



CARPD NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

By: Russell W. Noack, Public Policy Advocates, LLC
July 26, 2018

The End of an Era

As the Legislature takes its annual Summer Break, it provides some time to reflect on progress made so far this year and to take stock of what's left to do in August, the last month of the 2017-18 Legislative Session. Additionally, as he completes his 16th year as Governor, it will represent the final time Governor Brown presides over the State of California. Among his many accomplishments, his commitment to environmental concerns, including drawing international attention to climate change, will go down as perhaps his greatest legacy. And despite his well-earned reputation as a fiscal conservative, Governor Brown's signature on [Senate Bill 5 \(De León\)](#) and support for the recently passed Proposition 68 was crucial to the success of the park and water bond on the June 2018 Ballot.

Governor Brown signed his last State Budget a few weeks ago. The \$201 Billion package was signed into law without any blue-penciled items. As reported previously, many of the Prop. 68 programs were grafted into the 2018-19 State Budget even before the vote in June, so these programs can get up and running more expeditiously.

Another major legislative development before the Summer Break was the enactment of [Senate Bill 856](#), the Budget trailer bill allocating funds from the State's Cap-and-Trade Program to support various programs described to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in California.

The Governor and Legislature also pushed through a bill that prevented a fundamental shift in local government funding. [Assembly Bill 1838](#) was amended to provide a 13-year moratorium on local governments imposing taxes on sugared beverages. The critical element for local government was the concurrent commitment by the beverage manufacturers to pull back on an Initiative that had qualified for the November 2018 Ballot and would have raised the vote requirement on all local government funding ordinances to a 2/3rds Super Majority vote. Although this "counter Initiative ploy" sets a negative precedent, SB 1838 was viewed as preventing a worse effect on the ability of local governments to raise funds from their constituents.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

The CARPD Legislative Committee continues to be extremely active on bills that still need to move through the legislative process in August, when the Legislature reconvenes. The Committee is supporting the following bills:

[Assembly Bill 1918 \(E. Garcia\)](#) would establish the Office of Sustainable Outdoor Recreation within the Natural Resources Agency to promote the importance of outdoor recreational activities. The bill passed the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water and has been sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for fiscal analysis and consideration.

[Assembly Bill 2534 \(Limón\)](#) would establish the Outdoor Equity Grants Program to allow underserved “at risk” students the opportunity to participate in outdoor educational experiences at parks. AB 2534 also passed the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water shortly before the Summer Break and has been referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for fiscal analysis and consideration.

[Assembly Bill 2600 \(Flora\)](#) is an important local government streamlining measure providing an alternative process for the formation of regional parks and open space districts by allowing the affected local legislative body to adopt by resolution the formation without requiring signatures from the public. The bill is back in the Assembly for concurrence in Senate amendments.

[Assembly Bill 2614 \(Carrillo\)](#) would create a grant program to encourage outdoor experiences for disadvantaged youths. The bill passed the Senate policy committee and is in the Senate Appropriations Committee for fiscal analysis and consideration.

[Assembly Bill 2615 \(Carrillo\)](#) would require Caltrans to work with local agencies, including recreation and park districts, to develop ways to promote safe and convenient access for bicycles and pedestrians to visit parks near state highways. Like AB 2614, it is pending action in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

[Senate Bill 929 \(McGuire\)](#) – is the CSDA-sponsored measure to require all independent special districts to establish websites to promote transparency to the public. The bill has a delayed effective date of January 1, 2020 and provides an exemption for small special districts that do not have access to broadband services or do not have financial resources to maintain a website. SB 929 has moved to the Assembly Floor for action in August.

Other Relevant Active Legislation

[Assembly Bill 1912 \(Rodriguez\)](#) – We have good news to report on this bill designed to restrict Joint Power Authority (JPA) operations and the ability for members to contractually alter their liabilities with other JPA parties. Working with a coalition led by the League of California Cities, we were successful in negotiating extensive amendments with the sponsor (SEIU) to allow us to

remove our opposition. The bill no longer applies to all JPAs – just JPAs discontinuing operation. Joint and several liability has been removed from the bill. Importantly, the process will not lead to reductions in retiree benefits. As amended, AB 1912 has been referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee for fiscal analysis and consideration.

[Assembly Bill 2329 \(Oberholte\)](#) is a bill designed to increase compensation for special district board members to six meetings per month. The bill was amended at the request of Senator McGuire (Chair of the Senate Committee on Governance and Finance) to require certain findings justifying that the additional meeting is necessary. As amended, AB 2329 passed the Senate and is pending on the Assembly Floor.

[Assembly Constitutional Amendment No. 31 \(Cervantes\)](#) – Although it remains alive, I am pleased to report that no action has been taken on this ACA, which seeks to place a hard cap on all public-sector base compensation tied to the Governor's compensation, which is currently set at \$195,803 annually.