



PCL INSIDER: News from the Capitol

CEQA Bills Moving Forward

May 31 was the deadline to get all bills out of their 'houses of origin' (i.e., bills introduced in the Assembly needed to pass out of the Assembly; Senate bills needed to pass out of the Senate), so there is a lot more clarity on which CEQA bills are moving forward this year. With that important deadline now past, CEQA legislation has been winnowed down from a peak of nearly 30 bills to only 11 currently active bills (at least for now; the risk of gut-and-amend at the end of session is always present).

Of the 5 bills for which PCL was actively coordinating support, [AB 380](#) (Dickinson) on electronic notice posting and [AB 543](#) (Campos) on notice translation have passed from the Assembly into the Senate. [AB 953](#) (Ammiano) and [SB 617](#) (Evans), which both fix the ambiguity and threats to public health and safety caused by the decision in *Ballona Wetlands Land Trust v. L.A.*, remain in their houses of origin and are now two-year bills, meaning they can be acted upon again starting in 2014. At this moment the plan is to continue to advocate for these important, common-sense bills, in hopes of getting them to become law next year. Finally, [SB 754](#) (Evans), a more comprehensive CEQA strengthening omnibus bill, is also now technically a two-year bill after stalling in the Senate Appropriations Committee, though it is uncertain whether this bill will be revived next session.

Other positive CEQA reform bills that are moving forward include [AB 37](#) (Perea), which requires electronic records of proceedings, and [SB 436](#) (Jackson), which mandates that scoping meetings be public (a provision also included in AB 380). [AB 52](#) (Gatto), a bill that would strengthen protections for Native American cultural resources, is now a two-year bill.

Of all the bills that initially concerned PCL only two rather minor ones have moved on to the other houses. These are [AB 417](#) (Frazier), a bike plan exemption bill, and [AB 1060](#) (Fox), which leaves the Department of Fish and Wildlife without filing fee revenue when the permit applicant is the U.S. Armed Services.

Finally, as expected, [SB 731](#) (Steinberg) passed to the Assembly. This is the President Pro Tem's omnibus CEQA legislation, which includes some common-sense reforms PCL supports while other provisions raise significant concerns for us. We intend to remain in communication with the Speaker Pro Tem's office about ways in which this bill can be shaped to better protect the environment and communities.

For a complete list of CEQA bills, [click here](#). To join the CEQA Works Coalition – now over 180 organizations strong! – visit the [CEQA Works website](#); to support PCL and PCL Foundation's ongoing CEQA efforts, [give here](#).

Water Bills (Mostly) Stay Afloat

Many of the water-related bills that made it to the Senate and Assembly Floors were successful, and will continue through the legislative process. We're excited to report that PCL-sponsored AB 976 (Atkins), which gives the California Coastal Commission administrative penalty authority, [passed out of the Assembly](#) with a vote of 42-32. Unfortunately, related bill AB 203 (Stone) was not as lucky, and is now inactive – though it can be revived in 2014. AB 203 would allow the Coastal Commission to take existing Coastal Act violations into consideration when approving permits for new development on the same property. Thanks to those of you who helped PCL urge legislators to support public access, clean beaches, and protection of California's beautiful coastline! Stay tuned for more details on supporting AB 203 as it returns next year. In the meantime, we hope you will join our efforts to ensure that AB 976 is successful in the Senate.

A number of non-coastal water bills remain active as well. Six out of seven drinking water bills passed out of the Assembly: [AB 21](#) (Alejo), [AB 30](#) (Perea), [AB 69](#) (Perea), [AB 115](#) (Perea), [AB 145](#) (Rendon-Perea), and [AB 467](#) (Stone). PCL thanks and supports all of the legislators and organizations that have been working diligently on this environmental justice issue. Water conservation and recycling are also notable topics for the legislature this year. Recycling-related bills [AB 803](#) (Gomez), [AB 1200](#) (Levine), and [SB 322](#) (Hueso) all continue forward, as does water sub-metering bill [SB 750](#) (Wolk).

