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Announcing the Watchlist

The Planning and Conservation League is proud to announce the California Legislative Watchlist, available on our website at pcl.org/watchlist. This watchlist contains the list of bills we are actively tracking and working on in the California Legislature. The bills are selected based on the list of topics that PCL finds are important to address in the current political climate. These topics include housing, tenant protections and anti-displacement, transportation, CEQA, water, and climate

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Tenant Protection is Smart Growth Policy | The Common Sense of AB 36, AB 1481 and AB 1482

PCL has come to realize that protecting low-income vulnerable residents from displacement is a necessary component of smart compact development to meet California's equity, health, conservation, and climate goals. Earlier this year, in what we believe to be a natural and essential extension of our many years of advocacy for infill development, PCL made the unprecedented commitment to offer its strong support for the unofficially-dubbed "tenant protection package," [AB 36](#), [AB 1481](#), and [AB 1482](#).

AB 36 would restore the now-prohibited ability of local governments to protect struggling families with rent stabilization policy if the jurisdiction so chooses. AB 1481 would eliminate arbitrary evictions by requiring a specific justifiable reason for eviction while protecting a landlord's rights to evict for a reasonable range of just causes. AB 1482 would protect California renters from large rent increases in excess of a reasonable annual appreciation rate of 5%.

Both AB 36 and AB 1481 were held in the Assembly at the request of the authors, but AB 1482 has passed and now moves to the Senate.

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Dear Members,

We are halfway through the 2019 legislative year and are working on bills that are now moving into their second house for ratification. For the bills we support or oppose, that means more discussions, debates, and amendments with the various committee members and staff. If you are interested in following or engaging on the bills we are working on, go to [PCL.org/Watchlist](https://pcl.org/) (there is an article on our new tool in this newsletter).

On a different note, I just returned from the National Wildlife Federation's annual meeting. Collaborating and commiserating with our national partner and affiliates from 49 other states and 2 US territories on national and regional policy objectives is inspiring and eye-opening. From Alabama to Alaska and New York to Hawaii, colleagues from these organizations showed their dedication and commitment to tackling conservation and climate change challenges. Each time I attend these annual meetings, I return with a renewed sense of accomplishment for what PCL achieves with our legislative and policy work in California and a healthy respect for our allies around the country, each with their own set of challenges. Our successes are the envy of many other organizations in other states. However, our expectations are high in California and we are not satisfied with small or even medium successes on environmental policies. We want big solutions to our pressing

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AB 36 and AB 1481 can and should live another day, and while we believe it is critical that anti-rent-gouging policy such as AB 1482 be coupled with just-cause eviction protections, AB 1482 is an extremely important first step to protecting struggling families from losing their homes.

Around the state, some renters report receiving rent increases up to double their rent in a single month, leaving no feasible way for them to afford to remain in their homes. AB 1482 would remedy this situation by setting a maximum percentage for rent increases, protecting tenants from huge, unforeseen increases, while at the same time preserving the ability for landlords to make a fair return and maintain a successful business. It is critical to note that AB 1482 does not impose rent control, but simply guards against the most drastic and disruptive rent increases in places where tenants have no other protections.

We are in a housing affordability crisis and a climate crisis, and a primary focus of PCL's advocacy is towards the development of policy that supports equitable infill investment in existing communities that will successfully address both California's climate and housing goals. In both the "[2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update](#)" and the "[2018 Progress Report](#)" on Sustainable Communities Strategies, the California Air Resources Board has found that to meet our 2030 and 2050 climate goals, we need to significantly reduce Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) and associated greenhouse gas emissions through more efficient land use and increased transportation options.

Yet, as stated in previous Capitol Insiders, PCL recognizes that targeted investment towards the infill that is needed to meet our climate goals inevitably adds to gentrification and displacement pressures on low-income residents in these existing communities. Thus, this needed infill investment must be coupled with anti-displacement protections to guard against the perpetuation of historical patterns of segregation, to ensure that the vulnerable residents of these communities equitably reap the benefits of these investments, as well as to ensure that our ability to meet our climate goals is not undermined by forcing low-wage workers into long commutes.

