL TRADE POLICY AND IMPACTS ON U.S. BORAX

Fiscal Impact: None

On January 6, 2026, Supervisor Parlier referred to the Legislative Program Committee (LPC) an item requesting exploration of how the County Board of Supervisors can support U.S. Borax, located in Boron, in the face of federal trade policies that have disrupted market stability for the company. This memorandum provides a focused framework for LPC discussion and direction, centered on federal legislative advocacy to restore predictability in trade policy.

U.S. Borax is a cornerstone of Kern County's industrial base. For nearly a century, the company has sustained mining operations in the county and produced high-quality jobs that equate to local purchasing power and provide a significant source of local tax revenues. As a commodity producer operating in globally traded markets, the company's planning horizon depends on predictable federal trade rules. Over the past several years, episodic tariff actions have introduced uncertainty into input costs, export competitiveness, contract pricing, and capital planning, elevating risk for domestic mineral producers and their communities. When policy signals are abrupt, firms scale back investment, defer maintenance, or widen price spreads in ways that can ultimately affect local employment and possibly county revenue.

Advocating for clear process guardrails at the federal level is a practical step to reduce volatility (policy whiplash) that can ripple through the economy. A measured oversight framework that requires timely impact analysis and time-bound review of tariff actions would help stabilize business expectations, support long-term contracting, and better align federal actions with local economic realities.

S. 1272, introduced by Senator Cantwell (D-WA), would institute Congressional review for most new or increased tariffs, and focuses on three core mechanisms:

- **48-Hour Notification & Impact Assessment:** The President must notify Congress within 48 hours of imposing or increasing a duty and include the rationale and an assessment of impacts on U.S. businesses and consumers.
- **Automatic Expiration Absent Approval:** Any new duty expires after 60 days unless Congress enacts a joint resolution of approval.

- Disapproval Authority & Trade Remedies Preserved: Congress may terminate a duty via a joint resolution of disapproval; the bill excludes antidumping (AD) and countervailing duties (CVD)¹ under the Tariff Act of 1930, preserving established trade-remedy tools.

This bill provides predictability for capital planning by establishing a time-bound review and clear procedures that lower the risk premium attached to long-term investments and maintenance schedules. With greater predictability, firms such as U.S. Borax can negotiate supply and sales contracts with fewer “tariff shock” contingencies, reducing pass-through costs to customers and hedging expenses. Additionally, the required impact assessments foster transparency and furnish stakeholders with data they can use to evaluate secondary impacts on employment, procurement, and revenue generation. Lastly, by maintaining antidumping and countervailing duties, S. 1272 preserves essential trade-remedy tools while reducing the risk of sudden, broad tariff changes.

In sum, the bill has bipartisan sponsorship and is pending in the Senate Finance Committee. Its design aims to reduce abrupt policy shifts, increase transparency, and encourage evidence-based decision-making, all of which would help companies like U.S. Borax plan with greater confidence and reduce market volatility.

Supporting S. 1272 advances Kern County’s overarching goal of protecting local jobs and economic stability in the county and across the region. By advocating for a more predictable, transparent federal tariff process, the Board can help ensure that policy decisions in Washington better reflect their on-the-ground consequences here at home and throughout the nation.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that the LPC discuss the proposed legislation and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to adopt a position of support for S. 1272 at its February 24, 2026, meeting.

Sincerely,



Nancy Anderson
County Administrative Officer

NA:TB Federal Trade Policy & Impacts on US Borax (LPC)

Attachment

¹ U.S. tariffs imposed on unfairly priced or subsidized imports to protect domestic industries from foreign competition, with Antidumping Duties (AD) addressing sales below fair value and Countervailing Duties (CVD) offsetting government subsidies. Both, ultimately, level the playing field for U.S. businesses.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

Phillip Peters District 1
Chris Parlier..... District 2
Jeff Flores..... District 3
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Telephone (661) 868-3585
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February 24, 2026

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Schiff
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: S. 1272 Trade Review Act – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Padilla and Senator Schiff,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for S.1272 the Trade Review Act. This bipartisan legislation represents a critical step toward restoring Congressional oversight in trade policy decisions, particularly concerning the imposition of tariffs that can significantly impact local economies like ours.

