Legislative Bulletin

DRAFT

A Publication of the County Executive Office/Legislative Affairs

December 2, 2025
Item No. 35

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 December 2, 2025, the Board of Supervisors will consider the following actions:

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. **Consider 2026 County-Sponsored Legislative Proposal(s) and provide direction on which proposal(s) to designate as County-Sponsored Legislation.**

    - **CalOptima Alternate Board Members (Attachment A)**
    - **Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) Request on Funding Equity (Attachment B)**
    - **Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Credits for Small-Scale Housing (Attachment C)**
    - **Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Authorization (Attachment D)**
    - **CalOptima Board of Directors (Attachment E)**
    - **Elections Administration (Attachment F)**
    - **Jury Commissioner Information Sharing (Attachment G)**
    - **Veterans Warm Handoff (Attachment H)**
    - **Nitrous Oxide (NOx) Sales Ban (Attachment I)**
    - **Homekey+ Project Completion Period Extension (Attachment J)**
    - **Landfill Methane Monitoring Technology Modernization (Attachment K)**

2. **Direct CEO Legislative Affairs to work with the Orange County legislative delegation to author any Board-approved legislative proposal(s).**

3. Receive and File Legislative Bulletin

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. County Position Matrix: CEO-LA

2. Sacramento Legislative Report

3. Washington DC Legislative Report

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. **Consider 2026 County-Sponsored Legislative Proposal(s) and provide direction on which proposal(s) to designate as County-Sponsored Legislation. (Attachments A-K)**

SUMMARY:

In August, CEO-LA met with county departments to solicit proposals for County-sponsored legislation for the second year of the 2025-2026 Legislative Session. Departments were asked to consider the operational or fiscal impacts of a potential bill, determine whether immediate legislative action is required, and identify the nexus to the Board's legislative priorities and/or the Legislative Platform.

In September, CEO-LA met with each Board office to discuss potential Board-requested legislative proposals. Following these meetings, CEO-LA researched and drafted ten Board-requested state legislative proposals and one Department-requested state legislative proposal for your consideration. Proposals approved by your Board will officially be designated as an "Orange County-Sponsored Bill" and CEO-LA will work with Precision Advocacy to identify a member(s) of the Orange County legislative delegation to author the proposal(s). The proposed 2026 County-sponsored legislative proposals are listed below, and write-ups can be found in Attachments A-K.

BACKGROUND:

CEO-LA is bringing these legislative proposals before the Board now to provide ample time to secure delegation authors for legislation before the Legislature reconvenes on January 5th. Delegation authors are required to submit bill language to Legislative Counsel by January 23rd, ahead of the final deadline to introduce bills on February 20th.

2026 COUNTY LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS:

- *CalOptima Alternate Board Members* (Attachment A) – Allow alternate members of the CalOptima Board of Directors to have access to confidential information, such as items discussed in closed session.

- *Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) Request on Funding Equity* (Attachment B) - Secure approval for a JLAC audit to assess the County's fiscal capacity to fulfill both state-mandated obligations and crucial local responsibilities, while receiving comparatively lower funding than other large counties. The objective of the audit is to identify and propose solutions for any financial inequities discovered during the examination.

- *Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Credits for Small-Scale Housing* (Attachment C) – Ensure local jurisdictions subject to the RHNA process are allowed to receive RHNA credits for all small-scale housing units.

- *Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Authorization* (Attachment D) – Authorize a carve out for county and city animal shelters within existing law, clarifying these public agencies may support TNR programs for felines in their jurisdictions without violating existing animal abandonment statutes.

- *CalOptima Board of Directors* (Attachment E) – Stagger the terms of the seven members of the CalOptima Board of Directors who serve four-year terms to ensure that no more than four board members' terms expire simultaneously.

- *Elections Administration* (Attachment F) - Align the standards for first-time voters in federal and non-federal elections to remove a discrepancy in current requirements, which require voter identification for certain first-time voters in a federal election but not in a non-federal election.

- *Jury Commissioner Information Sharing* (Attachment G) – Require jury commissioners to provide the Secretary of State with data regarding registered voters who report on jury questionnaires a lack of qualification for jury service due to reasons that could concurrently impact their eligibility to vote.

- *Veterans Warm Handoff* (Attachment H) – Establish a comprehensive "warm handoff" program designed to improve the reintegration process for service members transitioning from military to civilian life. This proposal aims to strengthen coordination between military discharge points and state and local providers, ensuring earlier connection to available resources and enhanced support.

- *Nitrous Oxide (NOx) Sales Ban* (Attachment I) – Fully ban the sale of NOx, except for limited authorized retailers for legitimate culinary and medical purposes.

- *Homekey+ Project Completion Period Extension* (Attachment J) - Under future Homekey+ rounds, allow longer completion periods for projects involving major demolition and rebuild, which are currently limited to twelve months, to expand eligibility to additional housing projects.

- *Landfill Methane Monitoring Technology Modernization* (Attachment K) – Allow the use of alternative methane monitoring technologies, including methane detecting drones and other remote sensing systems, to satisfy compliance obligations, and establish performance-based criteria for the use of these advanced emissions monitoring technologies.

2. **Direct CEO Legislative Affairs to work with the Orange County legislative delegation to author any Board-approved legislative proposal(s).**

   Proposals approved by your Board will officially be designated as an "Orange County-Sponsored Bill" and CEO-LA will work with Precision Advocacy to identify a member(s) of the Orange County legislative delegation to author the proposal(s).

