



LEGISLATIVE REPORT October 2024

Vectis D.C. Federal Update

October Legislative Update

Both the House & Senate were in recess the entire month of August. The aptly named “Lame Duck” Session has been scheduled for November 12 to Christmas. Currently, both chambers are expected to be in recess the entire month of October to focus on individual member campaigns as well as the Presidential election.

Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations

The GOP leadership’s six-month Continuing Resolution proposal that would have extended each of the dozen annual appropriations bills through March 2025 to the floor last week. Attached to this bill was the “SAVE Act” which would mandate, at the federal level, proof of citizenship prior to voting. As predicted, the Continuing Resolution failed. After which Speaker Johnson turned to his self-described “Plan B”. He introduced a 3-month extension of funding at current levels through December 20. The bill will likely go to a full House vote later this week.

Lame Duck Session (November & December) Outlook

Regardless of the November election results, the House and Senate will come back to Capitol Hill on November 12 and are scheduled for a five-week session through December 20. During this time, it is expected that all remaining “must-pass” bills of the 118th Congress will be debated with an eye on enactment before leaving town for Christmas.

In addition to the 12 FY 2026 Appropriations bills, Congress is focused, before year-end, on passing the Farm Bill, Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), expanded anti-drone authority, energy legislation, cryptocurrency regulation, and additional VA and Secret Service funding.

The 119th Congress swears in on January 3, 2025, and any legislation that has not been acted upon will need to be reintroduced and go back through the committee process of hearings, mark-ups, and floor debate.

ACWA and Headwaters Federal Updates

House Passes Forest Health Legislation Supported by ACWA

On 9/24/24 the U. S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 8790, the bipartisan Fix Our Forests Act by a vote of 268-151. ACWA worked with the office of Congressman Scott Peters (D-CA) the lead democrat cosponsor of the bill and coordinated a national coalition letter expressing support for the bill. The letter was signed by the American Farm Bureau, the American Forest Resource Council, ACWA, the California Farm Bureau, the Family Farm Alliance, the Federal Forest Resource Coalition, and the National Association of Counties. A copy of the letter of support is attached.

During the amendment process another bill supported by ACWA (H.R.4018, the Headwaters Protection Act) was added to the underlying text of the Fix Our Forests Act.

The Fix Our Forests Act and Headwaters Protection Act will improve forest health conditions and help protect watersheds that are critical to water supply. Following House passage the bill will head to the Senate and await further action.

CSDA - actions

Fix Our Forests Act

At the request of the National Special Districts Coalition (NSDC), of which CSDA is a founding member, U.S. Representatives John Garamendi (D-CA) and Pat Fallon (R-TX) have submitted an amendment to Fix Our Forests Act (H.R. 8790) making clear that **special districts** are explicitly included in the definition of “local government” and eligible to participate in the wildfire-related programs authorized under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. It also expands the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) to special districts.

The GNA is a land management tool used by the USFS and BLM to plan and execute cross-jurisdictional restoration work. Under current law, only states, counties, and tribes are able to enter into such agreements.

Although there is bipartisan support for the measure, some Democrats have expressed concerns that the proposed reforms would weaken bedrock environmental laws. There is a letter from an 85 environmental organization coalition outlining these concerns and their strong opposition to the bill. The Biden administration has issued a Statement of Administration Policy that “strongly opposes” the bill, though it should be noted that the president did not issue a veto threat.

Other New Law Updates

CSDA efforts to oppose Assembly Bill 2561 were unsuccessful; this was signed into law 9/22 and takes effect Jan 1, 2025. CSDA and partners were able to help remove a meet and confer requirement, as well as the inclusion of language which harmonizes the public hearing requirement with multi year budgeting. New Law information

Assembly Bill 2561 (McKinnor) **Local public employees: vacant positions.** This bill, which will go into effect on January 1, 2025, will require every local agency (even agencies without represented workforces) to present the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts during a public hearing before the governing board at least once per fiscal year. The recognized employee organization for a bargaining unit shall be entitled to make a presentation at the public hearing at which the public agency presents the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts for positions within that bargaining unit. Agencies with high vacancy rates of 20 percent or more of the total number of authorized full-time positions shall, upon request by the recognized employee organization, provide additional detailed information at the public hearing, as specified.

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Director Saunders

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Requested Advocacy Position

Federal

Bill	Brief Description	Recommended Position	updates
H.R. 8790 Fix Our Forest Act	Federal https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/8790	Support	Passed House 9/24 (268-151)

District Positions

Federal

Bill	Brief Description	District Position	updates
S 3830 LIHWAP ACT	Would make the LIHWAP program permanent (US sunset - May 2024) https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/3830/text	Support	In Senate: referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
H.R.8812 - Water Resources Development Act of 2024	This bill authorizes, deauthorizes, and modifies various water resources feasibility studies and projects of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. GDPUD has a Bill amendment for \$20.5 million. https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/8812	Support	Passed House - 7/22 (359-13) In Senate - 7/23

State

Bill	Brief Description	District Position	updates
SB 867 (Dodd)	Climate Resiliency Bond - Proposition 4 https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB867	Support	Chaptered 7/3/24; going to Nov Ballot
SB 1072 (Padilla)	Amends and remedies issues with Prop 218. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB1072	Support	Chaptered - 9/20
AB 2257 (Wilson) ACWA sponsored	Aids member agencies in defending against Proposition 218 lawsuits by requiring litigants to have participated and raised specific objections during the public administrative process. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB2257	Support	Chaptered - 9/25
AB 1827 (Papan)	Provides that the fees or charges for property-related water service imposed or increased, as specified, may include the incrementally higher costs of water service due to specified factors, including the higher water usage demand of parcels. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1827	Support	Chaptered - 9/22
SB 937 (Wiener)	This bill makes numerous changes to development fees . Limits when a local agency can collect development fees and connection fees. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB937	Oppose	Chaptered - 9/19
AB 1820 (Schiavo)	This bill would authorize a development proponent that submits a preliminary application for a housing development project to request a preliminary fee and exaction estimate, as defined. The bill would require a local agency to comply with the request within 10 business days of the submission of the preliminary application. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1820	Neutral	Chaptered - 9/22
AB 460 (Bauer-Kahan)	Was a water rights bill. Text amended now only refers to Fines and Penalties. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB460	Neutral	Chaptered - 9/22
SB 1110 (Ashby)	Would specify that the Water Board can forgo strict enforcement of water efficiency requirements if there are lower cost water supply options and extends the timeline by two years. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billCompareClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB1110&showamends=false	Support	Passed Senate. August 15 hearing: Held in Assembly Approp committee and under submission (suspense file)

SB 1088 (Alvarado-Gil)	It is the intent of the Legislature to establish a Rural and Small Community Fire Resilience Program within the Office of Emergency Services to work in coordination with the Department of Water Resources, the State Water Resources Control Board, and other appropriate state entities to develop a program for the distribution of state matching funds to communities within the Wildland Urban Interface, or WUI, to improve water system infrastructure, including upgrading and upsizing waterlines, installing additional fire hydrants of water systems, and enhancing water system delivery to ensure adequate water flow for fire prevention and suppression activities https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB1088	Support	Passed Senate. August 15 hearing: Held in Assembly Approp committee and under submission (suspense file)
SB 1218 (Newman)	Would declare that it is the established policy of the state to encourage, but not mandate, the development of emergency water supplies, and to support their use during times of water shortage. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB1218	Support	Passed Senate. August 15 hearing: Held in Assembly Approp committee and under submission (suspense file)
SB 1393 (Niello)	Would require the State Air Resource Control Board to establish the Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation Appeals Advisory Committee for purposes of reviewing appeals of denied requests for exemptions from the requirements of the Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB1393	Support	4/3 Failed Senate Environmental Quality Committee. Reconsideration Granted.
AB 1337 (Wicks)	This bill would authorize the board to issue a curtailment order for any diversion, regardless of basis of right, when water is not available under the diverter's priority of right. Violation would be considered a trespass. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1337	Oppose Unless Amended	Hearing cancelled by author
SB 1255	LIRA Program Bill. Water agencies - must have a Low Income Rate Assistance Program, and funding would be by customers that would not qualify. Customers would automatically be charged a fee unless they "Opt-out" of the contribution fee. Maximum of 10% voluntary contributions for administartive costs. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB1255	Oppose Unless Amended	Passed Senate. August 15 hearing: Held in Assembly Approp committee and under submission (suspense file)
Advocacy Coalition	Join ACWA's Coalition to Maintain Funding for Agreements to Support Healthy Rivers and Landscapes	Support	

Neutral/Watch