Kern County's economy is intertwined with international trade, encompassing agriculture, energy, and manufacturing sectors. Unilateral tariff actions can disrupt supply chains and increase costs for consumers and businesses. These disruptions threaten local jobs, hinder economic growth, and create uncertainty for industries that rely on stable and predictable trade policies.

The Trade Review Act ensures greater transparency and accountability in U.S. trade policy by requiring the President to notify Congress within 48 hours of imposing or raising tariffs, along with a detailed explanation and impact analysis. It also mandates that new or increased tariffs automatically expire after 60 days unless Congress approves them through a joint resolution. Additionally, the bill empowers Congress to terminate existing tariffs that may not align with the national interest, reinforcing legislative oversight over key economic decisions.

I strongly urge you and your colleagues to support S. 1272 and provide a more stable and predictable trade environment, benefiting Kern County and California.

Sincerely,

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Kern House Delegation
Townsend Public Affairs

MEMORANDUM

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

From **Townsend Public Affairs**
Ben Goldeen, Federal Advocacy Director
Spencer Street, Senior Associate
Christopher Townsend, President

Date: February 9, 2026

Subject: Legislative Program Committee Federal Affairs Report

Federal activity in early 2026 has been shaped by uncertainty around finalizing Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations and the prospect of a brief, partial government shutdown. Congressional leaders are moving forward with most remaining spending bills while temporarily extending Homeland Security funding to allow continued negotiations on immigration enforcement with limited operational disruption.

Housing policy is a central focus. The FY26 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development package stabilizes HUD's Continuum of Care program by renewing expiring grants, prioritizing annual renewals, and providing additional funding after litigation halted prior changes that threatened permanent supportive housing.

House Republicans have also released a framework for a potential second budget reconciliation package addressing housing affordability, health care costs, energy policy, and government spending, though timing remains uncertain given narrow margins and the election cycle.

Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations will ramp up in February and March and we will be submitting the following projects for consideration to Kern County's congressional delegation.

- Buena Vista Aquatic Recreation Area Pavement - \$3 million
- California City Boulevard Extension - \$4 million
- Emergency Communications Vehicles - \$500,000
- Emergency Operations Center Backup Energy Equipment - \$1 million

Federal Legislative Update

Temporary Partial Shutdown Likely as Congress Continues Negotiations on Homeland Security Funding Bill

On January 29, Senate Democrats and the White House [announced](#) an agreement to finalize the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) appropriations process, after the six-bill minibus containing the

remainder of the FY26 bills stalled the final week in January following immigration enforcement incidents in Minnesota. Two House-passed minibuses were combined into a single six-bill combination to allow the Senate time to pass them in advance of the January 30 deadline. This deal would not avert a temporary shutdown, which will likely last until February 2 or 3, when the House returns to DC and can vote to pass the amended package.

The plan would allow the Senate to proceed with passing five of the six remaining bills, separating out the Homeland Security component into a continuing resolution, which would temporarily maintain prior funding levels for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, and Border Patrol. Democrats want to continue negotiations on the Homeland Security bill, specifically to add additional oversight and other reforms the immigration enforcement agencies. The other five appropriations bills contain language requiring the Administration to expend the funds on specific timelines and restricts their ability to redirect them in accordance with their policies or layoff program staff without consulting Congress.

Federal agencies under the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development; Labor, Health and Human Services, Education; Homeland Security; Defense; Financial Services; and State and Foreign Operations bills will be temporarily shutdown, though due to the short length, may not significantly alter operations.

FY26 Appropriations Minibus Funds Continuum of Care and Renews Existing Projects

The proposed final minibus of FY26, containing the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development [bill](#) and accompanying [Joint Explanatory Statement](#) introduced on January 20 makes significant changes to resolve the ongoing issues with the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUDs) [Continuum of Care](#) (CoC) program.