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, November 20, 2025*

Bill No.	Author	Subject	Position	Date of Board Action	Status
AB 28	Schiavo	Solid Waste Landfills: subsurface temperatures.	**Oppose**	6.24.25	2-Year Bill
AB 70	Aguiar-Curry	Solid Waste: Organic Waste Diversion: Biomethane.	**Support**	6.24.25	Chaptered
AB 81	Ta	Veterans: Mental Health	**Support**	3.25.25	Vetoed
AB 91	Harabedian	State and local agencies: demographic data	**Support**	4.22.25	Chaptered
AB 226	Calderon	California FAIR Plan Association	**Support**	4.08.25	Chaptered
AB 282	Pellerin	Discrimination: housing: source of income.	**Support**	5.06.25	2-Year Bill
AB 283	Haney	In-Home Supportive Services Employer-Employee Relations Act	**Support if amended**	8.26.25	2-Year Bill
AB 339	Ortega	Local public employee organizations: notice requirements	**Oppose**	4.22.25	Chaptered
AB 349	Dixon	Foster care supplement	**Support**	4.08.25	Chaptered
AB 370	Carrillo	California Public Records Act: cyberattacks	**Support**	4.22.25	Chaptered
AB 394	Wilson	Crimes: public transportation providers	**Support**	3.25.25	Chaptered
AB 424	Davies	Alcohol and other drug programs: complaints	**Support**	3.25.25	Chaptered
AB 462	Lowenthal	Land use: coastal development permits: accessory dwelling units	**Support**	4.08.25	Chaptered
AB 492	Valencia	Alcohol and drug programs: licensing	**Support**	3.25.25	Chaptered
AB 571	Quirk-Silva	California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: Gypsum Canyon Veterans Cemetery	**Co-Sponsor**	2.25.25	Chaptered
AB 607	Rodriguez	CalWORKs: Home Visiting Program.	**Support**	6.24.25	Chaptered
AB 615	Davies	Power facilities: emergency response and action plan	**Support**	3.25.25	Vetoed
AB 689	Rubio	Foster Youth: Disaster aid assistance.	**Support**	6.24.25	Vetoed
AB 1288	Addis	Registered environmental health specialists	**Support**	4.22.25	Chaptered
AB 1356	Dixon	Alcohol and other drug programs	**Support**	3.25.25	Chaptered
AB 1387	Quirk-Silva	Mental health multidisciplinary personnel team.	**Support**	5.06.25	Vetoed
SB 71	Wiener	California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions: transit projects	**Support**	3.25.25	Chaptered
SB 283	Laird	Energy storage systems	**Support**	4.08.25	Chaptered

SB 346	Durazo	Local Agencies: Transit Occupancy Taxes: Short-Term Rental Facilitator.	**Support**	6.24.25	Chaptered
SB 577	Laird	State Government	**Support**	8.26.25	2-Year Bill
SB 634	Pérez	Local government: homelessness	**Oppose**	5.06.25	Chaptered

Federal Legislation *As of Thursday, November 20, 2025*

Bill No.	Author	Subject	Position	Date of Board Action	Status
H.R. 965	Sherman	Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act	**Support**	5.20.25	Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
H.R. 1012	Levin	Spent Fuel Prioritization Act of 2025	**Support**	5.20.25	House Committee on Energy and Commerce
H.R. 2483	Guthrie	SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act of 2025	**Support**	6.24.25	Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
S. 1462	Curtis	Fix Our Forests Act	**Support**	9.23.25	Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
S. 2212	Padilla	Visible Identification Standards for Immigration-Based Law Enforcement (VISIBLE) Act of 2025	**Support**	8.26.25	Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Highlighted sections symbolize a status change.

2. **Sacramento Legislative Report**

Prepared by Precision Advocacy Group LLC

Legislative Analyst's Office 2026-27 Fiscal Outlook

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released its Fiscal Outlook for 2026-27 on November 19, along with a separate Medi-Cal fiscal outlook outlined in the next section of this report. The annual outlook provides the legislature with independent estimates and analysis of the state's General Fund budget condition based on current state and federal law and policy. It serves as a baseline for the 2026-27 budget process, assessing spending and revenues assuming no new laws are enacted. This year's outlook includes estimated effects of H.R. 1: One Big Beautiful Bill Act but it avoids assumptions about future federal policy changes.

Revenues. Weak economic conditions, including high borrowing costs, new tariffs, and federal uncertainty, have led to no job growth and flat taxable spending in California. Consequently, sales and corporation tax collections are below average.

In contrast, income tax collections are surging, driven by excitement over Artificial Intelligence (AI). This AI enthusiasm has pushed the stock market (S&P 500) up 50% in two years, boosting compensation for tech workers and increasing state income tax receipts.

Despite this income tax strength, the stock market appears overheated, much like during the dot-com era. Historically high stock valuations, increased investor borrowing, and high household stock investment suggest a strong risk of a market downturn in the next couple of years.

Reflecting this risk, the LAO's forecast incorporates a small, temporary revenue upgrade that reverses in 2026-27, keeping those revenues in line with the enacted budget. This "middle-ground approach" acts as insurance against a significant stock market drop, although it will likely under-predict revenue if a downturn does not occur. The LAO continues to advise that the legislature treat any extra revenues as temporary.

Budget Problem. The state faces a growing budget problem, now projected at nearly $18 billion for 2026-27, $5 billion more than anticipated in June, continuing a three-year trend of deficits. Despite the LAO's revenue estimates being $11 billion higher across 2024-25 to 2026-27, constitutional requirements, mainly Proposition 98 (school/community college funding) and Proposition 2 (reserves/debt), absorb nearly all this gain ($10 billion+). Over 60% of the revenue increase ($7 billion) goes to Proposition 98, including formula-driven increases and a settle-up obligation from the 2025 Budget Act. Additionally, $2.8 billion is required for Proposition 2 true up reserve deposits and $600 million more for debt payments. If the 2026-27 reserve deposit isn't suspended, constitutional requirements will exceed the revenue gains.

Other program costs increase the budget problem by nearly $6 billion as compared to the 2025 budget:

- **Statewide Expenditures ($2.4 billion higher):** Costs like retiree health care, pensions, and administrative expenses are higher because the administration's anticipated savings were not included in the LAO's outlook.
- **H.R. 1 ($1.3 billion higher):** Changes to Medi-Cal ($1 billion) and CalFresh ($300 million) from H.R. 1 are expected to decrease beneficiaries but increase state costs. This estimate depends on maintaining current provider tax levels, despite recent preliminary federal guidance suggesting changes may be required starting July 2026.
- **Corrections Costs ($850 million higher):** The higher estimates reflect an ongoing imbalance between the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's costs and its budget,

due to an unaddressed gap from 2024-25 and less savings than anticipated from assumed efficiencies in the 2025-26 budget.
- **All Other Costs ($1.1 billion higher):** Includes an $800 million solutions erosion related to employee compensation changes and approximately $300 million in other costs, mainly within health and human services.

Ongoing structural deficits are projected at about $35 billion annually starting in 2027-28, larger than previous estimates. While some recent solutions, primarily in Medi-Cal, slowed spending growth (now anticipated at 4.1% on average), overall spending growth remains high. The widening gap between spending and revenue, particularly in 2027-28, is driven by factors including the ramping up of H.R. 1 costs, expiring one-time solutions (like furloughs), planned repayment of budgetary borrowing, and program expansions (childcare, foster care reform). These larger deficits are primarily due to lower-than-projected revenues since 2022-23 and the state's failure to fully adjust ongoing service levels to this reduced capacity, partly because assumed savings from operational efficiencies were overly optimistic.

