



Legislative Bulletin

DRAFT

A Publication of the County Executive Office/Legislative Affairs

August 25, 2026
Item No. 23

County of Orange Positions on Proposed Legislation

The Legislative Bulletin provides the Board of Supervisors with analyses of measures pending in Sacramento and Washington that are of interest to the County. Staff provides recommended positions that fall within the range of policies established by the Board. According to the County of Orange Legislative Affairs Program Guidelines adopted by the Board of Supervisors on January 25, 2022, staff recommendations for formal County positions on legislation will be agendized and presented in this document for Board action at regular Board of Supervisors meetings. When the Board takes formal action on a piece of legislation, the CEO will direct the County's legislative advocates to promote the individual bills as approved by the Board. The Legislative Bulletin also provides the Board of Supervisors with informative updates on State and Federal issues.

The 2025-2026 Legislative Platform was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on November 19, 2024.

On August 25, 2026, the Board of Supervisors will consider the following actions:

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. **Receive and File Legislative Bulletin**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. **County Position Matrix: CEO-LA**
2. **Sacramento Legislative Report**
3. **Washington DC Legislative Report**

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. County Position Matrix: CEO-LA

The tables below list the bills the Board of Supervisors has taken positions on in the 2025-26 legislative session.

State Legislation

As of Thursday, August 20, 2026

Measure	Author	Topic	Date of Board Action	Board Position	Status
<u>AB 28</u>	<u>Schiavo</u>	Solid waste landfills: subsurface temperatures.	06/24/2025	Oppose	08/04/2026 - Senate Third Reading
<u>AB 35</u>	<u>Alvarez</u>	Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024: Administrative Procedure Act: exemption: program guidelines and selection criteria.	03/24/2026	Support	07/16/2026 - Chaptered
<u>AB 282</u>	<u>Pellerin</u>	Discrimination: housing: source of income.	05/06/2025	Support	09/11/2025 - 2 Year
<u>AB 283</u>	<u>Haney</u>	In-Home Supportive Services Employer-Employee Relations Act.	08/26/2025	Support if Amended	09/11/2025 - 2 Year
<u>AB 760</u>	<u>Ta</u>	Income taxes: exclusions: 2026 Garden Grove chemical leak.	06/23/2026	Support	08/19/2026 - Senate Third Reading
<u>AB 762</u>	<u>Irwin</u>	Disposable, battery-embedded vapor inhalation device: prohibition and penalties.	04/22/2025	Support	08/13/2026 - Senate Third Reading
<u>AB 1088</u>	<u>Bains</u>	Public health: kratom.	06/24/2025	Support	07/01/2026 - Dead
<u>AB 1567</u>	<u>Ta</u>	General plan: annual report: congregate and residential care for the elderly.	03/24/2026	Support	08/19/2026 - Senate Second Reading
<u>AB 1602</u>	<u>Rubio, Blanca</u>	Foster youth: disaster aid assistance.	03/24/2026	Support	08/13/2026 - Senate Third Reading
<u>AB 1617</u>	<u>Alanis</u>	Household hazardous waste: reporting.	08/11/2026	Support	08/03/2026 - Senate Third Reading
<u>AB 1619</u>	<u>Valencia</u>	Public employees' retirement: administration.	05/19/2026	Support	08/19/2026 - Assembly Enrollment
<u>AB 1638</u>	<u>Ta</u>	County veterans service officers: additional resources.	04/14/2026	Support	05/14/2026 - Dead
<u>AB 1830</u>	<u>Petrie-Norris</u>	Ignition interlock devices.	03/24/2026	Support	08/19/2026 - Senate Third Reading
<u>AB 1893</u>	<u>Gallagher</u>	Wildfire prevention: local assistance grant program: eligible activities.	04/28/2026	Support	05/14/2026 - Dead