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Low-income residents will use transit and active transportation options more than others if it's available. Displacing these residents to the urban periphery, or, worse, to the Valley from the coast, not only disproportionately burdens these families, but also will eat up our valuable agricultural land and open space and increase VMT and associated GHG emissions. Displacement is the Achilles heel of smart growth policy and is a problem we can no longer afford to ignore.

The common-sense tenant protections that AB 1482, as well as AB 1481 and AB 36, propose are essential mechanisms needed to protect low-income residents from this kind of indirect-displacement pressure. PCL had not previously actively supported such legislation, not because we didn't care about the social injustice issues concerned, but because, like many environmental organizations, these issues were not seen as a part of our core mission. We now know we were wrong.

Displacement is not just an equity issue, it is an environmental issue, and we call on the environmental community at large to make tenant protections a priority.

Major Environmental Victory for Parks and Open Spaces

PCL was instrumental in securing an environmental victory in Congress earlier this year. Working with the National Wildlife Federation, PCL was able to sway the vote of congressional members to reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) that expired in September 2018. The LWCF collects revenue from offshore oil and gas leasing and uses that revenue to fund parks and open spaces across the nation. California alone had received \$2.5 billion from the LWCF, which went to funding notable projects such as acquiring land for the Pacific Crest Trail spanning 1,700 miles, establishing the Mojave National Preserve to protect the Mojave, Sonoran, and Great Basin Deserts, and setting aside the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. We are grateful to be part of the movement that helped permanently reauthorize this fund that is critical to protecting our wilderness, parks, and recreation for all to enjoy.

Learn more about LWCF and PCL's involvement in getting it reauthorized at pcl.org/lwcf.



problems, and a strong message sent to the rest of the country to make bold moves on climate change.

At the annual meeting, presentations on the **IPCC Special Report** on global warming and the **IPBES Global Assessment Report** on species extinction were presented and discussed. We were all challenged and alarmed by the findings, and the discussions afterwards focused on what each of us could do in our respective states to reduce and hopefully remove the threats to one million species before they become extinct in the next decade or more. PCL has been working on habitat and land conservation for decades but our challenges are only getting larger with rapid climate change and the pressures of growth on our resources. So coming together to focus on these challenges is encouraging. But what we have heard, and what we have known for a while, is we are out of time.

What we all have to do now to change the trajectory of where we are headed is daunting. We have to dig deep, focus, commit to a new paradigm and change the course of that trajectory. PCL is committed to continuing the demanding work we do on statewide environmental policy and legislation, and we ask that you continue to spread the word on how important this work is, what it means to California, our nation, and the globe, and continue supporting us each and every way you can. You are a key member of our conservation army and we can't do this alone.

Howard Penn
Executive Director



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change. We work actively with our advisors and allies to support, oppose, track, and amend these bills. We hope that the watchlist will help our members stay informed about what is happening at the Capitol and help provide the resources necessary for people to reach out to their legislators and influence the outcome of the legislation. Legislators like to hear from their constituents on legislation and engaged PCL members are one of the many resources PCL has to influence legislation. Thus, by sharing our efforts, we hope that you join us in enacting policy that regulates sprawl, promotes low-income housing and rental protections, reduces GHG emissions, provides clean water to all Californians, and protects the intent and mission of CEQA.

PCL is also announcing the release of the Legislative Scorecard. The Scorecard represents which California legislators are supportive of PCL's efforts. Each bill PCL is supporting or opposing receives a score and any legislator that votes on the bill earns those

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CEQA 2.0 Moving Forward | 50th Anniversary Approaches

PCL's ambitious CEQA 2.0 project continues to move forward with developing proposed amendments to the California Environmental Quality Act, with the goal of rolling out an extensive update package by the fall of 2019 for the 2020 legislative year – the 50th anniversary of CEQA.

The 2.0 advisory group, consisting of CEQA and land use specialists from around the state, has been meeting regularly since August of 2018 to work on a variety of “process/procedural” issues including drafting statutory language

- to avoid “eleventh-hour” document submissions; to encourage pre-litigation settlements;
- to discourage the filing of monetary-settlement-only lawsuits;
- to expedite record preparation;
- to require more active management by CEQA Judges of the pre-writ hearing process, including monitoring the litigation for settlement opportunities;
- to increase the training and expertise of CEQA Judges;
- and to set a deadline for appellate court decisions to be issued.