LAO Comments

- **Budget Position Is Weak:** The legislature must use ongoing solutions, spending cuts and/or revenue increases, to address the larger-than-anticipated and growing structural deficit. This is critical because the problem is bigger, the estimates don't account for a recession, and most budget resilience tools are already used. If current estimates hold, the state faces a fourth consecutive year of deficits despite overall revenue growth.
- **Budget Resilience Waning:** Past deficits were solved with temporary fixes (reducing one-time spending, borrowing, using reserves, temporary revenue hikes), avoiding cuts to core programs. Now, temporary options are exhausted, over $20 billion in borrowing has been used, and reserves are halved. With larger forecasted deficits and fewer tools, California's budget is less prepared for downturns.
- **Ignoring Risks Could Create Serious Challenges Later:** Although revenues are not falling (avoiding an outright recession), ongoing solutions are vital. Continuing temporary measures, like borrowing, only defers the problem and leaves the state ill-equipped for a recession or stock market downturn. Building the budget with the LAO's forecast, which factors in potential downturns, is a step toward structural balance before a crisis.
- **Higher Revenue Unlikely to Balance Budget:** Even significantly higher revenue is unlikely to close future deficits. Due to Proposition 98 and Proposition 2, revenue improvement must be almost double the deficit size. Closing the projected out-year gaps would require an improbable $60 billion annual revenue increase above the LAO's forecast.
- **Increased Revenues Should Be Considered Temporary:** Any near-term revenue increases, likely from stock market strength, should be considered temporary. The LAO advises using any additional revenues to enhance budget stability, either by replenishing reserves or settling outstanding debts, while concurrently working towards a structurally balanced budget.

Responses to the LAO's Fiscal Outlook

Senate President pro Tempore Monique Limón: *California's economy remains steady, despite some self-inflicted economic wounds from our own federal government, including harmful tariffs, attacks on our workforce, and shortsighted federal budget actions.*

While the Legislative Analyst forecasts a budget shortfall, the upcoming January and May forecasts will also inform the Senate's work in crafting a responsible state budget that protects core programs, including education, childcare, safety net, health care, and public safety.

Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas and Assembly Committee on Budget Chair Jesse Gabriel: *Trump's cuts and tariffs are squeezing California's budget even harder. And the cautious LAO* *forecast is a reminder: Today's revenue surge won't last. We must invest limited dollars on sustainable, vital essentials — health care, food aid, housing, education. When Republican policies raise prices and fall short, Democrats will keep fighting for real affordability and lasting prosperity.*

Assembly Republican Leader Heath Flora: *While the LAO lays out the damage in plain terms, Governor Gavin Newsom and legislative Democrats are pretending none of it is their fault. They blamed the federal government in a press release meant to distract from decades of one-party budget control. The problem is their spending. Period.*

The facts aren't up for debate:

Newsom inherited a budget that had already recovered from the Great Recession, a booming stock market, and record tax revenue.

He spent through a pandemic surplus and ignored warnings during years of economic growth.

Now California's back in recession-level deficits. This time, they're self-inflicted.

California State Association of Counties (CSAC): *The LAO's report is grim, and county budget forecasts are even grimmer. The only way through this crisis is for the state to partner with counties to preserve California's safety net: Medi-Cal, CalFresh, indigent care and homelessness funding. Otherwise, the pain will hit the millions of Californians whose very survival depends on hospitals, shelters and schools.*

LAO 2026-27 Medi-Cal Fiscal Outlook

The Medi-Cal program, currently the state's largest with a nearly $200 billion budget (40% of all spending, over half from federal funds), is facing significant fiscal and policy shifts. The LAO's Medi-Cal fiscal outlook for the coming years is shaped by baseline trends, state budget solutions, and the impacts of H.R. 1.

Projected Medi-Cal spending is expected to reach $51.6 billion by 2029-30, a growth rate slower than the overall state budget. The largest driver of this growth is an estimated $12.8 billion increase in baseline spending due to higher utilization and increased provider rates, with rising senior caseloads also contributing. The state's General Fund share for Medi-Cal in 2025-26 will hit an all-time high of $44.9 billion, representing 20% of the total General Fund, up from a historical 15% due to these rising costs.

While state budget solutions enacted in 2025-26 are anticipated to offset a large part of the baseline increase (an estimated $9.3 billion), federal policy changes under H.R. 1 introduce a net cost increase of $3.2 billion. This federal effect is the result of a $5.1 billion increase from financing changes, partially mitigated by an estimated $1.9 billion saving from a projected 1.6 million reduction in caseload.

The combined impact of state and federal policy shifts means Medi-Cal spending will likely continue to rise. However, the exact timing and magnitude of this increase, which could vary by billions, remains highly uncertain. Given the state's broader fiscal challenges, the legislature will need to continue prioritizing Medi-Cal discussions.

LAO Fiscal Outlook

- General Fund spending on Medi-Cal is projected to be lower in the current year (2025-26) at $43.9 billion, a $1 billion decrease from the enacted budget.
- Baseline trends show spending initially falls in 2025-26 due to a reduction in the family and children caseload (nearly 500,000 people).

- Spending will increase steadily in subsequent years, with an average annual growth rate of 3.5%. Medi-Cal will remain around 19% of the total General Fund budget.
- After 2025-26, spending rises significantly ($11.1 billion) primarily due to annual increases in provider rates and utilization. Increased senior caseload, a higher-cost population, also contributes to net General Fund costs ($3.1 billion). An additional cost ($1.3 billion) is a General Fund backfill required by Proposition 35 (2024), which dedicates more Managed Care Organization (MCO) Tax revenue to provider rates instead of existing program costs.
- The outlook projects fewer enrollees (falling from nearly 15 million to 12 million) but higher monthly per-enrollee costs (rising from $298 to $355, a 19% increase). H.R. 1 is expected to reduce caseload, but costs continue to climb.

2025 Budget Solutions. To address the structural deficit and curb Medi-Cal spending, the legislature adopted policy changes in the 2025 budget, including tighter eligibility and benefit rules, most effective in 2026 and beyond.

The state's budget solutions yield $9.3 billion in net multiyear savings, primarily ($10.6 billion) from changes affecting adults with unsatisfactory immigration status (UIS). The state is freezing comprehensive coverage eligibility (for undocumented adults) and implementing monthly premiums (for all UIS adults ages 19-59). These measures are projected to reduce UIS comprehensive coverage enrollment by 1.5 million (64%) by 2029-30, with those individuals retaining limited Medi-Cal coverage. Other UIS-related savings include clinic payment changes and ending adult dental coverage.

Remaining ongoing savings ($2.7 billion) come from reducing pharmacy spending (ending certain weight loss drug coverage, negotiating higher rebates, and new utilization management) and reinstating an asset limit for seniors and persons with disabilities, estimated to reduce this caseload by 90,000 (4%) by 2029-30.