The Scoop on Other Environmental Bills

While PCL has been primarily working on CEQA and water legislation, many other key environmental bills have also been making their way through the halls of the Capitol. Several fracking bills have now been folded into a single bill, [AB 7](#) (Wieckowski), which was then granted more time to get out of the Assembly. Two bills to protect California's majestic cats are moving forward: [AB 1213](#) (Bloom) will limit trapping of bobcats, and [SB 132](#) (Hill) will allow non-lethal means to be used to remove mountain lions from populated areas. Unfortunately, a slate of bills seeking to phase out or reduce single-use plastic bags to help reduce marine debris are not moving forward; perhaps most disappointing was [SB 405](#) (Padilla) which [failed to get out of the Senate](#) by just a couple votes. Many groups are committed to continue pursuing statewide bag legislation while also building the network of local jurisdictions that are eliminating plastic bags and polystyrene containers.

California's Largest Ever Dam Removal Set to Break Ground this Summer!

PCL Instrumental in Initiating Project Nearly a Decade Ago

Ninety-two years after the San Clemente Dam was built – and nearly a decade after the Planning and Conservation League (PCL) Foundation helped initiate an effort to get it removed - the end of the 106-foot-high structure is finally in sight!

With the final permit for the dam removal approved by the Monterey County Planning Commission on May 8th, groundbreaking on the historic project is scheduled to begin this summer. The \$83 million project, which includes rerouting of the Carmel River into San Clemente Creek, will help safeguard over 1,500 homes and buildings that are currently at risk if the dam fails; will provide over 900 much-needed jobs in the region; and will help reestablish ecological continuity in the area that will protect hundreds of area species, such as the steelhead trout and the California red-legged frog.

To recognize this historic milestone, the PCL Foundation is hosting a community celebration on Thursday, June 20 to recognize the many nonprofit, agency, elected and business partners who came together to make California's largest-ever dam removal a reality. Contact Michelle Oyewole at moyewole@pcl.org or 916-822-5636 for more information on the event.

PCL Looks to Grow our League

Since it was formed, the Planning and Conservation *League* has been just that – a league of groups working together on policies to better California's environment. When PCL was established in 1965, there was no unified voice for conservation efforts in the Capitol; we played a pivotal role representing local organizations and communities that would otherwise have been left out of the dialogue. Even today, with an increased environmental presence in Sacramento, local groups are often disengaged and overlooked in the policy-setting debate. In response, PCL is looking to dramatically grow, diversify and revitalize our League membership. It is only by having a robust and engaged membership that PCL will be as effective as possible in impacting public policy at the state level. A vital PCL will also magnify the power of local organizations and communities that are still underrepresented in Sacramento. Simply put, League partners are our eyes and ears on the ground, while PCL is their voice in the Capitol.

Recognizing today's economic realities, we have updated our organizational membership dues (paid annually) to a sliding scale based on budget size. For as low as \$250, an organization can now become a League organizational member. We have also revised member benefits to ensure that joining is worthwhile, and we'll be coordinating a League meeting in Fall to get feedback on our legislative and campaign priorities going into 2014.

For more information or to join the League, please [visit here](#), or contact Abigail Okrent at aokrent@pcl.org or 916-822-5633.

Cap and Trade revenue gets “borrowed”

Months of suggestions, jostling, and alliance creation by various environmental organizations for thoughtful investment of cap and trade revenue appeared for naught when Governor Brown announced his plan to borrow \$500 million from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund as [a loan to the general fund](#). Under the guidance of AB 32 and the laws passed for its implementation, revenue generated from the cap and trade auctions must be invested with the goal of reducing greenhouse gases. For now it looks like the Governor is not backing down, but \$100 million from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund has been wrangled back to go directly into greenhouse gas reducing investments.

PCL Welcomes Lorena Gonzalez to the Assembly

Congratulations to former PCL Board member [Lorena Gonzalez](#) for her election to the 80th Assembly District comprising portions of Chula Vista, National City and the City of San Diego. Ms. Gonzalez, who was sworn in on May 28, was elected by a resounding 73-27 margin in a [special election](#) to fill the seat formerly held by Ben Hueso, who moved to the Senate to replace Juan Vargas who was elected to Congress. In addition to her background as a labor leader in San Diego County, Assemblymember Gonzalez brings a strong environmental background and will be joining the Assembly Water, Parks and

Wildlife Committee.



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