Additionally, the advisory group is also working on a variety of “policy/procedural issues” including the role of Environmental Justice considerations in the CEQA process;

- appropriate circumstances for requiring document translation;
- discouraging CEQA suits against emergency shelters, navigation centers, and supportive housing units;
- clarifying the extent to which environmental documents need to address existing environmental hazards, including wildfire;
- and the use of the initiative process by project proponents to avoid CEQA review.

The priorities listed above are just a sampling of the issues we are tackling in this update, along with discussions about policy priorities.

Members of our team have been in regular communication with key legislative and executive staff members about the progress the group is making. When the time comes for the public release of the update package, the goal is to have a coordinated game plan for guiding the package through the legislative process and onto the Governor's desk.

We have also been actively reaching out to various “stakeholder” groups, including the building industry, labor, environmental justice and local government representatives with the goal of building the necessary coalitions to actively support passage and adoption of the legislation.

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As the CEQA 2.0 process continues to generate work product, PCL maintains its historic role of monitoring and lobbying with thoughtful positions on all proposed CEQA legislation in the Assembly and the Senate. Stay tuned for further updates on what we plan to be the first extensive update of CEQA since its adoption in 1970.

Can anyone say 2020 and Happy 50 Year Anniversary CEQA?

For more information on the CEQA 2.0 project, please visit www.pcl.org/campaigns/ceqa/ceqa-2-0.

There's a New Governor in Town

For all the good Governor Brown did, he made the mistake of pursuing a 20th-century water project well past its "best if used by" date.

As one of his first acts, Governor Newsom announced that the State was dropping pursuit of two giant tunnels to divert water from the San Francisco Bay Delta. Instead, he said he would be looking at just one tunnel. Even more importantly he issued an Executive Order directing preparation of a Water Resilience Portfolio.

He specified that the recommendations should, "prioritize multi-benefit approaches that meet multiple needs at once; utilize natural infrastructure such as forests and floodplains; embrace innovation and new technologies; encourage regional approaches among water users sharing watersheds; incorporate successful approaches from other parts of the world; integrate investments, policies and programs across state government; and strengthen partnerships with local, federal and tribal governments, water agencies and irrigation districts, and other stakeholders."

This coincides with work PCL had recently initiated to get diverse stakeholders (i.e. urban water districts, irrigation districts, tribal members, enviros, business, environmental justice, fire, flood, academic) together to see what we could jointly recommend to the new administration. It turns out that just about all of these leaders are ready to hit "refresh." Several of these adversaries said they are, "Sick and tired of being sick and tired."

This will be an entirely open source process with no Non-Disclosure Agreements. It has two objectives:

- Begin establishing relationships among the parties; and
- Develop consensus recommendations for Governors Resilient Water Portfolio - not just a regurgitation of existing Governor Brown's Water Action Plan.

This is not a place where folks just repeat their talking points from the past three-plus decades. It is a six-month window to work with others to find joint approaches to common problems.

For more information, you can contact Jonas Minton, PCL's Water Policy Advisor, at jminton@pcl.org.

points. This scorecard can be a helpful tool for those who would be interested in seeing how their legislator ranks based on their support of PCL's environmental and housing issues. The scorecard also shows which votes contributed to the final score so that it is simple to track which bills the legislator needs to be persuaded to take a stance on.

We hope that these two tools will be helpful in understanding the process and discussions going on at the Capitol today. If you have any questions, please reach out to our Legislative Team at legteam@pcl.org.

Donation Information

PCL's success is largely due to the strong and generous support of our members. You can visit pcl.org/donate to submit a donation online. You are also welcome to mail a donation to the address listed below. Please consider contributing today to help protect and preserve California's natural environment and promote sustainable and healthy communities for all Californians.

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2020 California Environmental Assembly

Building a Better Future: Leading by Example

PCL's 2020 California Environmental Assembly, Building a Better Future: Leading by Example, will be held sometime in late January – early February at the McGeorge School of Law. In addition to our panels on water, energy, climate change, transportation, housing, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this year, we are adding new workshops on environmental advocacy. These workshops will help teach important skills to anyone interested in entering the environmental activism world. For more information, please visit pcl.org/assembly.