In 2025, HUD published a new Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) that reduced the amount of funding available for permanent supportive housing projects from 90% of the available funds to 30%. In addition, the scoring changes in the NOFO prioritized non-permanent supportive housing projects and made other technical changes that could have destabilized recipients and program operators. The NOFO timing, delayed by the previous government shutdown, could have also left a gap in rental assistance payments for CoC recipients. A lawsuit against the revised NOFO led to a [preliminary injunction](#) on December 23, 2025, requiring HUD to preserve the status quo.

The new language in the bill requires HUD to renew expired funding for CoCs for 12 months, and depending on when new, compliant guidance is issued renew expiring funding for each CoC with expiring funding for 12 months until new guidance is issued. There is also language that would require 60% of next year's funding to go towards the annual renewal demand and the bills provide additional funding for the program to cover increased costs.

Republican Study Committee Releases Plan for Reconciliation Package 2.0

On January 15, the Republican Study Committee (RSC), an intra-party committee led by Rep. August Pfluger of Texas, [released](#) a framework for a second reconciliation package, the same type of legislative vehicle as [HR 1](#), the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA).

Budget reconciliation packages were created by Congressional Budget Act of 1974, and allow for expedited consideration of certain budgetary measures by bypassing the 60-vote threshold for cloture in the Senate, allowing measures to pass with a simple majority. Separate from appropriations, they were originally intended to allow Congress to quickly correct course if federal

revenues for the year were significantly different than predicted, information which is usually provided to Congress relatively close to the end of the federal government's fiscal year on September 30, they have since been used to pass large packages of legislation on a partisan basis with narrow majorities in the Senate being common. The primary limitation on reconciliation packages is the [Byrd Rule](#), which prohibits non-budgetary and other extraneous policy riders from being included in reconciliation packages. Reconciliation can be pursued once per fiscal year, and begins with both the House and Senate passing identical frameworks, followed by each standing committee in the House and Senate passing bill text compliant with the framework.

The proposal seeks to address ongoing challenges related to housing affordability, health insurance and prescription drug costs, energy affordability, government spending, and the potential codification of certain executive orders. With narrow margins in Congress, limited legislative guidance from the White House, and an approaching election, Congressional Leadership has been [cautious](#) about pursuing a second reconciliation package, though the option may receive further consideration as lawmakers continue work on healthcare reform through the Spring.

Congress Considers Legislation Addressing Energy Regulations for Manufactured Homes

The House considered [HR 5184](#), the Affordable Housing Over Mandating Efficiency Standards (HOMES) Act, the second week of January. The bill would modify and provide exceptions to Department of Energy (DOE) efficiency and conservation standards for manufactured homes.

Under the bill, DOE would retain the ability to advise the Department of Housing and Urban Development on building code recommendations but would largely lose the authority to regulate manufactured or factory constructed housing. The bill aims to decrease the regulatory burden on pre-fabricated housing, as Congress looks to increase housing supply and affordable housing availability.

House Committee on Energy and Commerce Holds Hearing on Nuclear Power

On January 7, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce's Energy Subcommittee held a [hearing](#) on new nuclear power. Witnesses included the Director of the Idaho National Laboratory, the President of the Nuclear Energy Institute, and utility company representatives.

Due to increasing stable grid demand largely connected to the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence (AI) data centers, Congress is looking for alternative measures to increase energy supply. Members of the Subcommittee discussed modifying Nuclear Regulatory Commission procedures to allow older nuclear power plants to be either recommissioned or have their operating licenses extended. Members and witnesses also discussed next generation power plants and small modular reactors.

Congressman Doug LaMalfa of California's First Congressional District Passes Away

On January 6, House Majority Whip Tom Emmer [announced](#) the passing of Representative Doug LaMalfa (R-CA-1). Congressman LaMalfa had been serving California's First Congressional District since 2013.