<u>AB 2002</u>	<u>Solache</u>	Local government assistance: Regional Early Action Planning Fund.	04/28/2026	Support	08/14/2026 - Dead
<u>AB 2051</u>	<u>Wicks</u>	Public resources: Coastal Resilience Permitting Working Group.	08/11/2026	Support	08/17/2026 - Senate Third Reading
<u>AB 2076</u>	<u>Lowenthal</u>	The Parent's Accountability and Child Protection Act: online marketplaces: nitrous oxide.	03/24/2026	Support	08/13/2026 - Senate Third Reading
<u>AB 2194</u>	<u>Valencia</u>	Medi-Cal: special commissions.	06/23/2026	No Position	08/19/2026 - Senate Second Reading
<u>AB 2309</u>	<u>Bains</u>	CalFresh Protection Act.	04/14/2026	Support	05/06/2026 - Assembly Appr. Suspense File
<u>AB 2320</u>	<u>Ta</u>	Multifamily Housing Program: Homekey: adaptive reuse.	12/16/2025	Sponsor	08/19/2026 - Assembly Concurrence
<u>AB 2373</u>	<u>Dixon</u>	The California Coastal Act: local coastal program: sea level rise plan: neighborhood-scale adaptation approach.	04/14/2026	Support	05/14/2026 - Dead
<u>AB 2513</u>	<u>Petrie-Norris</u>	Wildfire: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program: local assistance grant program: regional landscape grants.	03/24/2026	Support	08/13/2026 - Senate Third Reading
<u>AB 2562</u>	<u>Dixon</u>	Alcohol or other drug recovery and treatment programs and facilities: suicide prevention.	04/14/2026	Support	08/10/2026 - Senate Third Reading
<u>AB 2614</u>	<u>Dixon</u>	Public health: Body Brokering and Patient Referral Integrity Act.	04/14/2026	Support	04/23/2026 - Dead
<u>SB 28</u>	<u>Umberg</u>	Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) court program.	08/11/2026	Oppose	08/14/2026 - Dead
<u>SB 296</u>	<u>Archuleta</u>	Property taxation: exemption: disabled veteran homeowners.	03/25/2025	Support	08/19/2026 - Senate Concurrence
<u>SB 329</u>	<u>Blakespear</u>	Alcohol and drug recovery: licensed treatment facilities and certified programs: investigations.	03/25/2025	Support	08/17/2026 - Assembly Third Reading
<u>SB 417</u>	<u>Limón</u>	The Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2026.	04/28/2026	Support if Amended	06/25/2026 - Chaptered
<u>SB 577</u>	<u>Laird</u>	State Government.	08/25/2025	Support	09/11/2025 - 2 Year
<u>SB 758</u>	<u>Umberg</u>	Public health: nitrous oxide.	01/13/2026	Sponsor	08/17/2026 - Assembly Third Reading
<u>SB 888</u>	<u>Seyarto</u>	Property taxation: disabled veterans' exemption: household income.	03/24/2026	Support	08/05/2026 - Assembly Appr. Suspense File
<u>SB 893</u>	<u>Seyarto</u>	State parks: facilities pass: Gold Star Family members.	04/14/2026	Support	05/14/2026 - Dead

<u>SB 907</u>	<u>Archuleta</u>	Driving under the influence and other driving offenses: comprehensive reform.	03/24/2026	Support	08/13/2026 - Assembly Third Reading
<u>SB 936</u>	<u>Blakespear</u>	Nitrous oxide: sales.	12/16/2025	Sponsor	08/13/2026 - Assembly Third Reading
<u>SB 1040</u>	<u>Choi</u>	Veterans Cemetery Maintenance-Endowment Match Act.	04/14/2026	Support	05/14/2026 - Dead
<u>SB 1167</u>	<u>Blakespear</u>	Vehicles: electric bicycles.	04/28/2026	Support	08/13/2026 - Assembly Third Reading
<u>SB 1310</u>	<u>Choi</u>	Voter registration: prospective jurors.	12/16/2025	Sponsor	04/23/2026 - Dead
<u>SB 1314</u>	<u>Menjivar</u>	Cigarette or tobacco product retailers: new retail locations and sale of nitrous oxide.	03/24/2026	Support	08/14/2026 - Dead

Federal Legislation

As of Thursday, August 20, 2026

Measure	Author	Topic	Date of Board Action	Board Position	Status
<u>H.R. 965</u>	<u>Sherman</u>	Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act	05/20/2025	Support	Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
<u>H.R. 1012</u>	<u>Levin</u>	Spent Fuel Prioritization Act of 2025	05/20/2025	Support	House Committee on Energy and Commerce
<u>H.R. 2483</u>	<u>Guthrie</u>	SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act of 2025	06/24/2025	Support	Became Law
<u>H.R. 5462</u>	<u>Goldman</u>	The Michelle Alyssa Go Act	03/24/2026	Support	House Committee on Energy and Commerce
<u>H.R. 8023</u>	<u>Sanchez</u>	The Child Care Supply Tax Credit Act.	05/19/2026	Support	House Committee on Ways and Means
<u>S. 1462</u>	<u>Curtis</u>	Fix Our Forests Act	09/23/2025	Support	Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
<u>S. 2212</u>	<u>Padilla</u>	Visible Identification Standards for Immigration-Based Law Enforcement (VISIBLE) Act of 2025	08/26/2025	Support	Senate Committee on the Judiciary

 Highlighted sections symbolize a status change.

2. Sacramento Legislative Report

Prepared by Precision Advocacy Group LLC

The legislature has entered the final stretch of the 2025-26 legislative session following completion of the final Appropriations Committee suspense hearings. With fiscal committee decisions now behind them, lawmakers are focused primarily on floor sessions, considering hundreds of remaining measures as well as bills returning to their house of origin for concurrence in amendments. All measures must clear the legislature by the August 31 adjournment deadline, after which the governor will have until September 30 to sign or veto legislation sent to his desk.

At the same time, significant policy and budget negotiations remain underway outside of the regular bill process. Legislative leaders and the administration continue discussions on a broad wildfire, utility liability, insurance, and ratepayer affordability package, while lawmakers are also working through unresolved budget issues involving Proposition 4 climate bond funding, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, health and human services, and other end-of-session priorities. With little time remaining, the coming days are expected to be dominated by fast-moving negotiations, floor amendments, and final decisions on measures and budget proposals that could have significant implications for counties and other local governments.

This report highlights several developments of particular relevance to Orange County, including recent legislative hearings on military readiness and veteran services and the LOSSAN Rail Corridor.

Military Readiness and Veteran Services

On August 12, the Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, chaired by Senator Bob Archuleta (D-Pico Rivera), held an informational hearing focused on California's military readiness and the state's ability to support service members, veterans, and military families. The hearing examined the continuum from active-duty service through transition to civilian life, with particular attention to housing affordability, childcare, military spouse employment, access to earned benefits, veteran employment, and the role of state and local governments. Archuleta emphasized that military readiness is closely connected to quality of life and that the state should identify practical legislative and interagency actions to strengthen existing programs and partnerships.

