

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.

November 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: 275 025 044 740 18

Passcode: e9x3qF9a

Or join by Phone:

+1 831-296-3421

Phone conference ID: 676 035 510#

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 September 22, 2026 meeting – APPROVE

5. Approve Legislative Program Committee meeting dates for calendar year 2027 – APPROVE

6. Annual report on State lobbying efforts; direct staff to act as necessary – RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION

7. Annual report on Federal lobbying efforts; 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.

AGENDA

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STANDING COMMITTEE – LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM
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September 22, 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: 296 362 077 776 493

Passcode: Hj7Px3eQ

Or join by Phone:

+1 831-296-3421

Phone conference ID: 661 152 553#

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: PHILLIP PETERS AND JEFF FLORES PRESENT****3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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4. Approve minutes from the July 13, 2026 meeting – APPROVED – SUPERVISOR FLORES FIRST; SUPERVISOR PETERS SECOND**5. 2027 State and Federal Legislative Platform – DISCUSSED; MADE RECOMMENDATION TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO APPROVE – SUPERVISOR FLORES FIRST; SUPERVISOR PETERS SECOND**

6. **Update on Federal issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary** – RECEIVED AND FILED; BEN GOLDEEN REPRESENTING TOWNSEND PUBLIC AFFAIRS GAVE PRESENTATION ON CURRENT EVENTS; NO DIRECTION PROVIDED
7. **Update on State issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary** – RECEIVED AND FILED; DYLAN ELLIOTT REPRESENTING SYASL GAVE PRESENTATION ON CURRENT EVENTS; SUPERVISOR PETERS ASKED FOR UPDATE ON SOLAR TAX BILL; SUPERVISOR FLORES ASKED FOR REGULAR UPDATES TO LPC ON H.R.1 IMPACTS AND REIMBURSEMENTS FROM STATE – DENNIS McLAIN HEARD
8. **Direction for new committee business at future meetings** – DISCUSSED; SUPERVISOR FLORES PROVIDED DIRECTION TO STAFF TO BRING BACK A SUPPORT LETTER FOR THE CADIZ NORTHERN PIPELINE PROJECT TO THE FULL BOARD AT THE NEXT AVAILABLE BOS MEETING – SUPERVISOR FLORES FIRST; SUPERVISOR PETERS SECOND
9. **ADJOURNMENT** – ADJOURNED TO NEXT MEETING ON 11/9/2026 @ 2P.M.

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ITEM #5

November 9, 2026

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

PROPOSED 2027 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

This is to request that the LPC review and approve the proposed 2027 Legislative Program Committee (LPC) meeting dates. Beginning in February, the proposed meeting dates will recur on the second Monday of every other month from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and are as follows:

February 8, 2027
April 12, 2027
June 14, 2027
August 9, 2027
October 11, 2027
December 13, 2027

Meetings will be held on the 5th Floor of the County Administrative Center in the CAO Large Conference Room and will also be available virtually via the Microsoft Teams platform.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that the LPC review and approve the 2027 LPC meeting dates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nancy Anderson".

Nancy Anderson
County Administrative Officer

NA:TB 2027 LPC Meeting Dates

cc: All County Department Heads
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange
Townsend Public Affairs

ITEM #6

November 9, 2026

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

ANNUAL OVERVIEW OF STATE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY**Fiscal Impact: None**

This item provides a summary of Kern County's state legislative activities for 2026, a year marked by focused advocacy, strategic engagement with state policymakers, and efforts to secure funding and protect local priorities.

Guided by the Board's direction and the County's Legislative Platform, Kern advanced a targeted agenda in Sacramento centered on public safety, healthcare, infrastructure investment, economic development, and local governance. The County supported legislation that advances local priorities and opposed proposals that could impose additional costs, restrict operational flexibility, or negatively affect County revenues and services.

Notable legislative outcomes this year

SB 1329 – Active Solar Property Tax Assessment: The County actively advocated against this proposal, which would have required assessors to adjust the valuation of active solar energy systems. The bill failed passage in the Legislature, preserving existing law and avoiding proposed changes to solar property tax assessments.

AB 1383 – Public Employee Pension Reform: The County opposed proposed changes to the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act that would have expanded pensionable compensation limits and permitted changes to certain safety retirement formulas. The Governor vetoed the bill, preventing the proposed changes from becoming law.

Wildfire Liability Reform: The County, alongside statewide local government associations, engaged in efforts to protect public agencies from provisions that could have limited recovery of wildfire-related costs, including damaged public infrastructure, emergency response expenses, and lost property tax revenues. Although the broader wildfire liability agreement ultimately failed to advance, the most significant provisions raising county and local government concerns had been removed from the final version of SB 492 before negotiations broke down.

Budget and Direct Appropriations

The County advocated for state funding to address local needs and protect critical County services. Key outcomes from the 2026–27 State Budget and end-of-session budget package include:

- **H.R. 1 Implementation Funding:** The final state budget included \$250 million for public hospitals facing increased financial pressures and \$420 million for homelessness, behavioral health, victim services, election administration, and other county-administered programs. The budget also rejected several proposed county cost shifts.
- **Proposition 36:** The state budget included \$50 million for implementation-related needs, including \$20 million in new county-specific funding for behavioral health planning and capacity building, \$20 million for pretrial services that may support Proposition 36 activities, and \$10 million for trial courts. However, the broader ongoing county funding sought during budget negotiations was not secured.
- **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA):** The final budget included \$50 million to support services for crime victims, doubling the \$25 million proposed in the May Revision.
- **Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP):** The state budget provided \$900 million for Round 7, with provisions intended to streamline distribution through supplemental Round 6 disbursements. However, the additional \$1 billion commitment for 2027–28 sought by counties was not included in the requested form.
- **Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Benefit:** The budget provided \$42 million in General Fund support to continue the statewide benefit through June 30, 2027, avoiding a proposed shift of the nonfederal share of these services to counties.
- **Sustainable Aviation Fuel Tax Credit:** The County requested removal of the proposed tax credit from the state budget because of concerns that it could redirect diesel excise tax revenues otherwise available for state and local transportation programs, including Local Streets and Roads. The proposal was not included in the final budget agreement.

Over \$5.4 Million in Direct State Budget Appropriations

Through the end-of-session budget package, Kern County secured approximately \$5.44 million in direct allocations for local projects and services, including:

- \$2 million for a Community and Emergency Disaster Center to support emergency services.
- \$2 million for a mobile dental unit at Kern Medical.
- \$750,000 for Meadows Field Airport infrastructure and regional aviation expansion.
- \$500,000 for the Office of Emergency Services to support cybersecurity and counterterrorism preparedness for schools, water systems, and critical infrastructure.
- \$100,000 for the Office of Veterans' Services to provide grants for veteran-owned businesses and entrepreneurs.
- \$88,000 for Public Health Services to support rural cancer prevention, screening, and patient navigation.

Legislative Influence

The County took positions on 57 bills during the 2026 legislative session, including remaining two-year bills, achieving a **63% success rate** on all bills we engaged on. The results demonstrate the importance of sustained advocacy and outreach to state policymakers.

- **30 supported bills:** 16 were signed into law, three were vetoed by the Governor, and 11 failed passage in the Legislature. The County achieved approximately a 53% success rate in securing the Governor's signature on supported legislation.
- **27 opposed bills:** Seven were signed into law, three were vetoed by the Governor, and 17 failed passage in the Legislature. The County achieved approximately a 74% success rate in blocking opposed legislation through gubernatorial vetoes or failure to advance.