The Congressman previously served in the State Assembly and Senate before being elected to the House. He served as Chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus, Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture's Forestry Subcommittee, and on the House Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Natural Resources. The Congressman is survived by his

wife and children. On January 7, the House adjourned in honor of Rep. LaMalfa and held a moment of silence on the floor.

New Court Filings Suggest Large-Scale FEMA Layoffs, Reform Efforts Continue

On January 28, in a court [filing](#) connected to a lawsuit by a group of federal labor unions against the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the plaintiffs provided additional details about mass layoffs previously [reported](#) on at FEMA.

According to the filing, on December 23, management employees at FEMA were directed to plan for up to a 50% reduction in staff, around 11,500 employees. This included a reduction of 15% in permanent, full-time civil servants, a 41% reduction in disaster employees, and an 85% reduction in the surge workforce that immediately responds to natural disasters. This follows the Administration's previous efforts to [shift](#) responsibility for disaster response to the states, without providing additional funding. The President also [extended](#) the FEMA Review Council's authorization on January 23. The panel, led by DHS Secretary Noem and Defense Secretary Hegseth, was expected to publish recommendations at the end of 2025 on reforms to disaster assistance overall and whether or not FEMA should become an independent agency.

While the filings do not represent statements from DHS or FEMA, they will likely produce factual information when DHS and the Department of Justice respond in advance of any hearing. In addition, Congress has been considering [HR 4669](#), the FEMA Act of 2025, which would make FEMA an independent agency among other changes.

President Signs Executive Order “Preempting” State Permitting Requirements for Victims of LA Fire

On January 27, the President signed Executive Order (EO) [14377](#), titled Addressing State and Local Failures to Rebuild Los Angeles after Wildfire Disasters. The EO attempts to preempt both California and local regulations that the Administration argues are hindering reconstruction following the 2025 fires in and around Los Angeles County.

The EO continues the prior National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) exemption originally granted for reconstruction projects in February, 2025, and orders the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Administrators of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) to consider policies, including federal preemption, to speed reconstruction efforts.

If fully implemented, the EO would allow builders using federal funding with permitting issues before local jurisdictions and the state to bypass both and seek federal approval instead. California previously [granted](#) California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) waivers for construction projects in affected areas, and it is unclear if the President has the constitutional or legal authority to preempt local regulations in this manner.

EPA Announces Changes to Clean Water Act Enforcement

On January 13, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [announced](#) a proposed rule that would modify enforcement of [Section 401](#) of the Clean Water Act (CWA). CWA gives states the authority to grant, deny, or waive certification of proposed federal licenses or permits that may discharge into waters of the United States (WOTUS) under certain conditions.

In 2023, the Biden Administration used agency rulemaking to expand Section 401, which created additional regulatory hurdles for certain discharge activities into WOTUS. The [proposed rule](#) would limit the authority of states to control discharges into WOTUS within their jurisdiction, and has the support of Senate Environment and Public Works Chairwoman Moore-Capito and House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Graves.

The move is being seen as working on both the [revised definition](#) of WOTUS EPA is seeking to complete pursuant to the Supreme Court [decision](#) in *Sackett v EPA* and the permitting reform efforts recently [passed](#) out of the House in December. The Administration has also broadly pursued environmental deregulation.

HHS Freezes Benefits Funding for California

On January 6, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [announced](#) they would be freezing funding for California and four other states under the Administration for Children and Families. The programs impacted include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF/CalWORKS), Child Care and Development Fund, and the Social Services Block Grant.

The federal funding provides financial assistance to families, funds early childhood education programs, and supports state child welfare services like foster care, counseling, substance abuse disorder treatment, and employment services.

The move is being seen as an extension of the [fraud accusations](#) being made in Minnesota. California Attorney General Rob Bonta [said](#) the State was assessing the legality of the move, and would take appropriate legal action once they had made a determination. Typically, additional reporting measures for Congressionally appropriated funds are added via the rulemaking process or included in future authorization or appropriations bills, though the President does maintain some authority to directly prevent fraud.