Ongoing savings are partially offset by the end of limited-term solutions ($4 billion), mainly due to a one-time cash loan to Medi-Cal in 2025-26 that will require General Fund coverage moving forward, and the phase-down of utilizing Proposition 35 funds to offset General Fund spending.

Overall, the ongoing solutions lower per-enrollee costs by $83 (21%) per month by 2029-30 relative to the baseline. Most solutions save money by reducing per-enrollee costs through utilization management, benefit cuts, and provider rate reductions, rather than directly reducing overall caseload (except for the asset limit). A $1 monthly per enrollee cost reduction saves an estimated $150 million to $180 million for the General Fund annually.

H.R. 1 Impacts. The state's General Fund will need to backfill $5 billion in Medi-Cal spending due to H.R. 1 federal policy changes.

The largest factor ($3.3 billion) is a substantial reduction in the state's MCO tax, expected to take effect in January 2027. This tax currently disproportionately taxes Medi-Cal enrollment ($274/month) compared to commercial enrollment ($2/month), a structure intended to maximize federal funds. H.R. 1 prohibits this disproportionality. Since Proposition 35 (2024) limits increasing the commercial rate, the state must significantly reduce the Medi-Cal rate, causing tax revenue to plummet and requiring a large General Fund backfill.

The second factor is a reduction in the Hospital Quality Assurance fee ($600 million backfill), also anticipated around January 2027. H.R. 1's proportionality rule, a new, lower revenue limit (3.5% by fiscal year 2032), and a lower payment limit (Medicare rates) will all pressure the state to reduce this fee.

Third, reduced federal cost sharing for immigrant emergency services decreases the federal match from 90% to 50% for certain undocumented adults, requiring a $1.2 billion General Fund backfill.

Finally, H.R. 1 introduces new eligibility requirements for childless adults - an 80-hour monthly community engagement mandate and more frequent 6-month eligibility determinations, which are expected to cut the childless adult caseload by 1.6 million (40%) by 2029-30. However, because this group has a high 90% federal match, the resulting state savings are limited ($1.9 billion), with most savings accruing to the federal government.

Risks and Uncertainties. Budget solutions will likely slow, but not fully offset, Medi-Cal spending growth. Without these solutions, Medi-Cal's share of state spending would rise to 23% by 2029-30, four percentage points higher than projected with the solutions. However, baseline cost increases and new costs from H.R. 1 will probably exceed the savings from state budget solutions. The ultimate size and timing of increased net spending are highly uncertain, potentially making General Fund spending billions of dollars higher or lower than projected.

The implementation timeline for H.R. 1's federal policy changes remains unclear, contingent on forthcoming federal guidance and, for provider tax changes, ranging from July 2025 to as late as 2028. Recent guidance suggests July 2026 for the MCO tax and July 2028 for other provider taxes. California might also get up to a two-year extension (until January 2029) to implement the new community engagement requirement, shifting associated disenrollment savings.

The size of the effects from state and federal policy changes also remains unpredictable. Savings are particularly sensitive to immigrant-related solutions, where small changes to assumptions yield billions in cost differences. Key unknowns include:

- **Immigrant Caseloads and Costs:** Data for people with UIS are limited, making cost projections imprecise.
- **Short- and Long-Term Effect of Freeze:** The January 2026 freeze on comprehensive coverage for undocumented adults could temporarily increase pre-freeze enrollment or depend on long-term exits.
- **Effect of Premiums:** The impact of new premiums on the undocumented population is unknown; they may be more sensitive to costs or incentivized to pay to avoid being locked out.
- Implementation of New Clinic Finance Change: This large solution's savings are at risk due to implementation hurdles, like requiring clinics to track immigration status.
- **Administrative Requirements of Reinstated Asset Limit:** Uncertainty exists around disenrollments caused by the asset limit itself and the administrative burden of demonstrating compliance.
- **Pharmacy-Related Savings:** These rely on the unpredictable prescription drug market and the state's success in negotiating rebates.
- **Community Engagement Requirement:** Since Medi-Cal is new to requiring employment, the disenrollment effect from lack of employment and administrative burden is uncertain and depends on implementation.
- **Spending on Emergency Care for Immigrants:** Volatile spending trends for emergency care for undocumented immigrants make the effect of H.R. 1's decreased federal match uncertain.
- **Flexibilities:** State choices to exempt groups from new eligibility requirements could mitigate disenrollments and associated savings.
- **Other H.R. 1 Changes:** Though four core changes are assumed to be most significant, the full fiscal effects of H.R. 1's dozens of policy changes will take years to understand. Other key changes to track include: a change in the UIS definition (impacting cost-sharing for some immigrant groups), a new $1 million home equity limit for long-term care, a prohibition on payments to certain family planning providers (e.g., Planned Parenthood), a new cost-sharing requirement for childless adults above the federal poverty level, a moratorium on new rules aimed at streamlining eligibility, and the elimination of waivers for recoupments on high Medicaid payment error rates.

The spending reductions in the 2025-26 Budget Act are projected to moderate the growth of Medi-Cal spending, which would otherwise have increased significantly. However, the exact amount of these savings is uncertain and could differ from the LAO's projections. This uncertainty is compounded by the fact that the complete fiscal and programmatic impact of H.R. 1 is still becoming clear as the federal government issues new guidance. Given these variables and the state's ongoing negative fiscal trend, the legislature will likely need to continue evaluating its Medi-Cal priorities in the near future.

UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative Report: Health and Homelessness

UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative released a new report on health and homelessness, "Toward Thriving: Understanding Health and Homelessness," based on its California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness (CASPEH). The report examines the connection between poor health and homelessness, the barriers people face in accessing care, and provides recommendations for policymakers, healthcare leaders, public health agencies, Continuum of Care leaders, and social service systems.

Summary of Findings. Not surprisingly, the study confirms that individuals with extensive life-course adversity, limited access to healthcare, and prolonged exposure to poverty and discrimination face the highest risk of poor physical health. Many enter homelessness already in poor health; and homelessness worsens health outcomes. The study found that:

- **Poor health is pervasive:** Nearly half (45%) of adults experiencing homelessness rated their health as poor or fair - four times higher than the general population.
- **Chronic disease is common:** 60% reported at least one chronic condition, and more than one in four (28%) reported two or more. Hypertension (30%), chronic lung disease (25%), and heart disease or stroke (15%) were most frequent.
- **Tobacco use is common and contributes to poor health:** 70% of adults experiencing homelessness smoke - six times the national rate.
- **Physical limitations are widespread:** 34% of adults reported difficulty with at least one daily activity (ADL) such as bathing, dressing, or eating. Among adults aged 50 and older, nearly half (43%) had at least one ADL limitation.
- **Access to care is limited despite insurance:** While most (83%) had health insurance, primarily Medi-Cal, only 52% had a regular place for care and 39% had a primary care provider.
- **High rates of acute care use:** 37% visited an emergency department in the past six months without being admitted, and 21% were hospitalized.