Because 2026 marked the second year of the 2025–26 legislative session, bills that failed passage are no longer eligible to advance in the current session and would need to be reintroduced in the 2027–28 session. While the County's advocacy contributed to advancing its priorities and preventing certain proposals from becoming law, legislative outcomes also reflect the work of bill authors, other local governments, statewide associations, and other stakeholders.

Strategic Engagement

SYASL provided testimony more than 50 times during legislative policy committee proceedings on behalf of the County, including lead testimony on key issues. The firm also coordinated meetings with legislators, committee consultants, legislative leadership, and the Governor's Office to communicate the local impacts of proposed legislation and advance Kern County's budgetary and policy priorities.

Significant engagement focused on SB 1329 and its potential impacts on solar property tax assessments, AB 1383 and proposed pension changes, and County budget and legislative priorities. Meetings included the Governor and his staff, Senate President pro Tempore Monique Limón and her staff, Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas and his staff, committee leadership, and Kern County's legislative delegation.

These efforts strengthened the County's relationships with key decisionmakers and helped ensure that Kern County's fiscal and operational concerns were represented during high-stakes legislative negotiations.

Looking Ahead

The 2026 legislative session concluded with meaningful funding outcomes and several important policy victories, while also underscoring the need for continued vigilance. State budget pressures, implementation of H.R. 1, wildfire liability, healthcare funding, and proposals affecting County revenues and operations will remain important areas of focus as the Legislature reconvenes in January 2027.

Through continued coordination between the Board of Supervisors, the Legislative Program Committee (LPC), County departments, and SYASL, Kern County will remain positioned to identify emerging issues, advance local priorities, and respond promptly to legislation affecting County services and residents.

In totality, these collective efforts have reinforced Kern County's presence as an active and credible voice in Sacramento, produced measurable funding and policy outcomes, and helped protect local interests during a consequential legislative year.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that the LPC receive and file this report.

Sincerely,



Nancy Anderson
County Administrative Officer

NA:TB:LEGGEN Annual Overview of State Legislative Activity (LPC).doc

Attachment

cc: All County Departments



1415 L Street
Suite 1000
Sacramento
CA, 95814
916-446-4656

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: November 9, 2026

Subject: Year End State Affairs Report – 2026

2026 Legislative Session

The Legislature adjourned the 2025–26 Legislative Session in the early hours of Tuesday, September 1, after both houses worked through the weekend and late into Monday night to finish action on the several hundred measures that remained heading into the final days. The Governor had until 11:59 p.m. on September 30 to sign or veto bills sent to him at the end of the legislative year. In total, the Legislature sent the Governor 1,160 bills during 2026. Of those, Governor Newsom signed 1,040 and vetoed 120.

As has increasingly become the case in Sacramento, some of the most consequential issues were still being negotiated in the final days and hours of session. In fact, 71 bills were amended during the final 72-hour window—the most since the 72-hour in-print requirement took effect in 2016. Several major proposals, including the Budget Bill Jr. ([AB/SB 113](#)) and the wildfire liability package ([SB 492](#)), were not in print early enough to be taken up by the August 31 deadline. Because urgency measures can be considered after September 1, lawmakers recessed around midnight Monday and returned Tuesday morning for one final, limited day of session.

In the end, agreements were reached on most of the major outstanding issues. Lawmakers reached a deal on public-agency liability related to childhood sexual assault claims through [SB 577 \(Laird\)](#), including changes addressing older claims and joint-and-several liability for public agencies with a relatively small share of fault. They also finalized the end-of-session budget and climate package, resolving spending decisions that had been left open in June, including allocations from the Proposition 4 climate bond ([AB/SB 113](#)) and a longer-term expenditure framework for Cap-and-Invest/Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund revenues ([AB/SB 193](#)). Wildfire liability reform, however, proved to be the notable exception. Throughout August, the Administration and legislative leaders had been negotiating a wildfire liability package, while Cal Cities, CSAC, RCRC and other local government interests worked to remove provisions that could have limited public-agency recovery of wildfire-related costs. A compromise ultimately emerged through [SB 492](#) following negotiations involving the Governor and leadership of both houses. The Senate was prepared to move the measure, but Assembly Democrats caucused Tuesday morning and ultimately declined to bring it up for a vote. Speaker Robert Rivas indicated that the compromise did not adequately address the structural nature of California’s wildfire liability problem, and the bill died when the Legislature adjourned.

Of note for local agencies, the final version of [SB 492](#) had already removed the provisions that generated the most significant county and local government concerns, including proposed limitations affecting recovery for damaged public infrastructure, emergency response costs, and lost property tax revenues. Those direct concerns had therefore largely been resolved before the larger agreement fell apart. The failure to reach an agreement,

however, has already had broader repercussions. PG&E announced that it would defer approximately \$2 billion in planned 2027 capital investments, including some work associated with connecting new customers and generation to the grid. Governor Newsom also directed the CPUC to monitor utility credit ratings and capital markets and submit a report by November 1 examining the statewide implications of the Legislature's failure to enact structural reforms.

Looking ahead, wildfire liability is unlikely to disappear as an issue. Assembly Energy Committee leadership has indicated that informational hearings will be held this fall, and there continues to be discussion about a possible Special Session, although the Governor has not called one. Otherwise, lawmakers will return to Sacramento for the organizational session on December 7 before reconvening for regular legislative business on January 4, 2027. In the meantime, attention turns to the Governor and the bills awaiting his action.

2026-27 State Budget

On June 29, 2026, Governor Newsom signed the 2026–27 state budget. The Legislature initially sent AB 109, reflecting its Legislative Budget Plan, to the Governor on June 15 to meet the constitutional budget deadline. The final agreement between the Governor, Senate, and Assembly was subsequently reflected in AB/SB 111, the Budget Bill Jr., which amended the spending plan contained in AB 109. All told, the Budget Act of 2026 contains approximately \$351.7 billion in total state spending, including \$251.5 billion from the General Fund, \$95.1 billion from special funds, and \$5.1 billion from bond funds. The final agreement maintains \$28.8 billion in reserves, including \$15.1 billion in the Rainy Day Fund, \$9.2 billion in the Proposition 98 reserve, and \$4.5 billion in the state's regular reserve. The budget is balanced for both 2026–27 and 2027–28, while projected structural deficits in the out-years have been substantially reduced, although not eliminated.

Part of that two-year approach is the state's first use of the Projected Surplus Temporary Holding Account, with \$6.4 billion set aside in 2026–27 for use in 2027–28. Together with the state's traditional reserves, approximately \$35.2 billion is therefore being set aside for reserves or future funding obligations. The budget also relies on several revenue measures, including renewal of the Managed Care Organization tax, continued limitations on business tax credits, and extending the sales and use tax to electronically delivered prewritten software. The software tax is estimated to generate \$560 million in additional local sales tax revenues in 2026–27 and \$1.1 billion annually beginning in 2027–28.

H.R. 1 Implementation Funding

Of particular importance to counties, the final budget provides additional resources to address the impacts of H.R. 1, including funding for county eligibility administration and public hospitals, while rejecting several proposed county cost shifts. Important for Kern County, the final budget included \$250 million for public hospitals facing increased financial pressures. Additionally, the final budget included \$420 million for additional funding for homelessness, behavioral health, victim services, election administration, and other county-administered programs.

Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program

The final budget provides \$900 million for HHAP Round 7 and includes provisions intended to streamline distribution by providing Round 7 funding as supplemental Round 6 disbursements. The requested commitment of an additional \$1 billion for 2027–28, however, was not included in the form sought by counties. The final agreement also establishes additional eligibility, accountability, and, for certain jurisdictions, local matching requirements for Round 7.

Proposition 36

The final State Budget includes \$50 million associated with Proposition 36 implementation, of which \$20 million is new county-specific funding for behavioral health planning and capacity building. An additional \$20 million restores funding for pretrial services that may be used for Proposition 36-related activities, and \$10 million is provided to trial courts. The final agreement does not provide the broader ongoing county funding sought during budget negotiations.

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)

\$50 million was included in the final budget agreement, doubling the \$25 million proposed in the May Revision.

Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Benefit

The final budget provides \$42 million General Fund to continue the statewide Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis benefit through June 30, 2027, avoiding the proposed shift of the non-federal share of these services to counties.

Sustainable Aviation Fuel Tax Credit

Kern County requested that the proposed Sustainable Aviation Fuel Tax Credit as proposed by the Governor's Administration be excluded from the final budget because of its potential to redirect diesel excise tax revenues otherwise available for state and local transportation purposes, including the Local Streets and Roads program. That proposal was not included in the final budget agreement.

Budget Bill Jr. and Kern County Direct Appropriations

The June budget was not the final word on state spending this year. Negotiations over several major items continued throughout the summer and into the final days of session. The end-of-session budget package, primarily through [AB/SB 113](#) and [AB/SB 193](#) ultimately allocated approximately \$2.7 billion from the Proposition 4 climate bond and \$450 million in discretionary Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund revenues, among other provisions. Included in AB 113, Kern County received direct allocations from the State Budget outlined below:

1. Community and Emergency Disaster Center – \$2,000,000 – Emergency services facility
2. Kern Medical – \$2,000,000 – Mobile dental unit (2 chairs + X-ray)
3. Meadows Field Airport – \$750,000 – Airport infrastructure/regional aviation expansion
4. Office of Emergency Services – \$500,000 – Cybersecurity/counterterrorism preparedness for schools, water systems, critical infrastructure
5. Office of Veterans' Services – \$100,000 – Grants for veteran-owned businesses/entrepreneurs
6. Public Health Services Dept. – \$88,000 – Rural cancer prevention, screening, patient navigation

Legislation Supported by the County

[AB 109 \(Gabriel\)](#) – 2026 Budget Act. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 283 \(Haney\)](#) – Would establish the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Employer-Employee Relations Act to shift collective bargaining with IHSS providers from the local level to the state. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 871 \(Stefani\)](#) – Requires mandated reporters of suspected financial abuse of an elder or dependent adult to report suspected abuse to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and requires financial institutions to train their

employees who are mandated reporters on how to escalate concerns internally and how to make required reports. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 1436 \(Ávila Farías\)](#) – Would prevent the California Air Resources Board from enforcing any regulation that directly or indirectly affects a private fleet, as stipulated, without a waiver from the federal Environmental Protection Agency. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 1534 \(Irwin\)](#) – Establishes state consumer protection standards for public and private postsecondary institutions seeking to participate in the federal Workforce Pell Grant program for short-term workforce training programs; and modifies Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements by requiring local workforce development boards to ensure that at least 50% of participants receive workforce training services commencing in 2028. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 1547 \(Bains\)](#) – Requires the University of California (UC), by January 1, 2028, to complete a feasibility study for the establishment of a UC medical school branch campus in Kern County. *Status: Vetoed by the Governor.*

[AB 1607 \(M. González\)](#) – Extends the sunset date, from January 1, 2027, to January 1, 2037, on both the portion of the Maddy Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Fund that provides funding for pediatric trauma centers, and on a provision that authorizes counties to levy an additional penalty in the amount of \$2 for every \$10 on fines and penalties imposed on all criminal offenses for deposit in the Maddy EMS Fund. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 1660 \(Schiavo\)](#) – Permits a court to award sanctions of no less than \$1,000 per violation if a financial institution or other person fails to comply with existing requirements to provide information or surrender property of a decedent, minor, or conservatee to a public administrator or public guardian that is authorized to take possession and control of such property. Specifies that a financial institution or other person or entity must receive notice of violation, as specified, and makes written certifications valid for 60 days, as specified. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 1821 \(Pacheco\)](#) – Extends the deadlines for public agencies to provide an initial response to a public records request, by converting the current "calendar day" deadlines to a "business day" standard. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 1852 \(Bains\)](#) – Would create a fallback mechanism for establishing a public medical school in Kern County if, by July 1, 2027, the University of California (UC) Office of the President has not taken "formal, verifiable steps" to establish a school of medicine in Kern County, and would authorize the California State University (CSU) Bakersfield and the Kern Community College District (KCCD), acting through a newly authorized local public agency called the Kern Medical Education Authority, to establish and operate a medical school in Kern County, subject to accreditation. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 1846 \(Stefani\)](#) – Clearly establishes that preferential consideration should be given to a request by a relative for placement of a dependent at every stage of the dependency court proceedings. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 2032 \(Ransom\)](#) – Exempts a public or private agency that operates a water supply system from certain California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) invasive mussel permitting requirements until CDFW approves or denies the agency's control plan and requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the State Water Resources Control Board to quickly respond to the threat of golden mussels. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 2124 \(Pacheco\)](#) – Requires the California Council on Science and Technology (CCST), upon appropriation, to establish a program to analyze, at the request of the Legislature, legislation that would establish a mandated program or requirement or otherwise affect electrical or natural gas ratepayers. *Status: Vetoed by the Governor.*

[AB 2157 \(Connolly\)](#) – Eliminates the July 1, 2027, sunset on the Displaced Oil and Gas Worker Pilot Program established to address employment dislocations associated with oil, gas, and related industries. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 2203 \(Tangipa\)](#) – Requires, commencing with the 2028-29 academic year, each campus of the California State University (CSU) and California Community Colleges (CCCs), and requests each campus of the University of California (UC) that administers a priority enrollment system, to grant priority to recipients of federal GI Bill benefits and recipients of the specified state fee waiver for military-connected students. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 2705 \(Dixon\)](#) – Would limit the validity of agreements between asset locators and parties of interest to locate, deliver, or recover excess proceeds from tax sales. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 2711 \(Ellis\)](#) – Would require the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) to evaluate whether a submitted notice of intention (NOI) to drill, redrill, or abandon a well is complete or not within 10 days, approve or deny a complete NOI within 30 days following the determination of completeness, require an explanation of the denial, and provide for an operation of law approval of an NOI if certain technical and environmental reviews are completed, among other provisions, as provided. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 2712 \(Ellis\)](#) – Would narrow California's oil and gas restrictions in health protection zones so they apply only to new wells rather than to all well-related activities, align related requirements like sensitive receptor mapping and bonding with that narrower scope, and repeal the prohibition on constructing or operating production facilities within those zones. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AJR 23 \(Hadwick\)](#) – Would express the consent of the Legislature for specified counties to form a new state from within the current boundaries of the State of California, and would urge Congress to accept and embrace that consent *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 581 \(McGuire\)](#) – Would amend existing law relating to state firefighter classifications within the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 661 \(Hurtado\)](#) – Transfers from the General Fund (GF), the Local Public Safety Fund (LPSF), and the Local Revenue Fund (LRF) to the Aeronautics Account in the State Transportation Account certain revenues derived from the imposition of state sales and use tax (SUT) on jet fuel and dedicates those revenues to specified airports and aviation-related purposes. *Status: Vetoed by the Governor.*