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.	Became law (P.L. 119-37) as part of H.R. 5371 11/12/2025 Amended in the Senate, passed the Senate by Yea-Nay vote 81-15 8/1/2025 On passage passed the

Bill Number	Bill Title	Sponsor	Position	Summary	Latest Major Action
					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

Bill Number	Bill Title	Sponsor	Position	Summary	Latest Major Action
S.1462	Fix Our Forests Act	Sen. John Curtis	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.	Ordered to be favorably reported by Senate Agriculture Committee 10/21/2025 Hearing held, Senate Committee on Agriculture 5/6/2025
H.R. 3109	REFINER Act	Rep. Bob Latta	Support	This bill requires the Department of Energy to direct the National Petroleum Council to publish a report on petrochemical refineries located in the United States.	House. On passage Passed by the Yeas and Nays 230-176 (Roll no. 303) 11/20/2025

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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



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

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary, United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Kern support for BUILD funding application to improve Route 58 connecting corridor

Dear Secretary Duffy,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for the Kern Council of Governments' (Kern COG) application for the 2026 Federal Highway Administration BUILD discretionary grant to create the *I-40 Extension from I-15 to I-5 Corridor Plan* for State Route 58, extending from Interstate 5 west of Bakersfield to the I-15/I-40 connections in Barstow. The requested BUILD planning funds will support evaluation of this multimodal freight corridor, including connecting highways, the BNSF and Union Pacific Class I rail corridor, and planned and under-construction inland ports.

Route 58 is a nationally significant freight corridor and the primary east-west connection linking Interstates 40, 15, and 5, supporting goods movement between the Midwest/East Coast and Central and Northern California. Its designation on the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) underscores its importance to defense and supply chain reliability.

The corridor carries more than 21,000 vehicles daily, with heavy trucks comprising up to 37% of traffic, resulting in increasing congestion, safety concerns, and infrastructure wear. These conditions are expected to intensify with planned inland port intermodal rail facilities, which will increase last-mile truck activity. This planning effort will improve freight mobility and safety in Kern and Southern California promoting more efficient rail shipments in a "Greenpass" freight corridor to via Route 58, U.S. 395 and other connecting routes.

BUILD funding will enable Kern COG to evaluate future investments that enhance freight efficiency, improve safety, and support regional economic growth. We appreciate consideration of Kern COG's application for the 2026 BUILD planning-only grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phillip Peters", with a stylized, flowing script.

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Kern Congressional Delegation
Kern Council of Governments
Kern County Public Works Department
Townsend Public Affairs

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

Phillip Peters District 1
Chris Parlier..... District 2
Jeff Flores..... District 3
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NANCY ANDERSON
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

January 7, 2026

The Honorable Alex Padilla
U.S. Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Schiff
U.S. Senate
SD-B40B, Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

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

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

RE: Community Development Block Grant funding in FY 2026-27 - SUPPORT

Dear Congressional delegates,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to urge your support for funding the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) programs in FY 2026-27.

For five decades, the CDBG, HOME, and ESG grant funding from the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) department have been the most effective and flexible tool used by states and localities to support low- and moderate-income (LMI) populations through four primary activities: housing, public services, public improvements (infrastructure), and economic development. This funding plays a key role in supporting the everyday lives of LMI people across the country. It helps preserve and expand affordable housing, contributes extensively to developing infrastructure in areas of need, delivers necessary services and support to vulnerable populations, and helps communities tackle economic distress.

From FY 2005 to FY 2023, the CDBG program facilitated the creation and retention of over 500,000 economic development related jobs, contributed to infrastructure developments benefiting almost 57 million people, assisted over 189 million people through public service activities, and met the housing needs of over 1.9 million households.

The impact of the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs is clear from their accomplishments, even as the number of direct grant recipients has grown from 594 in 1975 to over 1,200 today. Despite stagnant funding, no inflation adjustments, and rising costs, these programs continue to deliver impressive results that significantly impact the quality of life for your constituents.