The findings underscore how those facing homelessness face a disproportionate burden of poor health while confronting high barriers to care. Based on the findings of the report, researchers provided the following recommendations for the healthcare system (including Medicaid) and the homelessness and housing response system:

- Expand and stabilize Medicaid coverage for people experiencing homelessness.
- Scale street medicine and shelter-based care models that deliver primary and urgent care in non-traditional settings.
- Enhance medical respite programs for people discharged from hospitals without stable housing.
- Create accessible, supportive housing designed for people with disabilities and chronic disease.
- Invest in culturally and linguistically responsive care to build trust and equity across diverse communities.

Background. The California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness (CASPEH) is the largest representative study of homelessness in the United States since the mid-1990s. Researchers at the University of California, San Francisco Benioff Homelessness and Housing

Initiative (UCSF BHHI) recruited a representative sample of adults experiencing homelessness; all respondents (3,200) completed an administered questionnaire. A subset participated in in-depth interviews. UCSF BHHI has released a series of reports, including a comprehensive report; focused reports on intimate partner violence, racial equity (with separate analyses of Black people and Latine people experiencing homelessness), older adults, and behavioral health. BHHI additionally released several shorter topic briefs, including one on pregnancy and unsheltered homelessness. This report looks at the intersection of health and homelessness.

Uncertain Future for Funding. In its conclusion, the report acknowledges that there are many efforts underway to improve healthcare for those experiencing homelessness. This includes the work of Federally Qualified Health Centers and other safety net care systems, street medicine teams, and recuperative care programs. The expansion of Medi-Cal in California to fund these efforts is promising, but changes in federal policy are expected to significantly reduce funding resources.

BHHI plans to host a webinar discussing the report's findings on December 4.

Upcoming Hearings

Agendas are typically posted on the committee websites in the Assembly and Senate a few days prior to the hearings. To view hearings after they take place, you may access them in the Assembly or Senate media archives where they are generally available within a few hours of committee adjournment.

Tuesday, December 02, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
Assembly Select Committee on California's Mental Health Crisis
Informational Hearing: Implementing the 988 Suicide and Crisis Line

Grant Opportunities

Deadline: 1/15/26 00:00
Title: **Round 11a Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) Planning Grants**
State Agency / Department: Department of Conservation
Match Funding? 10%
Estimated Total Funding: Funding availability is dependent on auction revenues from the Cap-and-Trade Program's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF).
Funding Method: Other

Deadline: 12/1/25 00:00
Title: **Round 11a Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) Agricultural Conservation Acquisition Grants**
State Agency / Department: Department of Conservation
Match Funding? 10%
Estimated Total Funding: Approximately $58 million in funding will be made available for Round 11, but the amount of funding is subject to change based on final calculations from the FY2025-2026 Cap-and-Invest auction proceeds and residual funds that become available from disencumbered projects.
Funding Method: Other

Deadline: 2/2/26 17:00
Title: **Division of Boating and Waterways Shoreline Erosion Control Grant Program FY27**
State Agency / Department: Department of Parks and Recreation
Match Funding? 50%
Estimated Total Funding: $1,500,000
Funding Method: Reimbursement(s)

Deadline: 1/30/26 23:59
Title: **Explore the Coast**
State Agency / Department: Coastal Conservancy
Match Funding? No
Estimated Total Funding: Applicants may request a grant amount of up to $100,000. Approximately $700,000 is available for this grant round. Up to $50,000 of the $700,000 is available for participants to access the San Francisco Bay shoreline. Due to limited funding, projects with trips to the San Francisco Bay shoreline will be extremely competitive. The funding source for the remaining $650,000 is available for projects that provide access to the outer coast.
Funding Method: Advances & Reimbursement(s)

Deadline: 2/2/26 17:00
Title: **Division of Boating and Waterways Public Beach Restoration Grant Program FY27**
State Agency / Department: Department of Parks and Recreation
Match Funding? 15%
Estimated Total Funding: There is no predetermined amount of funds or number of awards that will be available through this program in any fiscal year. Projects are approved and funded individually through the annual state budget process.
Funding Method: Reimbursements

Governor's Press Releases

Below is a list of the governor's press releases beginning November 19.

November 22: Governor Newsom announces appointments 11.21.2025
- Claudia Quiroz, of Mill Valley, has been appointed as General Counsel at the California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation
- Jane Sadler, of Sacramento, has been appointed Senior Policy Advisor at the California Air Resources Board
- Paulette Brown-Hinds, of Riverside, has been appointed to the California Transportation Commission
- Martin Muoto, of Los Angeles, has been appointed to the California Housing Finance Agency Board of Directors
- Preston Prince, of San Jose, has been reappointed to the California Housing Finance Agency Board of Directors
- James "Jim" Cervantes, of Lafayette, has been reappointed to the California Housing Finance Agency Board of Directors
- Dr. Cedric "Jamie" Rutland, of Lake Forest, has been appointed to the South Coast Air Quality Management District Board
- Antoinette "Toni" Marengo, of San Diego, has been appointed to the Protect Access to Health Care Stakeholder Advisory Committee
- Kasheica McKinney, of Oakland, has been appointed to the California Architects Board. McKinney has been the Director of Transit-Oriented Development at the Bay Area Rapid Transit District since 2024
- Christopher Ferguson, of West Sacramento, has been appointed to the California Student Aid Commission
- Brian Haynes, of Rancho Cucamonga, has been reappointed to the California Student Aid Commission

November 21: Governor Newsom advances efficiency efforts, announces five new projects completed to improve state government
November 20: First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom leads Gender Equity Summit on technology and well-being

November 20: Amid public safety improvements, Governor Newsom's expanded CHP efforts yield
November 20:2,000 pounds of illicit drugs recovered in three months
November 20: Governor Newsom issues statement on Trump's idiotic offshore oil drilling proposal
November 20: Governor Newsom honors fallen Alhambra Police Department Officer
November 20: Governor Newsom proclaims Transgender Day of Remembrance
November 20: Governor Newsom announces next round of film and TV tax credits, hit series Baywatch returning to California
November 19: Governor Newsom cuts red tape to help communities clean up and rebuild faster following the TCU Lightning Complex fires
November 18: Governor's actions and local efforts push permit approvals for LA fire recovery forward at rapid pace

3. **Washington, D.C. Legislative Report**

Prepared by Townsend Public Affairs

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH ACTIVITY

Congress Makes Further Movement Towards Finalizing Appropriations Process

The Senate moved towards finalizing the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 appropriations process this week, releasing their versions of the Energy and Water and Financial Services and General Government bills. Congress has until January 30 to pass the nine remaining full-year appropriations bills and avert another, albeit partial, government shutdown.