County Veteran Service Officers Identified as Critical Front Line. Of particular relevance to Orange County, a substantial portion of the hearing focused on County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs) and the increasingly important role counties play after service members leave the military. CalVet described CVSOs as the closest and most personal point of contact for many veterans and families, helping them navigate complex federal and state benefit systems and connecting them with services in their communities. In 2025, CVSOs statewide had more than 460,000 interactions with veterans and family members, and during fiscal year 2024-25 they filed more than 316,000 claims that generated over \$680 million in new or increased federal benefits. CVSOs and CalVet also processed more than 27,000 college tuition fee waivers for veteran dependents, providing more than \$200 million in higher education savings.

The testimony reinforces the importance of Orange County's Veterans Service Office not simply as a benefits-processing operation, but as an entry point into a broader network of housing, health, behavioral health, education, employment, and other county and community services. Committee testimony stressed that veterans ultimately transition back into communities, rather than into state or federal institutions, making counties a central component of successful reintegration.

Concern that State Funding Has Not Kept Pace with County Workload. Jim Zenner, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and a representative of the California Association of County Veteran Service Officers, told the committee that state funding for

CVSOs has not kept pace with their workload. He characterized [AB 2219](#) as a positive step related to CVSO accreditation and accountability but argued that sustained state investment in county offices is necessary to ensure veterans receive benefits and community-based services. AB 2219 is currently awaiting a full vote of the Senate and would modernize and standardize the CVSO program by requiring timely vacancy appointments, CalVet accreditation and training standards, improved data collection, a statewide work queue, a service capacity and performance framework, and a statewide digital survey to measure veteran feedback on CVSO services.

Proposal to Expand Peer-Based Veteran Services Statewide. Zenner urged the state to build upon Los Angeles County's Veteran Peer Access Network by establishing a statewide framework that combines trained veteran peers with professional CVSO services. His recommendations included establishing a CalVet-led task force; providing targeted state funding, potentially through a veteran-specific allocation of Behavioral Health Services Act funding; creating a veteran-specific peer certification; and establishing a separate CVSO workload category that recognizes and incentivizes outreach to transitioning service members, their families, reservists, and National Guard members.

The goal is to intervene earlier, before veterans experience homelessness, justice involvement, unemployment, underemployment, or behavioral health crises. Los Angeles County reported that its locally funded peer model uses veterans working through community-based organizations to help other veterans navigate housing, employment, crisis services, and other needs. Combined with CVSO and VA partnerships, the program helped house more than 2,100 veterans in Greater Los Angeles during the previous year. Witnesses argued that this "no wrong door" approach could be replicated statewide. This proposal could be particularly relevant to Orange County as the state considers how Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) resources and county behavioral health systems can be better coordinated with veteran services.

CalVet Emphasizes Benefits Outreach and Local Partnerships. CalVet highlighted its California Transition Assistance Program (CalTAP), which complements the federal military transition program by providing California-specific information concerning benefits, education, employment, housing, legal assistance, entrepreneurship, and other services. CalVet also operates regional Local Interagency Network Coordinators that connect veterans with community resources. The department emphasized that its effectiveness depends heavily on partnerships with counties, veteran service organizations, nonprofits, and federal agencies.

CalVet also reported that \$1.27 million in BHSA grant funding was awarded to 14 counties in 2025-26, resulting in services for more than 7,000 veterans and family members, including homeless veterans, justice-involved veterans, student veterans, seniors, and individuals needing legal assistance. The testimony suggests an opportunity for counties to advocate for a larger and more sustained veteran component within future behavioral health funding.

Housing and Affordability are Affecting Both Readiness and Veteran Retention. Military representatives repeatedly identified California's housing costs as a barrier to retaining both active-duty personnel and veterans. Testimony from Travis Air Force Base described full on-base housing, long waiting lists, and local housing costs that frequently exceed military housing allowances. The witness encouraged state policies that could incentivize property owners to rent or sell to military families or otherwise improve affordability near installations.

CalVet also highlighted the CalVet Home Loan Program and federal VA home loan benefits. The state program provides veteran-specific financing supported through state bonds and can include home insurance, while veterans may also be able to refinance an existing home through veteran loan programs.

Child Care and Military Spouse Employment Viewed as Readiness Issues. Military representatives repeatedly told the committee that childcare is no longer simply a family quality-of-life

issue, but directly affects deployment, training, recruitment, and retention. Witnesses also emphasized employment barriers faced by military spouses who repeatedly relocate across state lines. The Defense State Liaison Office reported that 34% of military spouses work in licensed occupations, meaning state licensing requirements can delay employment following a move. The witness suggested expanding occupational licensing compacts and potentially adding active-duty military spouses to California's public-sector employment preference system without displacing veterans currently receiving preference.

Keeping Veterans in California Emerges as a Broader Economic Priority. The final panel focused on translating military experience into civilian employment and reducing the number of veterans who leave California after completing their service. Rear Admiral David Boone argued that high housing costs and taxation of military retirement income make California less competitive with other states. He testified that California's veteran workforce has declined substantially over the past two decades and noted that federal VA expenditures flowing into California totaled nearly \$26 billion in 2024-25, meaning veteran outmigration also represents a loss of federal economic activity.