As the Administration and Congress continue to review funding for federal programs, we respectfully urge you to champion the CDBG, HOME, and ESG programs. These programs are essential for helping our communities meet the ongoing need for investment in affordable housing, public infrastructure, small business assistance, and a wide range of public services for low- and moderate-income residents. Please commit to ensuring HUD funding for these essential programs remains in place in FY 2026-27 and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Phillip Peters", with a stylized, flowing script.

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: National Association of Counties
Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department
Townsend Public Affairs

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Leticia Perez District 5



NANCY ANDERSON
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

January 13, 2026

The Honorable David Fink, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE W-32
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Kern County's Cherry Avenue Grade Separation Project Application for the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program (FSP-National)

Dear Honorable David Fink,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for the Kern County Federal State Partnership (FSP) grant application. The Project is the result of a close collaboration between Kern County, the cities of Bakersfield and Shafter, the Greater Bakersfield Grade Separation District, and BNSF, a strong partnership of public and private entities committed to improving safety and quality of life in the community.

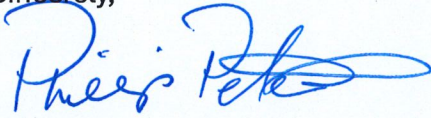
The proposed project located at the City of Shafter and Kern County boundary aims to grade-separate an existing rail/road at-grade crossing located at Cherry Avenue and the rail corridor which carries Amtrak's Gold Runner daily services as well as daily freight services. The Cherry Avenue at-grade crossing is ranked first in the City of Shafter by FRA's accident prediction system and represents a significant safety concern as well as a recurring impediment to local mobility. Since 2020, there have been three safety incidents at the Cherry Avenue crossing, including accidents which have resulted in injuries and fatalities. Grade separating this crossing will prevent collisions, reduce delays for both roadway users and rail traffic, and enhance overall safety for the City of Shafter and Kern County communities.

In eliminating delays resulting from safety incidents, the Project will benefit intercity passenger rail reliability along this route which passes through Kern County and the City of Shafter, and which connects major regional cities such as Bakersfield, Fresno, Stockton, and Sacramento. The Project will improve safety for road users and directly raise the quality of life for residents through improved mobility. By enhancing connectivity, the project will

help create a more livable environment and allow residents and workers better access to jobs and opportunities.

We are committed to supporting the safe, efficient, and reliable operations of passenger and freight rail in California's Central Valley. This transformative project will make a dramatic difference in the safety and mobility of the local community and its delivery and operations closely align with the sought after outcomes of the FSP program. We respectfully request that you give the Kern County's FSP grant application your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phillip Peters", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: City of Shafter
Kern County Public Works Department
Townsend Public Affairs



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: February 9, 2026

Subject: Legislative Program Committee State Affairs Report

2026 Legislative Year Begins

The Legislature reconvened January 5, 2026 for the second year of the current 2025-26 session.

On the first day back, the Senate formally voted to install a new Senate Pro Tempore, Monique Limon (D-Santa Barbara). As the Senate Democratic Caucus had already voted her in, she was comfortable in late December releasing new Senate committee chairpersons and makeups for 2026. The prior chairpersons were allowed to oversee their committees with respect to two-year bills in January; however, new chairs will step into their roles for new bills introduced this year. Most notably, Senate Caballero will no longer chair the Senate Appropriations Committee where she was a stalwart for counties.

In terms of two-year bills, a fair number of legislators attempted to resuscitate legislation they introduced last year but did not move. In some instances, the bills were gutted and amended before getting set in committees. Of note, SB 674 (Archuleta), related to veterans and Veterans Services Officers and supported by Kern County, moved all the way to the Governor's desk. Conversely, SB 747 (Wiener) turned into a bill that counties will want to watch as it could expose local governments to additional liability as it pertains to law enforcement officers. Also of note, AB 1383 moved out of the Assembly. AB 1383 would make a variety of changes to retirement law that your staff currently estimate could result in additional costs of \$13 million annually. A bill with cost implications this high would be in addition to any additional costs passed on to counties as a result of H.R. 1 implementation in California, which we discuss in greater detail below.