Senators are also reported to be planning to set up a larger minibus of five appropriations bills, containing the majority of discretionary spending, though House Appropriations Committee Chairman Tom Cole has expressed skepticism at the House's willingness to pass a minibus of that size.

Congress is also considering a full year CR for any bills they are unable to negotiate before the January 30 deadline, though appropriators have made it clear that is a last resort. The first two weeks of session in December will likely be consumed by attempts to pass a health care package before December 12, as Senate Democrats were promised a vote on health insurance premiums in order to end the government shutdown. That leaves one week of session in December and three in January before the deadline. It generally takes committee staff six weeks from finalized negotiations on topline numbers to compose floor-ready bills. With the holidays, it may take additional leaving the House and Senate on a tight timeline to resolve the differences between their funding bills.

House Committee on Natural Resources Advances Permitting Reform Bill

On November 20, The House Committee on Natural Resources held a markup of a number of bills, including HR 4776, the Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development Act or the SPEED Act. The SPEED Act was ordered reported out of committee on a bipartisan basis. The bill would represent the most significant reforms to federal environmental permitting in years and would notably create equivalency between California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) reviews and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews.

This means a completed CEQA review, since California has higher environmental standards, could satisfy the requirements of NEPA for federally funded projects. This would save developers and local jurisdictions significant time and resources in building housing and other infrastructure using federal dollars.

Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman has expressed optimism the bill will see a floor vote by the end of the year, though it will likely be pushed into 2026.

Congress Readies Health Care Package for December Vote

In the compromise with eight Senate Democrats to reopen the government, Senate Majority Leader John Thune committed to holding a vote on the central issue in the shutdown, a series of Affordable Care Act health insurance premium subsidies set to expire at the end of the year.

As premiums could drastically increase, Republicans in Congress have felt pressure to propose an alternative to the subsidies. Senator Bill Cassidy has proposed shifting the subsidy amount into individual Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and subsidy recipients into lower-tier higher-deductible health plans, while Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick has floated a compromise extension of the subsidies with new income limitations and additional flexibilities for HSAs. Senator Rick Scott released his own plan, creating a modified form of HSAs called Trump Health Freedom Accounts that could be used to pay both premiums and deductibles and introduces a state waiver program.

The competition between these plans, along with the President's short-lived proposal to extend the health insurance premium subsidies with additional limitations on eligibility will likely consume the legislature for the first two weeks of December, as the self-imposed deadline for action is December 12.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH ACTIVITY

EPA Announces New Definition of Waters of the United States

On November 21, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) announced a new proposed definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS). The definition of WOTUS determines which waterways and ultimately projects are subject to the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The prosed definition revises and limits the definitions of relatively permanent, continuous surface connection, and tributary, establishes new standards for tributary connections to navigable waters, increases local jurisdiction authority, clarifies exclusions for certain ditches, prior converted cropland, and waste treatment systems, and addresses natural seasonal changes in water quantity in an area.

The revised definition is intended to bring EPA into compliance with the Supreme Court's 2023 decision in Sackett v EPA. The proposal is open for public comment in the Federal Register through January 5, 2026.

DOT Announces Bus Grant Awards

On November 20, the Department of Transportation (DOT) announced $2 billion in grant awards from the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program and the Low or No Emission Grant Program (Low/No).

The funding includes support for both rural and urban transit providers. Active FY 2025 funding for these programs totals about $1.5 billion, with an additional $518 million in FY 2026 funding available through advance appropriations.

The grants previously prioritized the replacement of diesel busses with zero-emission alternatives. Awards under this round included a number of hybrid bus programs and compressed natural gas (CNG). The funding was made available through the 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which included the last Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act.

Orange County Delegation Press Releases

- Rep. Mike Levin – November 20, 2025: Rep. Mike Levin Criticizes the Trump Administration's Announcement to Allow More Offshore Drilling in California
- Rep. Young Kim – November 21, 2025: Reps. Kim, Beatty Introduce Resolution Recognizing October as National Financial Planning Month
- Rep. Dave Min – November 21, 2025: Reps. Min, Chu Lead 43 Representatives in Letter Demanding Answers on Systemic Pattern of Deaths in ICE Detainment Facilities
- Rep. Dave Min – November 19, 2025: Reps. Dave Min, Gabe Evans Introduce Bipartisan, Bicameral Legislation to Reduce Wildfire Risk
- Rep. Derek Tran – November 21, 2025: Representative Tran Issues Statement Following Vote on House Resolution 58
- Sen. Alex Padilla – November 21, 2025: Padilla, Davids Lead 88 Lawmakers in Urging Protection of Electric Vehicle Investments in Bipartisan Surface Transportation Negotiations
- Sen. Alex Padilla – November 21, 2025: Ranking Members Padilla, Durbin, Raskin, Jayapal: Trump Admin Too Cowardly to Defend Shocking Decision to Abandon Refugees
- Sen. Alex Padilla – November 21, 2025: Senate Passes Padilla, Schiff Resolution Congratulating Los Angeles Dodgers on Back-to-Back World Series Championships
- Sen. Alex Padilla – November 20, 2025: Padilla, Booker Call on DHS to Provide Information on Hiring Standards and Training Protocols for Newly Hired ICE Agents

- Sen. Alex Padilla – November 20, 2025: Padilla, Huffman Denounce Trump Administration's Plan to Sell Off California's Pristine Coastline
- Sen. Alex Padilla – November 19, 2025: Padilla Joins Bill to Repeal Senate Republicans' Cash Grab in Government Funding Bill
- Sen. Alex Padilla – November 19, 2025: WATCH: Padilla Walks Out of Sham Immigration Subcommittee Hearing on Attacks by the "Radical Left"
- Sen. Alex Padilla – November 18, 2025: Padilla, Schiff Announce Nearly $300 Million for Low-Emission California Commuter Buses
- Sen. Adam Schiff – November 22, 2025: STATEMENT: Sen. Schiff Statement on President Trump's Plan for Ukraine
- Sen. Adam Schiff – November 21, 2025: Schiff Resolution Congratulating Los Angeles Dodgers on Back-to-Back World Series Championships
- Sen. Adam Schiff – November 20, 2025: NEWS: Sen. Schiff Joined Senators McCormick and Coons to Introduce Bill to Boost U.S. AI Leadership with Energy-Efficient Liquid Cooling Technology
- Sen. Adam Schiff – November 20, 2025: NEWS: Sens. Schiff, Blumenthal, Warren Demand Answers from Trump Fundraiser and Lobbyists Solicitiating Hundreds of Millions in Private Donations for White House Ballroom Project
- Sen. Adam Schiff – November 19, 2025: WATCH: Sen. Schiff Calls on Trump Administration to Release Full Epstein Files After Trump Signs Bill, Raises Alarm on Trump Loyalists at DOJ Doing President's Bidding
- Sen. Adam Schiff – November 18, 2025: NEWS: Sens. Schiff, Padilla Announce Nearly $300 Million for Low-Emission California Commuter Buses

Legislation Introduced by the Orange County Delegation

Bill Number	Bill Title	Introduction Date	Sponsor	Bill Description	Latest Major Action
H.RES.908	No Short Title Available.	11/21/25	Rep. Young Kim (R-CA-40)	Expressing support for the designation of October 2025 as "National Financial Planning Month".	Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform., 11/21/25
S.RES.515	No Short Title Available.	11/20/25	Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)	A resolution congratulating the Los Angeles Dodgers for winning the 2025 Major League Baseball World Series.	Submitted in the Senate, considered, and agreed to without amendment and with a preamble by Unanimous Consent. (consideration: CR S8399; text: CR S8282), 11/20/25
H.R.6154	Regional Leadership in Wildland Fire Research Act	11/19/25	Rep. Dave Min (D-CA-47)	To provide for the establishment of regional wildland fire research centers, and	Referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Agriculture, and Science, Space, and

				for other purposes.	Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned., 11/19/25

If you or your staff have any questions or require additional information on any of the items in this bulletin, please contact Peter DeMarco at 714-834-5777.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Supervisor Janet Nguyen, First District

SUBJECT: CalOptima Alternate Board Members

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Allow alternate members of the CalOptima Board of Directors to have access to confidential information, such as items discussed in closed session.

PROBLEM: Under the current structure, two members of the CalOptima Board of Directors must also be members of the Board of Supervisors, with one additional member of the Board of Supervisors serving as an alternate. Currently, the alternate member does not have access to confidential information which may be necessary to perform their role.

BACKGROUND: Governance of CalOptima is vested in a governing body consisting of ten members, of whom nine are voting members and one is a nonvoting member. Two of the voting members are also on the County Board of Supervisors, and there is an additional member from the Board of Supervisors who serves as the alternate for those two. These members serve a one-year term.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *Guiding Principle - Efficient Service Delivery:*
  - The County supports legislation and budget actions that encourage new technology and innovation to streamline the delivery of services.
  - The County supports legislation and budget actions that reduce access barriers, increase efficiency, and expand equity of public programs.
  - The County supports efforts to reduce maintenance of effort cost requirements, and reasonable administrative or regulatory oversight.
- *CS-39: Public Health & Wellness:* Support measures that protect the public against disease and disability and promote health.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Supervisor Janet Nguyen, First District

SUBJECT: Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) Request on Funding Equity

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Secure approval for a JLAC audit to assess the County's fiscal capacity to fulfill both state-mandated obligations and crucial local responsibilities, while receiving comparatively lower funding than other large counties. The objective of the audit will be to identify and propose solutions for any financial inequities discovered during the examination.

PROBLEM: In recent years, legislative changes have shifted more responsibilities to the County without associated funding and restricted County discretion in service levels or implementation. Neighboring counties with similar populations have more revenue to provide similar, required services. Orange County must meet its mandated responsibilities first, leaving less funding for non-mandated services and other County priorities.

BACKGROUND: The County uses General Purpose Revenue to meet its unfunded mandated service requirements by the state and federal governments, such as match requirements for Community Services programs or Maintenance-of-Effort funding, as well as operational expenses for Public Protection and General Government Services departments. 92% of the County’s $1.1 billion General Purpose Revenue comes from property taxes. Orange County receives the lowest property tax allocation of all 58 counties in the state at five cents for every dollar.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *Guiding Principle - Fair Share Cost Recovery:*
    - The County supports dependable, predictable, and equitable revenue streams and allocation methodologies which reflect County responsibilities, demographics, cost of living, and caseload growth.
    - The County supports full reimbursement for all mandates and other responsibilities imposed by the federal and state governments.

  - The County supports adjusting the State's outdated property tax allocation formula so that Orange County receives its fair share of property tax revenue.
- *GS-7: County Revenue:* Support efforts to increase, protect and sustain local autonomy over local revenues, and ensure the County receives its fair share through the adoption of equitable funding mechanisms, such as population-based funding formulas.
- *GS-17: Property Tax Revenue & Funding Equity:* Protect local property tax revenues and rights afforded to the County. Support dependable, predictable, and equitable revenue streams, and adjust the State's outdated property tax allocation formula so that the County receives its fair share of property tax revenue.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento, Second District

SUBJECT: Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Credits for Small-Scale Housing

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Ensure local jurisdictions subject to the RHNA process are allowed to receive RHNA credits for all small-scale housing units.

PROBLEM: Despite the County's limited supply of land available for development, not all new housing units are counted toward the County's state-mandated RHNA requirements. In particular, the eligibility of some small-scale units—such as tiny homes, modular units, or interim structures—remains ambiguous under existing statute and state guidance.

BACKGROUND: The Regional Housing Needs Determination (RHND) and RHNA process is used to determine how many new homes, and the affordability level of the homes, that each local government must plan for in its housing element to meet the housing needs of current and future residents. Local jurisdictions report housing units permitted on an annual progress report to demonstrate a jurisdiction's progress toward meeting its share of the RHNA.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *CS-28: Housing:* Support efforts to increase the availability of housing options including small-scale homes, permanent supportive housing and affordable housing. Promote the flexible use of funding and financing mechanisms to meet the needs of individuals and families, including additional funding for the Local Housing Trust Fund Program and expanded definitions of homelessness. Support additional options for the procurement of materials for affordable housing.
- *CS-35: Low & Moderate-Income Housing:* Support efforts to streamline funding, construction processes, and land use regulations, which expedite the development of low- and moderate-income housing units and allow local governments to adequately plan to meet the housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

- *IN-39: Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA):* Support legislation that provides clarity, addresses inconsistencies, or provides flexibility in the RHNA process for a successful completion of the County's Housing Element.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento, Second District

SUBJECT: Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Authorization

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Authorize a carve out for county and city animal shelters within existing law, clarifying these public agencies may support TNR programs for felines in their jurisdictions without violating existing animal abandonment statutes.

PROBLEM: While California does not have a statewide ban on TNR programs, some counties have discontinued or been hesitant to initiate such programs. This hesitancy has been attributed to perceived ambiguity in state law regarding the authority or protections related to TNR efforts.