Work for Warriors described efforts to match veterans, reservists, National Guard members, military families, and even active-duty personnel with civilian jobs by translating military occupational skills into qualifications employers understand. Committee discussion encouraged greater coordination with EDD. Manufacturing and aerospace employers similarly emphasized the value of veteran employees; Lockheed Martin testified that one in five of its approximately 123,000 employees is a veteran, reservist, or military spouse.

Senate LOSSAN Rail Informational Hearing and SB 1098 Report

The Senate Transportation Subcommittee on LOSSAN Rail Corridor Resiliency held an informational hearing last week to review the recently released SB 1098 LOSSAN Rail Corridor Working Group Final Report and its recommendations for strengthening the corridor. The August 12 hearing was chaired by Senator Catherine Blakespear and included two panels – one presenting the report and its recommendations and a second providing the perspective of the corridor's operating agencies.

SB 1098 (Chapter 777, Statutes of 2024) directed the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to convene a Los Angeles–San Diego–San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Working Group, including representatives from rail infrastructure owners; passenger and freight rail operators; regional transportation and planning agencies; stakeholder organizations representing business, community, environmental, labor, transportation, and civic interests; and relevant state agencies with regulatory and rail oversight responsibilities. The Working Group was tasked with developing consensus recommendations on strategies to strengthen coordination, management, and performance of passenger rail services throughout the 351-mile corridor.

The final report addresses four broad policy areas: service coordination and reducing disruptions; alternative management and operating structures; changes to state laws, rules, and funding; and coordination with the federal Corridor Identification and Development Program (CIDP). The recommendations reflect areas where Working Group participants were able to reach consensus, an important limitation that became a recurring topic during the hearing.

Key findings and recommendations of the SB 1098 report include:

- Establishing a corridor-wide asset management plan and written fleet strategy that align equipment, facilities, infrastructure needs, and available funding.
- Reviewing state transportation programs for opportunities to support State of Good Repair (SGR) rail projects and incorporating SGR eligibility considerations emphasizing safety, reliability, and maintenance of existing infrastructure.
- Formalizing a cooperative agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) among CalSTA, the LOSSAN Corridor, and the California Coastal Commission to identify

opportunities to streamline delivery of rail projects in the coastal zone. The report also calls for a corridor-wide response playbook defining roles, decision thresholds, and timelines when critical bluff instability or other coastal emergencies occur.

- Establishing a Vision Zero framework for rail safety along the LOSSAN Corridor, supported by unified safety data and a data-driven pipeline of safety investments.
- Aligning state grant programs with the federal CIDP project development pipeline to strengthen the corridor's competitiveness for federal capital funding.
- Streamlining California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review for passenger rail projects by establishing agency comment timelines and conflict-resolution procedures for multi-jurisdictional projects, as well as considering a permanent extension of the expedited judicial review provisions enacted through SB 149.
- Modernizing the Transportation Development Act (TDA), including replacing the farebox recovery ratio penalty with updated performance measures more reflective of current transit conditions.
- Improving operating coordination by using the Rail Leadership Group for strategic leadership and the LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee as a staff-level forum; better aligning operator schedule changes; regularly updating the corridor's schedule optimization study; and designating a primary liaison to negotiate with host freight railroads. The Working Group discussed more substantial governance changes, including a formal corridor operating review process and a permanent SB 1098 governing body, but did not reach consensus on those proposals.

SB 1098 Report Presentation. The first panel included Anthony Serna, Deputy Secretary for Rail and Transit at CalSTA; Peter Allen, Director of Statewide Transportation, Access and Mobility at the California Coastal Commission; and Donna DeMartino, Chair of the Mineta Institute.

Mr. Serna acknowledged the significant vulnerabilities facing LOSSAN from extreme weather events and coastal instability but highlighted recent signs of progress. He noted that Pacific Surfliner service has returned to pre-pandemic service levels and that recent state investments have helped produce substantial ridership growth. He characterized the SB 1098 recommendations as a foundation for additional action rather than a finished product. Importantly, he emphasized that SB 1098 required the Working Group to develop consensus-driven recommendations. That requirement helped produce agreement among a diverse set of corridor interests, but it also limited the Working Group's ability to recommend more substantial changes to corridor governance and leadership. The final report itself notes several governance proposals that were discussed but could not achieve consensus.

In her testimony, Ms. DeMartino offered two rider-focused recommendations that were not specifically included in the report. First, she called for improved and more consistent wayfinding and signage across the corridor's 41 stations. She noted that signage can be inconsistent, outdated, unclear, or duplicated, particularly at stations served by multiple operators, creating confusion and an unnecessary barrier for potential riders. She suggested that preparations for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games could provide an opportunity to establish a more consistent, long-term approach to station wayfinding.

Ms. DeMartino also highlighted the need for agencies to improve their response following fatalities and trespasser strikes. While recognizing the tragic circumstances involved, she noted that these incidents can shut down multiple tracks and leave passengers stranded for hours. She encouraged closer coordination among railroads, transit police, local law enforcement, and coroners' offices so incidents can be addressed appropriately while restoring service as quickly as circumstances allow. She framed both recommendations around the need to put the passenger experience at the center of corridor management.

Mr. Allen focused heavily on the environmental and infrastructure challenges created by coastal erosion and sea-level rise. Drawing on experience with coastal highways, he noted that Caltrans had

spent many tens of millions of dollars over decades on revetments, walls, and emergency repairs at vulnerable coastal locations while erosion continued to accelerate. In those examples, only long-term adaptation ultimately provided reliable infrastructure protection. He argued that LOSSAN faces a similar challenge: emergency repairs may be necessary in the short term, but they cannot substitute for durable, long-term adaptation.

The Coastal Commission supports development of an MOU with CalSTA and corridor agencies, but Mr. Allen stressed that such an agreement should not simply create a fast track for additional shoreline armoring. Instead, it should establish clearer procedures, improve emergency coordination, proactively address mitigation requirements, and help agencies work together on long-term solutions. The Commission's presentation specifically emphasized that the MOU should bring the relevant entities together to pursue long-term solutions while maintaining appropriate coastal protections.

The Perspective of Operating Agencies. The second panel included Darren M. Kettle, Chief Executive Officer of Metrolink; Shawn M. Donaghy, Chief Executive Officer of NCTD; and Jason Jewell, Managing Director of the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency.

Mr. Kettle testified that successful implementation of many of the report's recommendations ultimately depends on sustainable operating funding. He argued that a transformational vision for passenger rail cannot be achieved while agencies remain focused on managing recurring deficits and potential service cuts. Metrolink alone faces a projected \$35 million operating deficit for fiscal year 2026-27, and Kettle said that absent additional funding, the agency could be forced to reduce the average number of trains operated systemwide by roughly 30% or more. He emphasized the contradiction of discussing major service reductions while Southern California is preparing for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

NCTD faces similar longer-term pressures. Its comments on the SB 1098 report state that operating expenses are expected to exceed available funding beginning in fiscal year 2028, creating cumulative operating shortfalls through fiscal year 2031. NCTD is examining options ranging from shifting capital resources to operations to identifying additional state and federal revenue but warned that service reductions may ultimately be necessary without additional funding.

Mr. Jewell highlighted the significant improvement in Pacific Surfliner performance following restoration and expansion of service. The 11th, 12th, and 13th Los Angeles–San Diego roundtrips have now been restored, supported in large part by a three-year state budget augmentation and a first-ever LOSSAN Agency federal Restoration and Enhancement Grant of more than \$27 million.

For fiscal year 2026, Pacific Surfliner ridership reached approximately 2.65 million passengers, or roughly 96% of fiscal year 2019 levels, and was 31% higher than fiscal year 2025. More recent performance was even stronger: between January and June 2026, ridership reached more than 106% of comparable pre-pandemic levels, with record monthly ridership and revenue reported during the summer. Farebox recovery also increased from approximately 58% in fiscal year 2025 to 63% in FY 2026.

Jewell stressed that the Pacific Surfliner's looming funding problem is therefore structural rather than the result of weak performance. The temporary Public Transportation Account augmentation expires at the end of fiscal year 2026-27. Beginning in fiscal year 2028, statewide support for state-supported intercity passenger rail would decline by more than \$70 million annually and revert to approximately fiscal year 2015 funding levels unless the state acts. LOSSAN has warned that the reduction would likely result in significant Pacific Surfliner service cuts and could jeopardize the federal funding tied to restoration of the 11th, 12th, and 13th roundtrips.

Governance and Leadership Remain Unresolved. During both panels, Senator Blakespear repeatedly returned to what she views as the report's most significant unresolved issue: who is actually responsible for leading the corridor and making decisions when its many agencies disagree.

Blakespear noted that the report itself recognizes that LOSSAN lacks a decision-making body capable of resolving conflicts and providing corridor-wide strategic direction. She argued that the corridor also lacks a sufficiently strong unifying vision and that individual agencies can be driven by local or “parochial” interests rather than what is best for the entire 351-mile system. She identified CalSTA and the LOSSAN Rail Corridor Agency as the two entities most naturally positioned to provide stronger leadership and pressed witnesses on whether the current reliance on voluntary coordination would produce materially different results.

That concern is particularly significant because infrastructure ownership and operating responsibility are fragmented. OCTA owns the LOSSAN right-of-way between San Clemente and Fullerton; LA Metro owns the segment between Los Angeles Union Station and Chatsworth; VCTC owns the segment between Chatsworth and Moorpark; and additional portions are owned or controlled by NCTD, the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System, Union Pacific, and BNSF.

Kettle suggested that one potential structural alternative would be full state ownership of the corridor segments currently owned by Metrolink's member transportation agencies, which would consolidate responsibility, liability, and infrastructure stewardship at the state level. He characterized the idea as exploratory rather than a formal proposal. Donaghy generally supported the concept behind Kettle's comments, noting that fragmented ownership and political boundaries can complicate both corridor management and efforts to secure federal funding. He suggested that having one agency or an experienced rail operator responsible for a corridor-wide decision-making framework could provide greater consistency.

Mr. Jewell acknowledged the limits of the LOSSAN Agency's current authority. While LOSSAN manages the Pacific Surfliner and represents the broadest coalition of corridor stakeholders, it does not have management authority over Metrolink, NCTD, or the host railroads. He pointed to opportunities to strengthen the Rail Leadership Group and other existing forums, increase stakeholder engagement, and use the State Rail Plan more effectively to guide fleet, infrastructure, and funding decisions across the corridor.

Fleet Reliability and Zero-Emission Technology. The hearing also examined how equipment reliability has directly affected service levels. Kettle discussed Metrolink's fleet of 40 F125 Tier 4 locomotives, which have experienced significant mechanical problems despite being relatively new. After equipment problems forced Metrolink to reduce service earlier this year, the agency chose not to immediately restore all trains once some mechanical issues improved because its larger budget deficit made future service reductions likely. Kettle said the agency wanted to avoid giving customers “whiplash” by repeatedly increasing and reducing schedules. He also testified that the Tier 4 locomotives can cost two to three times more to maintain and operate than older Tier 2 equipment, forcing Metrolink to consider whether it makes more sense to overhaul older, more reliable locomotives.

Zero-emission equipment, particularly hydrogen, also became a significant topic. Donaghy emphasized that NCTD supports the state's transition toward zero-emission transportation but said the infrastructure and cost assumptions underlying hydrogen deployment have not yet materialized. NCTD's hydrogen bus fuel costs alone increased by nearly \$1.5 million this year, and Donaghy said additional regulatory and zero-emission-related costs are consuming resources that could otherwise support service. He cautioned that transit agencies can reach a point where environmental technology mandates unintentionally compete with the fundamental environmental benefit of keeping frequent public transit service operating.

He also described challenges securing dependable hydrogen supplies and supporting infrastructure. At one point, NCTD had 30 federally funded hydrogen buses sitting unused for roughly two and a half months because low-pressure hydrogen was unavailable, requiring the agency to retain older diesel and CNG buses as a backup. Donaghy said those experiences should inform decisions about introducing hydrogen rail vehicles and the amount of spare equipment agencies will need to maintain reliable service.

OCTA. The final report notes that the Coastal Commission has required OCTA and Metrolink to complete a Long-Term Railroad Adaptation Study by January 1, 2034, examining an alternative rail alignment outside the coastal hazard area as well as options to protect, elevate, or otherwise adapt the existing corridor through at least 2100.

In comments submitted during development of the SB 1098 report, OCTA generally supported the report's emphasis on coastal resiliency, streamlined emergency response, Coastal Commission coordination, corridor-wide asset management, and stronger interagency collaboration. However, OCTA specifically asked CalSTA to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the state, corridor owners, passenger operators, and freight railroads, noting that although OCTA owns the Orange County right-of-way, operating decisions such as service suspension and restoration are made by rail operators. OCTA also asked for stronger recommendations to streamline permitting and environmental review for projects that preserve and enhance existing rail infrastructure, particularly coastal resiliency and emergency stabilization projects.

Next Steps. In her closing remarks, Senator Blakespear made clear that she does not view publication of the SB 1098 report as the conclusion of the subcommittee's work. She said there remains a strong institutional tendency to maintain the status quo and expressed concern that the report's recommendations prioritize incremental change while remaining silent on issues that require more significant reform.

Blakespear said she intends to continue holding responsible agencies accountable, pursue stronger reforms during the next legislative session, and advocate for additional transit funding. She stressed that the legislature, passengers, and the public will be watching to see whether the recommendations translate into measurable improvements in management, planning, reliability, and passenger service.

The final report anticipates that the Working Group will continue meeting quarterly to develop implementation steps. The hearing, however, made clear that the next phase of the debate is likely to extend beyond implementation of the 39 consensus recommendations and into the more difficult questions that the Working Group was unable to resolve, particularly corridor governance, state leadership, sustainable operating funding, long-term coastal adaptation, and the division of responsibility among infrastructure owners and rail operators.

Background

- [08/12/2026 Agenda](#)
- [CalSTA Senate Bill 1098 Final Report](#)
- [CalSTA SB 1098 LOSSAN Rail Corridor Report Presentation](#)
- [California Coastal Commission Presentation](#)
- [NCTD Letter - Senate Bill 1098 Report](#)
- [LOSSAN Agency Letter](#)

Grant Opportunities

Below is a list of the latest grant opportunities released by the state. All opportunities for local jurisdictions may be found [here](#).

Application Deadline: 2/1/27 12:00

Title: [Division of Boating and Waterways Local Assistance Statewide Ramp Repair and Modification Grant Program FY27](#)

State Agency / Department: [Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

Match Funding? No

Estimated Total Funding: The funding for this grant is dependent upon future fiscal year State budgets.

Funding Method: Reimbursement(s)

Application Deadline: 2/1/27 12:00

Title: [Division of Boating and Waterways Local Assistance Boat Launching Facility Grant Program FY27](#)

State Agency / Department: [Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

Match Funding? No

Estimated Total Funding: The funding for this grant is dependent upon future fiscal year State budgets.

Funding Method: Reimbursement(s)

Application Deadline: 2/1/27 12:00

Title: [Division of Boating and Waterways Local Assistance Statewide Sign Grant Program FY27](#)

State Agency / Department: [Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

Match Funding? No

Estimated Total Funding: The funding for this grant is dependent upon future fiscal year State budgets.

Funding Method: Reimbursement(s)

Application Deadline: 2/1/27 12:00

Title: [Division of Boating and Waterways Local Assistance Statewide Non-Motorized Boat Launching Facility Grant Program FY27](#)

State Agency / Department: [Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

Match Funding? No

Estimated Total Funding: The funding for this grant is dependent upon future fiscal year State budgets.

Funding Method: Reimbursement(s)

Application Deadline: 10/9/26 17:00

Title: [FY 2027-28 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant](#)

State Agency / Department: [Department of Transportation](#)

Match Funding? 11%

Estimated Total Funding: Approximately \$17.9 million is available for Sustainable Communities grants. \$1.5 million is available for Strategic Partnerships grants. \$3 million is available for Strategic Partnerships-Transit grants.

Funding Method: Reimbursement(s)

Governor's Press Releases

Below is a list of the governor's press releases beginning August 12.

August 19: [As school begins, California launches universal Transitional Kindergarten, free meals for EVERY student and historic supports for kids](#)

August 18: [Governor Newsom secures federal disaster assistance for small businesses impacted by Boyle Heights warehouse fire](#)

August 18: [California leads in organized retail crime fight, recovers 8,500 stolen items in 9-day nationwide blitz](#)

August 17: [Governor Newsom announces \\$95 million plan to expand EV charging and hydrogen fueling across California](#)

August 17: [Governor Newsom signs legislation 8.17.2026](#)

August 17: [ICYMI: Law signed by Governor Newsom helps pave the way for the world's largest union of rideshare drivers](#)

August 14: [Governor Newsom announces appointments 8.14.2026](#)

- Yael Sheinfeld, of San Francisco, has been appointed Deputy Secretary of Communications at the California Business and Consumer Services Agency
- Kimberly Tenggardjaja, of Sacramento, has been appointed Assistant Secretary of Biodiversity and Habitat
- Kathleen Kelly Janus, of San Francisco, has been appointed to the California State University Board of Trustees
- Chaunise "Chaun" Powell, of Tracy, has been appointed to the Board of Behavioral Sciences
- Shannon Cheffet-Walsh, of San Diego, has been appointed to the Osteopathic Medical Board
- Oliver Emerson Jr., of Winchester, has been appointed to the Physician Assistant Board
- La Tosha Walden, of Lodi, has been appointed to the Physical Therapy Board of California

August 13: [Bank closes \\$236 million in bond financing for La Brea Tar Pits Reimagine Project](#)

August 13: [ICYMI: California takes historic action against data brokers](#)

August 13: [As Trump's EPA silences youth voices, California launches new Environmental Youth Council to shape our climate future](#)

August 12: [Governor Newsom and First Partner Siebel Newsom announce California State Parks' FREE Fourth Grade Pass Now Available for 2026/27 School Year](#)

3. Washington D.C. Legislative Report

Prepared by Townsend Public Affairs

The House and Senate were on August Recess, the White House remained focused on Foreign Policy Goals.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH ACTIVITY

House and Senate on Recess, Support for Senate Continuing Resolution Emerges Amongst House Republican Leaders

On August 8, the Senate passed [HR 6500](#), a trade agreement modified to become the Senate's [version](#) of the House passed Continuing Resolution, punting the deadline to fund the federal government from the end of the Fiscal Year (FY) on September 30 to December 11, after the midterm elections.

The bipartisan compromise CR also provides extended funding for the expiring 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The IIJA included the last Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act, which provides funding for highway, road, bridge, airport, seaport, and other federal infrastructure programs for the five years. The CR would also delay the publication or implementation of a White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [Proposed Rule](#) that could give the Administration significant control over federal grantmaking.

While House Republican support for the Senate-passed CR was unclear, House Rules Committee Chairwoman Virginia Foxx [suggested](#) it could be passed under expedited procedures with a 2/3rds majority when the House returns from August recess on August 31. On August 19, House Speaker Mike Johnson made a similar [statement](#) while campaigning in Pennsylvania. If Democrats agree to support the measure, it is likely to overcome any potential opposition from fiscal hawks in the Republican conference and pass. The White House issued a [Statement of Administration Policy](#) supporting the measure.

Levin Leads Letter to Interior Secretary on Energy Project Permitting

On August 18, Orange County Representative Mike Levin led a [letter](#) with House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Jared Huffman and House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Ranking Member Chellie Pingree and other members requesting a status update from the Department of the Interior (DOI) on permits for new energy projects.

According to the letter, DOI has failed to meet bimonthly reporting requirements secured by Rep. Levin in the FY26 Interior and Environment appropriations [bill](#), having missed deadlines in March, May, and July to provide permitting status updates delimited by energy type for new projects. The purpose of that language was to incentivize DOI to lift non-statutory permitting barriers slowing the construction of zero-emissions generation capacity, the letter argues DOI has demonstrated bias against new zero-emissions generating projects, specifically wind and solar, since the beginning of the President's term.