For new bills Friday, February 20 is the deadline for the introduction of non-urgency measures. SYASL will go through every bill and report to the County as quickly as possible on bills of possible interest.

On Thursday, January 8, Governor Newsom delivered his first formal State of the State address in a while. The next day, January 9, the Governor released his proposed 2026-27 State Budget. While the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) predicted an \$18 billion deficit in December, the Governor pegged it at just under \$3 billion. Although the numbers are very different, there is not disagreement about the difference: the LAO believes the stock market will perform poorly while the Governor does not.

Over the last three year budget cycles, the Governor estimates that \$42 billion will be realized compared to the assumptions of last summer. The \$42 billion goes away pretty quickly as follows: 1) a carryover deficit of \$13

billion, 2) current budget year expenditures over budget by \$9 billion, and 3) \$20 billion going to the schools (per Proposition 98) and reserves (per Proposition 2).

The Governor was clear that his January proposal is largely a placeholder. With this in mind, he did not provide any additional funding areas of interest to counties such as Proposition 36 or CARE Court. For homelessness programs (HHAP) there was good news in that the Governor firmly committed another \$500 million but did not increase the amount to \$1 billion as in prior years.

Regarding implications from the enactment of H.R. 1 at the federal level, the Governor's proposal was silent on any specific actions at the state level. However, legislative committees have already met and discussed possible impacts on counties. At the most recent hearing, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) estimated that more than 720,000 Californians could lose coverage in the budget year alone, with losses growing to nearly 2 million in out-years. Department officials were clear that the state cannot backfill the loss of federal funds. On top of this, with respect to California's health insurance exchange, premiums are rising sharply, new enrollment is down more than 30 percent, and it is estimated that as many as 400,000 people could drop marketplace coverage this year.

Lastly, with regards to the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) the Governor proposed to cap state spending in a way that – according to the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) could mean a cost shift to counties.

Proposed State Legislation (updates in *italics*)

[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, would redirect revenue to the Aeronautics Account for airport and aviation purposes. The would allocate redirected funding to specific types of airports based on their size and passenger boarding numbers. The formula contained in the bill would be advantageous to Meadow's 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.

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

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. Although this bill is far along in the process, it stalled last year and was placed on the Senate Inactive File.

[Wildfire Insurance](#)

SYASL expects many new bills on this topic in 2026, especially with respect to the Fair Plan.

[AB 470 \(McKinnor\) – Caller of Last Resort \(COLR\)](#)

This bill proposed to establish 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 stalled late in 2025. Assemblywoman McKinnor has stated her intent to introduce similar legislation in 2026.

Earmarks

SYASL is working on a new list of requests supplied by the County. Although it will be another tough year fiscally, we will always look for every opportunity on earmarks.

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January 7, 2026

The Honorable Mike Fong
Chair, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
1020 N Street, Room 173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1547 (Bains), UC Medical School Kern Branch Campus Feasibility Study - SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Fong,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for AB 1547 (Bains), which directs the University of California (UC) to conduct a feasibility study on establishing a medical school branch campus in Kern County. This legislation represents a crucial step toward addressing the severe shortage of physicians and healthcare professionals in our region.

Kern County and the broader San Joaquin Valley have long faced significant disparities in healthcare access due to a chronic shortage of medical providers. Our region has the lowest ratio of licensed medical professionals in the state, with just 157 physicians per 100,000 residents—far below the 411 per 100,000 seen in the Bay Area. This shortage is especially concerning in primary care, where demand continues to outpace the supply of providers. As many rural physicians near retirement, the gap in care is expected to grow even wider.