[SB 694 \(Archuleta\)](#) – Provides additional protections for veterans in California in connection with fees charged for assistance applying for veterans' benefits and the privacy of their information. Requires persons to be federally accredited before preparing, presenting, or prosecuting a veteran's claim for benefits under federal law. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[SB 758 \(Umburg\)](#) – Prohibits a retailer licensed to engage in the sale of cigarettes or tobacco products from selling nitrous oxide at a retail location. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[SB 845 \(Pérez\)](#) – Makes various changes to the state's framework for career technical education (CTE), work-based learning, and youth apprenticeships, including: (1) establishing definitions and common requirements for work-based learning activities; (2) expanding the authority of local educational agencies (LEAs) and state special schools to offer work-based learning through work experience education (WEE), CTE, early college credit, and other existing programs; (3) allowing pupils beginning in grade 10 to receive credit for WEE; (4) clarifying workers'

compensation, liability, and student protections for work-based learning activities; and (5) establishing requirements for school-based youth apprenticeship programs registered with the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS). *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[SB 892 \(Grove\)](#) – Beginning July 1, 2027, requires a campus of the California State University (CSU), and of the California Community Colleges (CCC), and requests a campus of the University of California (UC), that administer a priority enrollment system, to provide priority enrollment registration to any California resident member or former member of the Armed Forces of the United States, without regard to number of years removed from state or federal active duty and without limitation on the number of years a student may receive priority status. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[SB 926 \(Strickland\)](#) – Would, as the Funding of Proposition 36 Act, create the California Public Safety Services Support Fund. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 940 \(Grove\)](#) – Would establish the New Technology Program within the Geologic Energy Management Division in the Department of Conservation (CalGEM) to facilitate evaluation of repurposing oil and gas or geothermal wells for renewable-energy-related purposes. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 973 \(Becker\)](#) – Requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Department) to establish the California Wildfire Preparedness Program and enter into an agreement with the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) to administer and deliver the Wildfire County Coordinator Program. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[SB 1143 \(Caballero\)](#) – Authorizes the members of a multidisciplinary team associated with a children’s advocacy center to share any information or records, as defined, including video recordings of the forensic interview, with child welfare agencies authorized to investigate child abuse and neglect for specified purposes. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[SB 1157 \(Archuleta\)](#) – Would require a court, when determining whether to place a ward committed to a secure youth treatment facility (SYTF) in a less restrictive program (LRP) in which the ward would reside in congregate residential care, to consider specified information about the program and to state on the record the reason for the placement. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

Legislation Opposed by the County

[AB 28 \(Schiavo\)](#) – Establishes a protocol for the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to require a corrective action plan in the event of a subsurface elevated temperature event (SET) at a landfill. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 225 \(Bonta\)](#) – Would prohibit hospitals and health systems from charging facility fees for a wide range of outpatient, preventive, and telehealth services. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 340 \(Ahrens\)](#) – Would prohibit a public employer from (1) questioning an employee or employee representative regarding representation-related communications made in confidence between the employee and employee representative, and (2) compelling disclosure of such communications to a third party. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 1116 \(Berman\)](#) – Requires by January 1, 2029, the Secretary of State (SOS) to develop a method to collect an electronic image of a signature from someone who does not have a California driver’s license or a California identification card and is registering to vote electronically using the statewide voter registration system on the SOS’ website. *Status: Vetoed by the Governor.*

[AB 1156 \(Wicks\)](#) – Allows additional Williamson Act cancellations that facilitate the development of a solar facility located within a critically-overdrafted basin or subbasin to qualify for reduced or eliminated cancellation fees provided those cancellations include a community-benefits agreement. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 1331 \(Elhawary\)](#) – Prohibits an employer from using a workplace surveillance tool to monitor or surveil employees in a bathroom located in the workplace. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 1337 \(Ward\)](#) – Amends the Information Practices Act by expanding the definition of “personal information,” extending its scope to cover local governmental entities, and bolstering protections regarding disclosures and accounting. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 1376 \(Bonta\)](#) – States that a ward may not remain on probation for a period that exceeds 12 months from the disposition hearing, except that a court may extend the probation period upon proof by a preponderance of the evidence that it is in the ward's and public's best interest to extend probation, as specified. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 1383 \(McKinnor\)](#) – Makes changes to the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) of 2013 that apply prospectively to: (1) increase the pensionable compensation limit used to calculate a Defined Benefit (DB) retirement for all public employees, as provided; (2) provide options for various DB retirement formulas applicable only to safety retirement plan members; and (3) authorize employers and recognized employee organizations to negotiate a lower or higher DB safety retirement plan formula, as prescribed. *Status: Vetoed by the Governor.*

[AB 1421 \(Wilson\)](#) – Would require the California Transportation Commission (CTC), in consultation with the Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and other specified state, local and private entities, to consolidate and prepare research and recommendations related to a road user charge or a mileage-based fee system, which the CTC would submit in a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2027. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 1564 \(Ahrens\)](#) – Would prohibit a public employer from questioning employees and employee representatives about, or compelling them to disclose to a third party, communications between employees and employee representatives in connection with the representation relating to any matter within the scope of representation, as specified. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 1576 \(Ortega\)](#) – Would make specified changes to the process of filing, evaluating, and paying claims for special additional compensation from the Subsequent Injuries Benefits Trust Fund (SIBTF). *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 1883 \(Bryan\)](#) – Regulates an employer's use of workplace surveillance tools, as specified. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[AB 1898 \(Schultz\)](#) – Would require an employer to notify a worker of the employer's use of a workplace artificial intelligence (AI) tool. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 2027 \(Ward\)](#) – Would prohibit an employer from using a worker's personal information to train an artificial intelligence (AI) system to replicate, automate, or replace a worker's job. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 2214 \(Jackson\)](#) – Would establish a Community Reinvestment Account within the Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF) and require the State Treasurer to allocate between five and ten percent of LAIF funds toward deposits with financial institutions engaged in specified community lending activities. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[AB 2656 \(Petrie-Norris\)](#) – Requires certain state and local public employers to provide a recognized employee organization no less than 45 days' written notice before taking an action to develop, purchase, or require the use of any generative AI (GenAI) to perform a service that is within the scope of work of the job classification represented by the recognized employee organization. *Status: Vetoed by the Governor.*

