



2020 Legislative Summary

It goes without saying that this has been a difficult year around the globe, and so too was it a difficult year at the California Capitol. The Legislature struggled mightily to operate effectively under Covid emergency protocols, and in fact, struggled even to develop what the emergency protocols would be. The two houses lacked coordination in the basic logistics of operating in the building together, and in some cases actively worked against each other on critically important issues, producing little meaningful legislation on affordable housing, equitable transportation, or environmental and social protections. Legislation that needed to be thought out more was passed without proper vetting, while many other bills of merit were left on the capitol floor, all as advocates struggled to meaningfully engage in the process.

To be fair, these are unprecedentedly challenging times, and there are certainly individual legislators that worked tirelessly to do the best they could—and there were some good things that got done—but, in total, the end-product was disappointing. As we look ahead, it is likely that we will be under similar circumstances for the 2021 session, and we implore the leadership of both houses to rethink the operational approach to ensure that the democratic process is not compromised as it was in 2020.

Below are the highlights of the legislation PCL was engaged in. We expect that many of the failed bills are likely to return in some form in 2021. To view the full list of the bills PCL worked on this year, visit pcl.org/watchlist.

[SB 950](#) and [SB 55](#) (Support): PCL sponsored, CEQA update legislation – **Failed**

-Both SB 950 and its reincarnation, SB55, proved too controversial for this difficult year, but the “CEQA 2.0” effort made progress through the process and much interest remains in continuing to develop a pragmatic update to CEQA.

[AB 3279](#) (Opposed, then Neutral): CEQA procedure modifications – **Failed**

-PCL and many allies strongly opposed the original approach of this bill on administrative record preparation and the inclusion of interlocutory remand, among other concerns. The final bill eliminated

these provisions, with amendments that were not dissimilar to SB 950, but still failed.

[SB 1385](#) (Oppose unless Amended) and [AB 3107](#) (Support if Amended): Residential allowed as a use on underutilized commercial lands – **Failed**

-PCL strongly supported the intent of these bills and worked to ensure that they would apply to inclusionary, location-efficient housing. They never got there, but similar legislation is likely to return next year.

[SB 1120](#) (Oppose Unless Amended): ministerial approval of second units & parcel splits – **Failed**

-PCL also strongly supports breaking up single-family zoning, but again worked to ensure that the bill would apply to location-efficient areas. And again, the bill never got there but similar legislation is likely to return.

[AB 1279](#) (Support): Ministerial approval of affordable housing in “High Resource” areas – **Failed**

-An extremely important bill aimed at dismantling a century of housing segregation by streamlining inclusionary development in historically exclusive, high-resourced neighborhoods.

[SB 995](#) (Oppose Unless Amended, then Neutral): [AB 900](#) (2011) extension to 2025 - **Failed**

-PCL did not support the original AB 900, nor does PCL support “expedited judicial review” generally. But if the state was to insist on continuing to streamline large Governor-approved projects, our goal was to ensure that they are truly exemplary projects that meet the strongest environmental standards and provide true benefit for the surrounding community, without displacement. The final bill would have made some significant improvements to AB 900, but we felt more should be done.

[AB 2323](#) (Neutral): existing CEQA exemptions, updating/modification – **Failed**

-PCL worked with the authors and many allies in the development of this bill aimed at providing consistency and alignment of multiple CEQA exemptions with the current climate and equity goals. Many improvements were identified, but we felt more work needed to be done.

[SB 288](#) (Neutral): CEQA exemption for transit, bike, and pedestrian projects – **Signed**

-A bill aimed at streamlining non-auto transportation projects, there were strong concerns initially that the bill was too broad, but we feel the final bill was adequately targeted to the right kind of projects.

[SB 414](#) (Support): Small (at risk of failing) water system consolidation – **Failed**

-A follow-up legislation to the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Act, which PCL supported, would have corrected a loophole in the original legislation. This bill failing to pass through the legislative process is an example of the convoluted outcomes of bills during this pandemic year.

[AB 345](#) (Support): Regulations, setbacks, for oil wells in residential areas – **Failed**

-A greatly publicized and contested effort to mandate minimum setbacks for drilling in residential areas, it is a shame the legislature could not muster the fortitude to pass this common-sense bill.

[SB 146](#) (Opposed, then Neutral): SB 375 (2008) public participation requirements – **Signed**

-In the name of needed flexibility under the circumstances of Covid, the bill initially unnecessarily weakened the public participation requirements for CA’s Regional Transportation Plans. The final Bill eliminated the problematic provisions while allowing for the legal flexibility needed.

[AB 1436](#) (Support): Covid rent and mortgage relief for tenants, owners, and landlords – **Failed**

-The most thought-out, cross-interest proposal that emerged for the relief of both tenants and landlords amid Covid, this proposal failed but led the way to the final Relief Act deal, AB3088, the merits of which are still being debated.

[AB 1788](#) (Support): Ban on the use of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs)– **Signed**

-This was a 2-year bill that proposed a ban on the use of SGARs in California due to their harmful effects on wildlife. After a long battle to reduce the opposition, the bill finally passed this year.

[AB 3030](#) (Support): Conserving 30% of California's land and water– **Failed but brought back**

-This bill introduced the goal of conserving and protecting 30% of California's land, rivers, and oceans by 2030. Although the bill failed in committee, Governor Newsom signed an executive order that made this goal an official state mandate.

[SB 45](#) (Support): Wildfire, Drought, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2020 – **Failed**

-This bill authorizes a 5.5B bond to be voted on in the November 2020 election that would go towards increasing climate resiliency, such as improving wildfire prevention, safe drinking water, drought preparation, and flood protection. Introduced last year, this bill passed through the Senate but was never assigned to a committee in the Assembly.

[SB 766](#) (Support): Indirect cost recovery for wildlife crossing projects – **Failed**

- This bill would exempt wildlife crossings from being charged indirect cost recovery if they have received over half of the funding from private sources. This bill was not heard in committee due to its non-relevance to the goals set for legislation this year.

[SB 1372](#) and [SCR 62](#) (Support): Two bills promoting wildlife crossings – **Failed**

- SB 1372 would encourage the building of more wildlife crossings by requiring the Department of Transportation to develop a wildlife habitat connectivity program in each region of California. SCR 62 is a resolution that designates Caltrans to build an overpass on state route 101 in Liberty Canyon after collecting enough private funds and to maintain the overpass after building it. Both bills were rescinded at the beginning of this year due to the shorter legislative schedule.

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