AB 1547 lays the groundwork for a long-term solution by requiring a comprehensive study of the challenges and opportunities associated with establishing a UC medical school branch campus in Kern County. Research has consistently shown that medical schools and residency programs located in rural areas play a key role in increasing the number of physicians who choose to practice in those communities. By recruiting students from rural backgrounds and offering specialized training in rural medicine, a medical school in Kern County would help build a sustainable pipeline of healthcare providers for the region.

This bill builds upon the momentum of AB 2357 (Bains, 2024), which established an endowment fund to support a UC medical school in Kern County. AB 1547 is the next critical step in making this vision a reality. We urge the Legislature's full support and appreciate your leadership in advancing healthcare access for Kern County and the entire San Joaquin Valley.

Sincerely,


Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

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January 6, 2026

The Honorable Jesse Arreguín
Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 545
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 758 (Umberg), Prohibiting the sale of kratom and nitrous oxide - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Arreguín,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for SB 758 (Umberg), which proposes to prohibit the sale of kratom and nitrous oxide (N₂O) products in California. Kern County is on the front lines of the addiction and overdose crisis, and our communities urgently need statewide action to close dangerous retail loopholes that are harming youth, undermining recovery, and burdening local public health and safety systems.

Kratom, marketed as a “natural” remedy, contains psychoactive alkaloids (mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine). The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has made clear there are no approved medical uses for kratom, it is not lawfully marketed as a dietary supplement or food, and the agency warns consumers not to use kratom for medical treatment¹. FDA further highlights the higher opioid potency of 7-hydroxymitragynine and ongoing enforcement actions against products infused with this alkaloid.

Similarly, the Drug Enforcement Administration lists kratom as a “Drug and Chemical of Concern,” noting stimulant and opioid-like effects, documented adverse events, dependence, withdrawal, and psychosis².

Despite these federal warnings, kratom products are widely sold in corner stores, vape shops, and gas stations, often with youth-appealing branding, variable potency, and no reliable safeguards. The result is predictable: experimentation among young people, relapse risks for individuals in recovery, and increased community harms.

Nitrous oxide misuse is also surging as large, candy flavored cylinders (“whippets” or “whip-its”) flood retail outlets and online vendors with minimal age verification. These products are often

¹ <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/fda-and-kratom>

² <https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/Kratom-Drug-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

marketed in brightly colored containers with names such as “Galaxy Gas”, “Miami Magic”, “Infuzd”, and “Space Gas” among others. Public health reports associate N₂O misuse with oxygen displacement, B-12 depletion, neurological injury, paralysis, falls and crashes, and even death. Recent analyses show a sharp national rise in fatalities linked to misuse. California counties and cities, including Orange County jurisdictions and Laguna Niguel, have begun adopting ordinances to curtail sales or distribution, but the current patchwork is insufficient.

Here at home, Kern County continues to fight the opioid epidemic. While 2025 provisional data show declines, fentanyl remains a leading cause of death for adults under 45, underscoring the need to reduce gateway and relapse risks posed by unregulated psychoactive products like kratom and easily accessible inhalants like N₂O.

Local governments, including ours, have limited tools to address retail sales when products are not scheduled or uniformly regulated under state law. SB 758 would provide a clear, statewide standard that prevents back-door distribution, reduces youth access, and relieves counties from chasing storefront bans city-by-city.

This bill will stop retail sales of kratom and nitrous oxide that exploit loopholes, target youth, and threaten recovery, create statewide uniformity, ending the patchwork that pushes sales across city boundaries and undermines local enforcement, and protect legitimate, professional uses (medical/dental anesthesia and lawful culinary applications) while curbing misuse and illicit retail marketing practices.

A statewide prohibition on the sale of kratom and nitrous oxide is a common-sense public health measure that will save lives, fortify recovery, and support local enforcement. For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors strongly supports SB 758 and urges you to vote YES on this measure when it comes before your Committee.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Public Safety Committee
The Honorable Tom Umberg, California Senate District 34
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Kern County Public Health Department
Kern County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange