



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities

APA CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

MAY 2023

By Erik de Kok, AICP, Vice President for Policy and Legislation

Lauren De Valencia, APA California Lobbyist

Many Important Planning Related Bills Clear First Policy Committee Deadline

April 28 marked the first policy committee deadline where bills that have been identified as having a fiscal impact must pass out of their respective policy committee(s) in their house of origin to continue moving. While several bills of interest to planners have been tabled for the year and will not move until 2024, there are many more high priority bills that continue to move. APA California is tracking nearly [400 bills](#) that will be of interest to planners this year and are taking [positions](#) on those that are high priority and/or providing feedback and technical expertise.

The housing and homeless crisis continues to be a top concern for the Governor and Legislature, and the Legislature is again looking at streamlining and zoning. [SB 423 \(Wiener\)](#) continues to move, which proposes to remove the sunset date and make other changes to SB 35 (Wiener, 2017) to provide streamlining for multi-family developments. Focus on adaptive reuse and office conversions has also grown, with [AB 1490 \(Lee\)](#), however [AB 1532 \(Haney\)](#) was made a two-year bill. Another important bill to planners is [AB 821 \(Grayson\)](#), which looks to address zoning consistency with the General Plan by requiring a new 180 day timeline to make zoning ordinances consistent with the General Plan for all non-residential projects. Previous language to require development approvals for projects consistent with an SCS was removed.

While [SB 571 \(Allen\)](#) was introduced to require evacuation route analysis and planning for all new developments in high or very high fire hazard severity zones, this bill is now a two-year bill to allow more time to work through the details. Taking climate resilience and hazard mitigation planning a step further and looking to also address the housing crisis, [AB 68 \(Ward\)](#) proposes to create new streamlining for housing in “climate ready” areas while potentially restricting growth in “climate risk” areas. While this bill was introduced and made a two-year bill, APA California has met with the sponsors and plans to remain engaged before the bill begins moving next year.

Additionally, with the approval of the 2022 Scoping Plan, the Legislature is also focused on implementing strategies to meet the state’s carbon neutrality goals by 2045. With that in mind, [AB 1176 \(Zbur\)](#) requires new General Plan updates to address electrification of transportation and buildings at the local level, however the prescriptive nature of the bill remains concerning and work on this bill is ongoing.

APA California’s advocacy work in the Legislature

Over the last few months, APA California has been busy meeting with committee consultants and legislative staff to help provide feedback and offered suggested amendments to bills of interest to planners. As an organization, APA California is often asked to provide feedback on planning related bills and provide technical expertise, giving a voice to planners and an opportunity to help shape legislation. This is a valuable role that the Chapter works hard to maintain, and so far this year we have resolved concerns on several bills, with more work ahead. In addition, we frequently partner with other organizations to advocate on bills and continue to look forward to expanding our partnership network.

APA California 75th Anniversary Legislative Resolution

Senator Caballero, as Chair of the Senate Governance and Finance Committee and Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry, as Chair of the Assembly Local Government Committee, will jointly recognize APA California with a Resolution to honor the Chapter’s 75th Anniversary and contributions in empowering growth for the planning profession throughout the state and advocating for excellence in planning. Andrea Ouse, APA California’s Chapter President, and Erik de Kok, APA California’s Vice President for Policy and Legislation, will join both members on the Senate Floor to receive the Resolution later this month.