[ACA 9 \(Boerner\)](#) – Would have moved telecommunications regulation away from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), removed portions of the CPUC's constitutional regulatory authority, and made the Legislature the primary policymaking body for telecommunications and energy. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 357 \(Menjivar\)](#) – Would authorize a board of supervisors, in a county with a population of at least 6,000,000 people, to delegate to a county official who has jurisdiction over youth development, the duties and authorities that the county probation department has with respect to juveniles, as specified. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 947 \(McNerney\)](#) – Prohibits an employer from using an automated decision system (ADS) that does certain functions and limits the purposes and manner in which an ADS may be used to make disciplinary or termination decisions; requires an employer to provide a written ADS post use notice, as specified; includes worker anti-retaliation provisions for the exercise of these rights; authorizes enforcement through the Labor Commissioner or an authorized public prosecutor; and prescribes penalties and remedies for violations. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[SB 982 \(Wiener\)](#) – Would permit the Attorney General to bring a civil action against fossil fuel companies that meet specified criteria, to recover damages on behalf of policyholders and the FAIR Plan Association (FAIR Plan), that were caused by climate events that resulted from, or were worsened by, climate change. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 1013 \(Cervantes\)](#) – Would require operators and end-users of automated license plate recognition (ALPR) systems to bolster their safeguards relating to employee access and usage of such systems; require the Department of Justice (DOJ) to conduct random annual audits of public agency operators and end-users to ensure compliance with their usage and privacy policies; and impose additional use restrictions on public agencies and place retention limits on ALPR data, with exceptions. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 1075 \(Reyes\)](#) – Would make changes to the Community Air Protection Program (CAPP) established by AB 617 (C. Garcia), Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 1203 \(Smallwood-Cuevas\)](#) – Requires additional training for proprietary private security officers (PSO) and private security guards specific to deescalation and employee rights, beginning January 1, 2029. *Status: Signed by the Governor.*

[SB 1305 \(Richardson\)](#) – Would require the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to develop a roadmap that evaluates whether, and under what conditions, reintroduction of the grizzly bear is feasible and advisable. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 1327 \(Reyes\)](#) – Would transfer authority for initial and subsequent inspections and oversight of electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) from the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Division of Measurement Standards (DMS) to the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission (CEC) upon the CEC's adoption of related regulations, as specified. *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

[SB 1329 \(McNerney\)](#) – Would require assessors to adjust for certain aspects when valuing an active solar energy system (ASES). *Status: Dead; failed passage in the Legislature.*

In terms of success rates for supported and opposed bills, the County:

- **Took positions on 57 total bills** during the 2026 legislative including remaining two-year bills.
- **Supported 30 bills:** 16 were signed into law, 3 were vetoed by the Governor, and 11 failed passage in the Legislature, representing approximately a **53% success rate** in securing the Governor's signature. Because 2026 was the second year of the two-year session, the bills that failed passage are dead and would need to be reintroduced in the 2027–28 session to advance.
- **Opposed 27 bills:** 7 were signed, 3 were vetoed by the Governor, and 17 failed passage in the Legislature, reflecting about an **74% success rate** in blocking legislation. With the session over, none of the 20 blocked bills can move forward without being reintroduced.

As stated in last year's report, to the extent that bills opposed by the County contained mandates and will become law, SYASL would note that its success rate was, at times, negatively impacted by the actions of statewide associations that represent counties such as the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Urban Counties Coalition (UCC), and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC).

Meetings, Cultivating Contacts, etc.

In 2026, SYASL provided testimony over 50 times, including lead testimonies, in legislative policy committees on behalf of the County. SYASL also arranged or conducted meetings on behalf of Kern County including, *but not limited to*, the following:

- Senator McNerney, staff, and SB 1329 sponsors – Meetings on SB 1329 (McNerney) and impact to Kern County.
- Colin Grinnell, Chief Consultant, Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee – Regular meetings on SB 1329 (McNerney).
- Samantha Lui, Principal Consultant, Office of Senate President pro Tem Limon – SB 1329 (McNerney) and its impact to Kern County.
- Glenn Miles, Principal Consultant, Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee – AB 1383 (McKinnor) and its impact to Kern County.
- Assemblymember Gipson, Chair of Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee – SB 1329 (McNerney) and its impacts to Kern County.
- Irene Ho, Deputy Chief Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee – SB 1329 (McNerney) and its impacts to Kern County.
- Senator Grove – County earmarks, budgetary and legislative priorities.
- Senator Hurtado – County earmarks, budgetary and legislative priorities.
- Assemblymember Lackey – County earmarks, budgetary and legislative priorities.
- Assemblymember Bains – County earmarks, budgetary and legislative priorities.
- Assemblymember Ellis – County earmarks, budgetary and legislative priorities.

- Governor Newsom and staff – Impacts of SB 1329 and efforts by large scale solar industry and AB 1383.
- Senate Pro Tem Limon and staff – Impacts of SB 1329 and AB 1383.
- Speaker Rivas and staff – Impacts of SB 1329 and AB 1383.

With respect to relationships established and/or enhanced as a result of the legislative program which are determined to be of significant long-term value to the County, the County should rest assured that SYASL maintains the best relationships possible with Governor Newsom and his staff, the Pro Tem and her staff, the Speaker and his staff, and all other relevant individuals in California policymaking. SYASL is also very well positioned to be amongst the most productive advocacy firms before both would-be administrations for the two candidates vying for Governor in the 2026 General Election.

ITEM #7

November 9, 2026

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

ANNUAL OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY Fiscal Impact: None

This item provides a summary of Kern County's federal legislative activities for 2026, a year marked by targeted federal advocacy, progress in securing infrastructure funding, and efforts to protect the County's fiscal and programmatic priorities.

Guided by the Board's direction and informed by the Legislative Program Committee (LPC), Townsend Public Affairs (TPA) worked to advance the County's federal priorities through legislative analysis, congressional outreach, engagement with the Trump Administration, and formal advocacy on federal funding and regulatory proposals.

Notable legislative outcomes this year

Federal Appropriations and Community Project Funding: TPA helped secure the inclusion of three Kern County projects totaling **\$11.1 million** in Fiscal Year 2027 House appropriations bills approved by the House Appropriations Committee. The projects include \$4.9 million for the Panama Road Rehabilitation Project, \$3 million for the California City Boulevard Extension Project, and \$3.2 million for the Kern County Emergency Communications Project.

21st Century ROAD to Housing Act: Enacted July 11, 2026, the law expanded the permitted uses of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to include construction of new affordable housing, allowing recipients to use up to 20 percent of their allocations for that purpose. It also authorized new competitive grant programs that could provide additional opportunities for Kern County, subject to future congressional appropriations.

Veterans and Military Infrastructure: The Fiscal Year 2027 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, supported by the County, passed the House in May and awaits Senate consideration. The bill includes a requirement to begin construction of the Bakersfield VA Outpatient Clinic.

Energy and National Security: The County advocated for federal action to strengthen domestic energy production and recognize Kern County's role in national resource development and military readiness. The Administration's April 20, 2026, presidential determination authorizing use of the Defense

Production Act to expand domestic petroleum production, refining, and logistics capacity aligned with the central objectives of the County's advocacy.

Federal Grant Administration and Safety-Net Programs: TPA advocated against proposed federal grant-administration changes that could increase local compliance costs and legal exposure, and supported continued federal investment in workforce development, housing, and community development. The County also engaged to mitigate the implementation requirements of H.R. 1, which are expected to increase administrative workload and fiscal pressures associated with Medi-Cal and CalFresh eligibility requirements.

Budget and Direct Appropriations

- **FY 2027 Community Project Funding:** The County secured inclusion of three project requests totaling \$11.1 million in House appropriations bills.
 - The Panama Road Rehabilitation (\$4,900,000) and California City Boulevard Extension (\$3,000,000) are included in H.R. 9170, the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill.
 - The Kern County Emergency Communications Project (\$3,200,000) is included in H.R. 8845, the House Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill.
 - Both bills have been reported by the House Appropriations Committee and are awaiting completion of the legislative process.
- **Housing and Community Development:** TPA advocated for continued federal support for CDBG, HOME Investment Partnerships, and Emergency Solutions Grants. The enactment of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act creates additional flexibility for CDBG funds and potential competitive grant opportunities for housing production, infrastructure, and planning.
- **Workforce Development:** TPA advocated for sustained Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding after proposed reductions threatened approximately \$13.6 million of the \$18.9 million supporting workforce programs across Kern, Inyo, and Mono Counties. The County emphasized the importance of maintaining services for workers, young people, and employers.
- **Veterans and Defense Funding:** The County supported federal appropriations for military construction and veterans services, including legislation containing a requirement to begin construction of the Bakersfield VA Outpatient Clinic. TPA also coordinated congressional meetings in support of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Live Experimentation and accelerated Prototyping (UAS LEAP) project in eastern Kern County.
- **Secure Rural Schools:** TPA coordinated outreach to Kern County's congressional delegation in support of reauthorization and long-term stabilization of the Secure Rural Schools program, which helps counties maintain essential services despite limited property tax revenue from federally managed lands.

Legislative Influence

The County took positions on 13 federal bills during the 2026 Congressional session, including measures carried forward from 2025, achieving a **69% success rate** on bills we engaged on. The results demonstrate the importance of sustained advocacy and outreach with federal policymakers.

- **11 supported bills:** Of the 11 supported bills, one became law, six were approved by their respective legislative chambers of origin, and four remain in committee. TPA achieved an

approximately 63% favorable outcome based on the County's supported legislation that advanced beyond committee or became law. Several measures remain pending and will require continued monitoring and advocacy through the end of the calendar year.

- **2 opposed bills:** Both opposed bills remained stalled, with no further substantive advancement reported during 2026. This represents a 100% favorable outcome under the report's methodology, although both measures remain subject to future congressional action.

Supported measures included legislation addressing veteran services and military construction, election security, wildfire mitigation, domestic energy production, transportation infrastructure, and trade policy. The County also supported the Golden Mussel Eradication and Control Act and other measures intended to advance local priorities.

Executive Orders and Regulatory Engagement

TPA monitored federal executive actions and regulatory proposals affecting Kern County's energy economy, federal funding, and local government operations. The County advocated for federal recognition of Kern's energy and resource-producing industries, including a request that the Administration use the Defense Production Act to strengthen domestic energy supplies, designate Kern County as a National Resource Development Zone, and establish a federal-state task force on energy security and military readiness.

TPA also assisted the County in responding to proposed revisions to the federal Uniform Guidance governing financial assistance. Formal comments submitted June 29, 2026, raised concerns that expanded federal authority over grant termination, additional pre-award reviews, increased subrecipient oversight, and uncertainty regarding allowable expenditures could create new costs and risks for local governments. Implementation of the proposed changes have been successfully delayed as part of the continuing resolution enacted September 2, 2026.

Additional advocacy addressed proposed duplicative federal grant-reporting requirements, with the County emphasizing that new reporting systems could increase administrative costs and create compliance risks despite existing audit and oversight requirements. TPA also supported the County's efforts to maintain federal attention on the Kern Valley Health District's approximately \$32 million FEMA grant application for seismic upgrades to Kern Valley Hospital. Although the application cleared FEMA's regional review, a federal suspension and review of Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants placed final approval at risk. Congressional outreach has helped maintain attention on the project, with final funding approval still pending.

Fiscal and Programmatic Impacts

Implementation of H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, created significant administrative and potential fiscal challenges for the County. As the local administrator of Medi-Cal and CalFresh eligibility, Kern County faces increased staffing, information technology, training, verification, and compliance demands associated with expanded work requirements and more frequent eligibility reviews. Expanded CalFresh work requirements took effect June 1, 2026, and the federal share of CalFresh administrative expenses decreased from 50 percent to 25 percent beginning October 1, 2026.

Beginning in 2027, additional Medi-Cal work requirements and more frequent eligibility reviews are expected to increase administrative costs. Further potential exposure could arise from federal provisions tying certain state CalFresh benefit costs to payment error rates beginning in October 2027, followed by potential Medi-Cal penalties associated with eligibility errors beginning in October 2029. The extent to which these costs may be passed to counties remains uncertain, however, TPA and the CAO remain

committed to continued advocacy to secure adequate implementation funding, simplify compliance requirements, and protect local taxpayers from unfunded mandates.

Strategic Engagement

- **Congressional and Administration Outreach:** TPA coordinated engagement with congressional offices, committee staff, federal agencies, and senior Administration officials to advance County priorities and strengthen Kern County's federal relationships.
- **Kern Valley Hospital Seismic Upgrades:** TPA elevated the pending FEMA grant application with the County's congressional delegation to emphasize the importance of completing required seismic improvements and preserving access to emergency and acute care in the Kern River Valley.
- **Federal Grant Accountability:** TPA advocated for federal grant requirements that maintain accountability without creating duplicative reporting, unnecessary legal exposure, or additional unfunded administrative burdens for the County, which administered approximately \$417 million in federal grants in 2024 alone.
- **Energy and Resource Development:** The County advanced federal policy proposals intended to support domestic energy production, national security, military readiness, local employment, and long-term economic stability.
- **Workforce and Community Development:** TPA advocated for sustained federal investment in workforce training, affordable housing, and community development programs serving Kern County residents and employers.

In parallel, the LPC continued to provide a forum for County departments and community stakeholders to inform federal legislative priorities. Through coordination among the Board of Supervisors, County departments, TPA, congressional offices, and federal agencies, the County advanced funding requests, influenced federal policy discussions, and elevated issues with direct implications for local services and economic development.

Looking Ahead

Collectively, these efforts strengthened Kern County's federal advocacy and positioned the County to continue pursuing infrastructure funding, protecting local resources, and addressing emerging federal policy and fiscal challenges. While several funding requests and legislative priorities remain pending, the County's 2026 efforts established a foundation for continued engagement in the second year of the 119th Congress and beyond.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that the LPC receive and file this report.

Sincerely,



Nancy Anderson
County Administrative Officer

NA:TB:LEGGEN Annual Overview of Federal Legislative Activity (LPC).doc

Attachment

cc: All County Departments



MEMO

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

From Townsend Public Affairs
Ben Goldeen, Federal Advocacy Director
Spencer Street, Deputy Director
Christopher Townsend, President

Date: November 9, 2026

Subject: Annual Federal Advocacy Report, 2026

Townsend Public Affairs is pleased to present this annual report summarizing federal advocacy activities undertaken on behalf of Kern County during 2026.

Summary of 2026 Federal Legislative Advocacy

During 2026, Townsend Public Affairs worked closely with the Kern County Board of Supervisors and the Legislative Program Committee (LPC) to identify federal priorities, evaluate legislation and regulatory proposals, and develop advocacy strategies reflecting the County's goals. TPA regularly engaged the LPC on pending federal actions, prepared policy analyses and recommended positions, and coordinated outreach to the County's congressional delegation and the Trump Administration.

A principal focus of TPA's advocacy was securing Community Project Funding for high-priority County projects. Working with the County and its congressional delegation, TPA secured the inclusion of three requests totaling \$11.1 million in fiscal year 2027 House appropriations bills: \$4.9 million for the Panama Road Rehabilitation Project, \$3 million for the California City Boulevard Extension Project, and \$3.2 million for the Kern County Emergency Communications Project.

TPA also represented the County's interests on eleven federal bills, achieving favorable outcomes on five of nine supported measures that advanced beyond committee or became law, while both opposed bills remained stalled. In addition, TPA advocated for workforce and community development funding, opposed federal proposals that could impose new administrative costs, and expanded relationships with congressional leaders, federal agencies, and senior Administration officials. Collectively, these efforts positioned Kern County to compete for federal funding, protect local resources, and maintain a strong voice in federal policymaking.

Fiscal and Budgetary Impact of Federal Legislation

Positive Fiscal Outcome

- Federal Appropriations and Earmarks

During 2026, TPA worked with Kern County and members of the County's congressional delegation to secure the inclusion of \$11.1 million in community project funding for transportation infrastructure and emergency communications projects in Fiscal Year 2027 House appropriations bills. In all, three County requests were included in appropriations bills approved by the House Appropriations Committee:

- \$4,900,000 – Panama Road Rehabilitation Project sponsored by Rep. Valadao
- \$3,000,000 – California City Blvd. Extension Project sponsored by Rep. Obernolte and Sen. Schiff
- \$3,200,000 – Kern County Emergency Communications Project sponsored by Rep. Valadao

The House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, H.R. 9170, includes both the \$4.9 million for the Panama Road Rehabilitation Project, sponsored by Representative David Valadao, and \$3 million for the California City Boulevard Extension Project, sponsored by Representative Jay Obernolte with support from Representative Vince Fong and Senator Adam Schiff. The House Appropriations Committee reported H.R. 9170 on June 3, 2026, by a vote of 34-27. The bill awaits consideration by the full House.

The House Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill, H.R. 8845, includes the \$3.2 million for the Kern County Emergency Communications Project, sponsored by Representative Valadao. The House Appropriations Committee reported the bill on May 13, 2026, by a vote of 32-28. No additional action has been taken on the legislation.

- 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act

The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act became law on July 11, 2026 and creates new opportunities for Kern County to obtain federal funding for affordable housing development, housing-related infrastructure, regulatory modernization, and the conversion of vacant commercial buildings into housing. Several of the newly authorized grant programs are subject to future congressional appropriations.

The law expanded the permitted uses of Community Development Block Grant funding by allowing recipients to use up to 20 percent of their allocations for the construction of new affordable housing. This change will provide Kern County with greater flexibility to direct existing federal resources toward local housing production.

The law authorized a competitive innovation fund providing \$200 million annually for local governments that demonstrate measurable increases in housing supply. If Congress appropriates funding, Kern County could compete for grants supporting housing-related infrastructure, transportation improvements, community development activities, and other

initiatives that expand attainable housing. Kern County may also become eligible for competitive planning and implementation grants to update housing plans and regulatory processes, improve inspection capacity, coordinate housing development with transportation planning, and reduce barriers to affordable housing production.

Negative Fiscal Impact

- Fiscal Impacts of H.R. 1 Implementation

Although the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, or H.R. 1, advances important federal priorities related to work, personal responsibility, and program integrity, its implementation creates substantial fiscal and administrative challenges for Kern County. The County administers both Medi-Cal and CalFresh eligibility on behalf of the state, meaning that expanded work requirements, more frequent eligibility reviews, and additional verification responsibilities will increase staff workload, information technology needs, training costs, and compliance obligations. These pressures began during 2026 as expanded CalFresh work requirements took effect on June 1 and the federal share of CalFresh administrative expenses fell from 50 percent to 25 percent beginning October 1. The reduction in federal support leaves state and county governments responsible for 75 percent of administrative costs at the same time that counties must perform more complex eligibility and case-management functions.

Beginning January 1, 2027, certain working-age adults will be required to document at least 80 hours per month of employment, education, training, or community service to maintain Medi-Cal coverage, with more frequent eligibility reviews beginning in March 2027. These requirements will increase Kern County's staffing, verification, technology, and appeals-related costs.

Additional fiscal risks will begin October 1, 2027, when states with CalFresh payment error rates above 6 percent may be required to contribute between 5 and 15 percent of benefit costs. Kern County could bear a portion of these costs if California passes them through to counties or reduces local administrative funding. Potential Medi-Cal penalties associated with eligibility errors could begin in October 2029. Continued federal advocacy should therefore focus on securing adequate implementation funding, simplifying compliance requirements, and protecting local taxpayers from unfunded federal and state mandates.

Summary and Analysis of Legislative and Regulatory Outcomes

Throughout the year, Kern County took formal positions on several key bills, many of which advanced through Congress. This summary includes information on all bills for which Kern County took a formal position during both years of the 119th Congress (2025-2026).

Legislation Supported by the County

- H.R. 8469 – Fiscal Year 2027 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act
 - This bill provides FY2027 appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and related agencies, including a requirement to begin construction of the Bakersfield VA Outpatient Clinic.

- Status: Passed the House by a vote of 400-15 on May 20, 2026 and was received in the Senate where it awaits further action.
- S. 4603 – Golden Mussel Eradication and Control Act of 2026
 - Supported by the county, this bill would amend the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 to establish a demonstration program with respect to the golden mussel.
 - Status: Referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.
- S. 1272 – Trade Review Act
 - Supported by the county, this bill would provide for notification to, and review by, Congress with respect to the imposition of duties.
 - Status: Referred to the Senate Committee on Finance, awaiting further action.
- H.R. 7437 – Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act
 - This bill would improve federal transportation programs by ensuring funding reaches communities efficiently and is used where it delivers the greatest public benefit.
 - Status: Referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.
- H.R. 7296 – SAVE America Act
 - This bill would require proof of U.S. citizenship to register to vote, among other provisions aimed at election security.
 - Status: Passed the House as S. 1383 by a vote of 218-213 on February 11, 2026.
- H.R. 1949 – Unlocking our Domestic LNG Potential Act
 - The bill streamlines federal approval of natural gas imports and exports by removing certain restrictions and giving the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission sole authority to approve related trade and facility applications as being in the public interest.
 - Status: Passed by House of Representatives. Awaiting further action in the Senate.
- H.R. 3109 – REFINER Act
 - This bill would require the Department of Energy to publish a report on petrochemical refineries located in the United States and provide recommendations to increase capacity.
 - Status: Passed by House of Representatives. Awaiting further action in the Senate.
- H.R. 471/S. 1462 – Fix Our Forests Act:
 - Supported by the County, this bill aims to reduce wildfire threats and expedite forest management.
 - Status: Passed by House of Representatives. Advanced through Senate Agriculture Committee, awaiting further action.
- H.R. 22 / S. 128 – SAVE Act:
 - Requires proof of citizenship for voter registration.
 - Status: Passed House; received in Senate.
- H.R. 2499 – Codify Executive Order 14248:
 - Preserves election integrity measures by codifying EO 14248.
 - Status: Introduced and referred to relevant committees.

- H.R. 3944 – Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act:
 - Supports Kern County’s veteran services and military infrastructure.
 - Status: Became law (P.L. 119-37) as part of H.R. 5371 on November 12, 2025.

Legislation Opposed by the County

- S. 1240 – Defending America’s Future Elections Act:
 - Repeals EO 14248 and restricts voter eligibility verification.
 - Status: Referred to Senate Committee, no additional activity.
- H.R. 3132 – CHOICE for Veterans Act:
 - Alters fee agreements for veterans’ claims.
 - Status: Advanced in House Committee, no additional activity.

Legislative Success Rate

Kern County actively engaged on thirteen bills in 2026. Eight of the eleven bills were also engaged on in 2025, the first year of the two-year 119th Congress:

- 11 supported bills: 1 bill became law, 6 bills were approved by their respective legislative chamber of origin, and 4 remain in committee. This equates to an approximately 63% favorable outcome.
- 2 opposed bills: S. 1240 is stalled in committee while H.R. 3132 has not advanced since being reported by the House Committee on Veterans Affairs in May 2025. This equates to a 100% favorable outcome.

Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Relationships

Support for Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding

Townsend Public Affairs supported the Kern County Board of Supervisors in advocating for continued federal funding for the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnerships, and Emergency Solutions Grants programs in fiscal year 2027 and beyond. The advocacy was especially timely as the Administration and Congress evaluated federal spending priorities amid stagnant program funding, rising project costs, and growing community needs.

Kern Valley Health District Support

Townsend Public Affairs worked with the Kern County Board of Supervisors to elevate the Kern Valley Health District’s pending FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities grant application with the County’s congressional delegation. The approximately \$32 million grant would support a shovel-ready seismic upgrade of the Kern Valley Hospital facility, enabling it to comply with California’s 2030 seismic safety requirements and continue serving as the Kern River Valley’s only local emergency and acute care facility. After the application cleared FEMA’s regional review and approached final approval, a federal suspension and review of BRIC grants created an unexpected obstacle that placed the project’s funding and timeline at risk.

In response, TPA helped the County communicate the project’s urgency and broader public safety implications to Senators Alex Padilla and Adam Schiff and Representative Vince Fong. Following the County’s September 2 letter, Representative Fong’s office confirmed that it contacted FEMA to request a status update on the application. Although final approval remained pending, this outreach helped maintain federal attention on the project and established a foundation for continued engagement with FEMA and other federal and state partners. TPA’s ongoing advocacy

is focused on securing reconsideration and approval of the grant before delays jeopardize the District's ability to complete the mandated improvements and preserve essential health care access for residents of the Kern River Valley.

Opposition to Proposed Changes to Federal Grant Administration

Townsend Public Affairs supported the Kern County Board of Supervisors in responding to the Office of Management and Budget's proposed revisions to 2 CFR Part 200, the Uniform Guidance governing federal financial assistance. The proposal represented a substantial change to federal grant administration and could have exposed the County to greater fiscal uncertainty, legal liability, and compliance costs across programs supporting public safety, transportation, health, housing, emergency response, and human services. These risks are particularly significant because Kern County administered approximately \$417 million in federal grants in 2024 and relies on predictable federal commitments to establish budgets, maintain staffing, and plan multiyear services.

TPA helped advance the County's concerns through formal comments submitted on June 29, 2026 focusing on provisions that would expand federal authority to terminate grants based on changing policy priorities, impose additional pre-award reviews, increase county oversight responsibilities for subrecipients, and create uncertainty regarding allowable expenditures. This advocacy positioned Kern County as a responsible steward of federal resources while seeking to prevent federal accountability measures from creating unfunded mandates, disrupting congressionally authorized services, or shifting unreasonable financial and legal risks to local taxpayers.

Implementation of the rule was delayed as part of the continuing resolution enacted on September 2, 2026.

Support for Federal Workforce Development Funding

Townsend Public Affairs supported the Kern County Board of Supervisors in communicating the local consequences of potential reductions to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding during consideration of the fiscal year 2027 Labor-HHS appropriations bill. TPA helped demonstrate that proposed funding reductions could jeopardize approximately \$13.6 million of the \$18.9 million supporting workforce programs in Kern, Inyo, and Mono Counties, potentially eliminating services for hundreds of adults and young people. By presenting district-specific data to Representative David Valadao ahead of key appropriations proceedings, the advocacy connected federal budget decisions to their practical effects on residents, employers, and America's Job Centers of California. TPA's work strengthened the County's case for sustained federal investment as a fiscally responsible means of helping residents enter or remain in the workforce, meeting employers' labor needs, and effectively implementing federal work requirements.

Federal Action to Protect Kern County's Energy and Resource Economy

Townsend Public Affairs supported the Kern County Board of Supervisors in advancing a coordinated federal strategy to protect the County's energy and resource-producing industries from restrictive policies while elevating their importance to national security and military readiness. In a letter to President Donald Trump the County requested that the Administration use the Defense Production Act to strengthen domestic energy supplies, designate Kern County as a National Resource Development Zone, and establish a federal-state task force on energy security and military readiness. TPA's advocacy established a line of communication for continued engagement with the Administration, Congress, and federal agencies on this effort. It also reinforced Kern County's position as a national leader in responsible resource development and

created additional opportunities to pursue federal policies that support local jobs, energy independence, military preparedness, and long-term economic stability.

The County's advocacy was reinforced by the Trump Administration's April 20, 2026, presidential determination authorizing use of Section 303 of the Defense Production Act to expand domestic petroleum production, refining, and logistics capacity. The action closely aligned with the County's request for federal intervention by recognizing domestic petroleum resources and infrastructure as essential to national defense and authorizing federal purchases, financial support, and other measures to address production, permitting, infrastructure, and supply-chain constraints. While the determination did not specifically designate Kern County for assistance, it validated the central premise of the County's letter and created a potential pathway for continued advocacy to secure federal investment in Kern County's energy production and related infrastructure.

Opposition to Duplicative Federal Grant Reporting Requirements

Townsend Public Affairs supported Kern County's federal interests by raising concerns regarding the U.S. Department of the Treasury's proposal to establish a new system of records for several federal financial assistance programs, including State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds enacted by the American Rescue Plan Act in 2021. The comments made to the County's congressional delegation emphasized that state and local governments have already complied with extensive reporting, documentation-retention, auditing, and subrecipient-monitoring requirements, and that retroactively requiring information through a separate system could duplicate prior work, increase administrative costs, create data inconsistencies, and heighten fraud and compliance risks. This advocacy reinforced Kern County's commitment to accountability while urging Treasury to rely on existing reports and audit procedures or, at minimum, provide adequate implementation time, training, flexibility, and safeguards to prevent additional unfunded burdens on local governments.

Griffiss Institute Advocacy Meetings

In April Townsend Public Affairs partnered with the Griffiss Institute to advocate for federal funding with direct benefit to jobs and growth in Kern County. TPA arranged several meetings with congressional leaders and the County's congressional delegation in support of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Live Experimentation and accelerated Prototyping (UAS LEAP) project based in eastern Kern County. This partnership strengthened Kern County's relationships with congressional leaders, the County's delegation, and stakeholders in the defense and aerospace sectors. By arranging meetings in support of the UAS LEAP project, TPA elevated the County's role in advancing national defense priorities while building support for federal investment that could create local jobs, stimulate economic growth, and expand the region's innovation economy.

Support for Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization

Townsend Public Affairs supported the Kern County Board of Supervisors in advocating for reauthorization and long-term stabilization of the Secure Rural Schools program, which helps counties with substantial federally managed forestland maintain essential services despite their limited property tax base. TPA coordinated outreach to Representatives Vince Fong, David Valadao, and Jay Obernolte in support of reauthorizing the program. This advocacy helped ensure that Kern County's needs remained part of the broader federal discussion regarding the program's reauthorization and the federal government's responsibility to communities containing tax-exempt federal lands.