



APA CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

APRIL 2024

By Erik de Kok, AICP, Vice President for Policy and Legislation
Lauren De Valencia, APA California Lobbyist

Policy Committees in Full Swing

With the bill introduction deadline behind us, the 2024 Legislative Session is now in full swing with hundreds of bills being set in their respective policy committee(s), where they will need to pass to meet the April 26 policy committee deadline for bills with a fiscal impact, and May 3 for all other bills. APA California has reviewed all bills introduced and met with the APA California Legislative Review Team on March 7 to review several [bills](#) of interest. Monthly meetings with Section Legislative Representatives to further engage on legislative matters with Sections also continue. Nearly [400 bills](#) have been identified that will be of interest to planners this year, with several rising to higher priority. As we develop positions on bills moving in the Legislature, APA California will share [position letters](#) on important bills so stay tuned. Note that even if you don't see a position letter on a particular bill, that doesn't mean we aren't working on it. We often work in advance of taking a position to try and address concerns where possible.

Planning-Related Issues Remain Front and Center in Legislation

A top priority of the Governor and Legislature remains addressing the housing and homeless crisis. In addition to their statements as such, we are seeing several bills proposed to continue to address accountability and enforcement of existing laws. This year, [AB 1886 \(Alvarez\)](#), [AB 1893 \(Wicks\)](#) and [AB 2023 \(Quirk-Silva\)](#) look to make changes around the "builders remedy" and housing element self-certification.

Impact fees have also proven to be a bigger interest this year with several bills dealing with upfront estimates and transparency on projects prior to final approval as provided in [AB 1820 \(Schiavo\)](#) and [AB 3012 \(Grayson\)](#). Other legislative proposals such as [SB 937 \(Wiener\)](#), look to delay fees to address challenges developers are facing with particularly high interest rates, without capping or removing fee authority overall.

Most notably, several new bills are moving that would require, in some cases, substantive updates to the General Plan. [AB 2684 \(Bryan\)](#) would require an update to the safety element to address impacts from extreme heat. [AB 2583 \(Berman\)](#) looks at addressing school walk zones and [SB 1045 \(Blakespear\)](#) seeks to ease the siting of composting facilities. However the most impactful new proposed mandate on the General Plan is [AB 1889 \(Friedman\)](#) which, as introduced, would have required a new standalone wildlife and habitat connectivity element to be adopted by 1/1/2025. APA California has spent significant time discussing the impacts of new General Plan mandates, particularly the amount of work that would go into AB 1889, should it be signed into law. Thanks to early discussions, recent amendments reduce the level of detail and prescriptive language in these proposals and provide a more realistic timeframes to implement. Additionally, APA California was successful in moving AB 1889 from a new standalone element to instead work within the existing parameters of the conservation element. As we continue to work with the author's office on this bill, we are still asking for more time to implement and with that change, would move to a neutral position. Finally, don't forget [AB 1176 \(Zbur\)](#) from last session, which is still eligible to move this year and would require new General Plan updates or other appropriate local plans to address decarbonization at the local level.



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

APA California continues to work through amendments and participate in discussions to address concerns related to many of the bills highlighted above in addition to others not noted here. These bills are only a small snapshot of the broader set of bills we have been working on to ensure planners have clarity with workable language and time to implement.

Proposed Budget Cuts to REAP 2.0

As we noted last month, a proposed “reversion” to the REAP 2.0 grants and other housing related programs funded through the budget are on the chopping block under the Governor’s January budget proposal. APA California recently issued a [letter](#) to express our concerns and are urging the Legislature to reject these proposals. We also flagged this issue during our meetings with members, as noted below. If you are interested in sharing your own city/county or professional concerns, we encourage APA California members to share your local experiences, particularly on how REAP funding has helped your jurisdiction and the types of projects that would be impacted with the proposed cuts.

While the Legislature recently voted on an early action deal to reduce the overall budget deficit by \$17 billion, which did not include impacts to REAP and other existing housing programs, cuts could still be looming as the Legislature continues to negotiate a budget by June 15.

APA California’s Work in the Legislature

APA California is actively engaged in many bills. In fact, we work closely with legislative and committee staff on amendments and clarifications to bills before taking a position. 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 noted above, several discussions on proposed bills are ongoing. After meeting with key members of the Legislature last month, we continue to discuss the work planners are doing at the local level to implement and keep up with all the planning related bills that pass year over year and how that relates to the cumulative impact of bills on the table this year. We also continue seek opportunities to suggest tangible ways, absent fiscal resources at the state level, that the Legislature can help to make implementation more successful and support the planning community.