Orange County Delegation Press Releases

- Rep. Mike Levin – August 18, 2026: [Rep. Mike Levin Pushes Interior Department on Renewable Energy Permitting | U.S. Congressman Mike Levin](#)

- Rep. Lou Correa – August 17, 2026: [CORREA PRESENTS \\$1,000,000 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING TO THE CITY OF ANAHEIM FOR BOYSEN PARK IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT | U.S. Congressman Lou Correa of California](#)
- Rep. Lou Correa – August 13, 2026: [CORREA, GROTHMAN INTRODUCE PERM BACKLOG REDUCTION ACT TO ADDRESS GREEN CARD PROCESSING DELAYS | U.S. Congressman Lou Correa of California](#)
- Rep. Dave Min – August 19, 2026: [STATEMENT: Rep. Min Denounces Islamophobic Online Threats Against the Islamic Center of Irvine | Representative Dave Min](#)
- Rep. Derek Tran – August 18, 2026: [Representative Tran Introduces Legislation to Hold GKN Accountable | Representative Derek Tran](#)
- Rep. Derek Tran – August 17, 2026: [Representative Tran Issues Statement on Trump Decision to Reduce Vital U.S.-South Korea Military Exercises | Representative Derek Tran](#)
- Rep. Linda Sanchez – August 17, 2026: [54 House Democrats raise concerns over Trump administration's critical minerals agreements | Congresswoman Linda Sanchez](#)
- Sen. Alex Padilla – August 19, 2026: [Padilla, Schiff Slam Shasta County Plans to Hire Election-Denier, Urge California SOS to Conduct Maximum Oversight of Access to Sensitive Election Materials - Senator Alex Padilla](#)
- Sen. Alex Padilla – August 18, 2026: [Padilla, California Leaders Sound Alarm as Trump Administration Cuts Billions in Federal Funding - Senator Alex Padilla](#)
- Sen. Alex Padilla – August 18, 2026: [Padilla, Schiff Announce Over \\$150 Million to Upgrade Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner Route - Senator Alex Padilla](#)
- Sen. Alex Padilla – August 18, 2026: [Padilla, Schiff, San Diego Congressional Delegation Demand Answers Surrounding the Extended Deployment of USS Abraham Lincoln - Senator Alex Padilla](#)
- Sen. Alex Padilla – August 14, 2026: [Padilla, Schiff Announce Nearly \\$109 Million to Modernize California Airports - Senator Alex Padilla](#)
- Sen. Alex Padilla – August 14, 2026: [Padilla, Schiff, Senate Judiciary Democrats Press Todd Blanche on Continued Abuse of Taxpayer Funds to Reward Trump Allies, January 6 Insurrectionists - Senator Alex Padilla](#)
- Sen. Alex Padilla – August 14, 2026: [Padilla, Hirono, Democratic Colleagues Sound Alarm on New Barriers to Naturalization - Senator Alex Padilla](#)
- Sen. Alex Padilla – August 13, 2026: [Padilla, Warren, Colleagues Press Trump Administration on CMS Guidance that Could Threaten Nursing Home Residents' Right to Vote - Senator Alex Padilla](#)
- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 19, 2026: [NEWS: Sens. Schiff, Padilla Slam Shasta County Plans to Hire Election-Denier, Urge California SOS to Conduct Maximum Oversight of Access to Sensitive Election Materials](#)
- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 18, 2026: [NEWS: Sens. Schiff, Padilla, Reps. Brownley, Sherman Urge FEMA to Provide Answers on Delay to Release Millions in Federal Funding for Wildfire Emergency Preparedness Project in Los Angeles County](#)

- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 18, 2026: [ICYMI: In New Sacramento Bee Op-Ed, Sen. Schiff Calls for New Guardrails on Fraudulent AI Use, Ad Transparency in Political Campaigning](#)
- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 18, 2026: [ICYMI: Sen. Schiff Tours Rice Paddy Farm in Yuba City, Highlights 2026 Farm Bill Priorities](#)
- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 17, 2026: [NEWS: Sens. Schiff, Padilla Announce Over \\$150 Million to Upgrade Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner Route](#)
- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 17, 2026: [NEWS: Sens. Schiff, Padilla Announce Over \\$42 Million to Upgrade Amtrak's Gold Runner Route in Kern County](#)
- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 17, 2026: [NEWS: Sens. Schiff, Padilla & San Diego Congressional Delegation Demand Answers Surrounding the Extended Deployment of USS Abraham Lincoln](#)
- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 14, 2026: [NEWS: Sens. Schiff, Padilla Announce Nearly \\$109 Million to Modernize California Airports](#)
- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 14, 2026: [PHOTOS: Sen. Schiff and State Senator Mike McGuire Host 'Economy for All' Town Hall in Santa Rosa](#)
- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 14, 2026: [NEWS: Sen. Schiff Leads Senate Judiciary Democrats in Pressing Todd Blanche on Continued Abuse of Taxpayer Funds to Reward President's Allies, January 6 Insurrectionists](#)
- Sen. Adam Schiff – August 13, 2026: [NEWS: Schiff, Padilla & Congressional Democrats Demand FTA and OMB Stop Holding Blue State Infrastructure Funding Hostage](#)

Legislation Introduced by the Orange County Delegation

Bill Number	Bill Title	Introduction Date	Sponsor	Bill Description	Latest Major Action
H.R.10114	No Short Title Available.	08/17/26	Rep. Dave Min (D-CA-47)	A Bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15642 Sand Canyon Avenue in Irvine, California, as the "Mary Kageyama Nomura Post Office Building".	Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform., 08/17/26
H.R.10108	Hazardous Materials Transparency Act.	08/13/26	Rep. Derek Tran (D-CA-45)	A Bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to establish guidance governing community engagement and emergency preparedness for defense industrial facilities, and for other purposes.	Referred to the House Committee on Armed Services., 08/13/26

If you or your staff have any questions or require additional information on any of the items in this bulletin, please contact Charles Dulac at 714-834-3141.