BACKGROUND: California Penal Code Section 597 makes it a misdemeanor to abandon an animal. Some counties have curtailed TNR programs, fearing that releasing even feral cats could be considered illegal abandonment.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *CS-3: Animal Care Shelter:* Support funding for regional animal shelter facility maintenance and programs, and support feral cat trap, neuter, and release authority.
- *CS-44: Spay/Neuter:* Support funding for spay/neuter and microchipping education, vouchers, and clinics. Support feral cat trap, neuter, and release authority.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento, Second District

SUBJECT: CalOptima Board of Directors

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Stagger the terms of the seven members of the CalOptima Board of Directors who serve four-year terms to ensure that no more than four board members' terms expire simultaneously.

PROBLEM: Under the current structure, the terms of all seven board members serving four-year terms expire simultaneously, which may create a risk of sudden turnover and the potential loss of experienced decision-makers. Staggering terms could mitigate this risk by providing continuity in governance.

BACKGROUND: Governance of CalOptima is vested in a governing body consisting of ten members, of whom nine are voting members and one is a nonvoting member. Members of the CalOptima board serve four-year terms, except for those members who are members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, who serve a one-year term.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *Guiding Principle - Efficient Service Delivery:*
    - The County supports legislation and budget actions that encourage new technology and innovation to streamline the delivery of services.
    - The County supports legislation and budget actions that reduce access barriers, increase efficiency, and expand equity of public programs.
    - The County supports efforts to reduce maintenance of effort cost requirements, and reasonable administrative or regulatory oversight.
- *CS-39: Public Health & Wellness:* Support measures that protect the public against disease and disability and promote health.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Supervisor Donald P. Wagner, Third District

SUBJECT: Elections Administration

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Align the standards for first-time voters in federal and non-federal elections to remove a discrepancy in current requirements, which require voter identification for certain first-time voters in a federal election but not in a non-federal election.

PROBLEM: Under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), voter identification is required only for first-time voters in a federal election who registered by mail or online without providing a driver's license number, state ID number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number at registration. California's law extends this requirement to meet federal standards but does not require voter identification for first-time voters in a non-federal election who registered by mail or online without providing a driver's license number, state ID number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number at registration.

BACKGROUND: Existing law requires a person to provide personal identifying information when registering to vote and requires elections officials to validate the information provided; requires an applicant to certify to the truth and correctness of the content of their voter registration application under penalty of perjury; provides that every person who registers to vote knowing that they are ineligible to do so is guilty of a crime punishable by imprisonment for 16 months or two or three years, or in a county jail not exceeding one year; and states that if a voter is voting in a federal election for the first time after registering online or by mail and did not provide their driver's license number, California identification number, or the last four digits of their social security number on their registration form, they will be asked to show a form of identification when they go to the polls.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *GS-29: Voting Systems & Access:* Support legislation that promotes and increases voter registration and access for as many eligible voters as possible, establishes consistent funding for the maintenance and replacement of voting systems equipment, and provides adequate funding for the administration of election services.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Supervisor Donald P. Wagner, Third District

SUBJECT: Jury Commissioner Information Sharing

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Require jury commissioners in each county to share information with the Secretary of State, which after confirmation of a voter match will share the information with county elections officials, about registered voters who attest on a juror questionnaire that they are not qualified for jury service in that county for any reason that would also make them ineligible to vote, make them qualified to vote in another county in the state, or indicate that they require accommodation to vote.

PROBLEM: Currently, when persons who attest under penalty of perjury that they were eligible to vote on a voter registration affidavit and subsequently attest to a Superior Court that they are not qualified to serve on a jury for a reason that would also make them ineligible to vote, the Secretary of State and county elections officials are not notified. The lack of access to jury questionnaire data may impede the ability the Registrar of Voters to maintain accurate voter files and allow for the risk that persons not eligible to vote could cast a ballot in a local, state, or federal election.

BACKGROUND: The Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) provides that if a jury commissioner requires a person to complete a questionnaire, the questionnaire shall only ask questions related to juror identification, qualification, and ability to serve as a prospective juror. Pursuant to CCP Section 203, there are 11 circumstances that exclude persons from eligibility for jury service in the state that include, among others, persons who are not domiciliaries of California or who are not residents of the jurisdiction wherein they are summoned to serve.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *GS-29: Voting Systems & Access:* Support legislation that promotes and increases voter registration and access for as many eligible voters as possible, establishes consistent funding for the maintenance and replacement of voting systems equipment, and provides adequate funding for the administration of election services.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Chairman Doug Chaffee, Fourth District

SUBJECT: Veterans Warm Handoff

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Establish a comprehensive "warm handoff" program designed to improve the reintegration process for service members transitioning from military to civilian life. This proposal aims to strengthen coordination between military discharge points and state and local providers, ensuring earlier connection to available resources and enhanced support.

PROBLEM: Integrating back into civilian life after active duty is a complex and often challenging process that demands a significant period of readjustment across multiple domains. Successful reintegration requires addressing a comprehensive set of needs that collectively support a service member's return to health and productivity.

BACKGROUND: There are numerous veteran support efforts underway, including a little more than $1 billion from recent statewide bond funding set aside to support veterans housing and a pilot program dedicated to higher levels of on-site supportive services for older veterans in permanent supportive housing. A pilot report published in February of this year outlines improvements and opportunities for advancement in veterans' health, community engagement, and support services.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *CS-49: Veterans Services, Programs & Housing:* Support programs, services, and funding for our veterans, including:
  - Funding for the County veterans service offices (VSOs).
  - Funding and approval of veteran housing projects.
  - Maintaining veterans as a priority group in the housing voucher program.
- Expedited training and certification for VSO claims officers, and increased access to the veterans' affairs database.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Vice Chair Katrina Foley, Fifth District

SUBJECT: Nitrous Oxide (NOx) Sales Ban

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Fully ban the sale of NOx statewide, except for limited authorized retailers for legitimate culinary and medical purposes.

PROBLEM: According to recent data, fatal nitrous oxide poisonings increased by more than 500% from 2010–2023. Despite statewide limits, NOx remains widely sold in smoke shops, gas stations, and online, often labeled as "food use only." In August, the OC Health Care Agency issued a special report on NOx assessing its use and policy recommendations, highlighting challenges with collecting accurate data and the negative effects of NOx misuse.

BACKGROUND: California Penal Code Section 381b–381e makes it illegal to possess or inhale NOx for intoxication, sell or furnish it to minors, or distribute it knowing it will be used for intoxication. Retailers must keep signed sales logs acknowledging the dangers of inhalation, and those records must be retained for one year. Exemptions apply for legitimate uses such as medical or dental anesthesia and as a food propellant. A handful of counties (Orange, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Humboldt, and Mendocino) have enacted local bans on retail sales outside authorized food or medical channels.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *P-26: Unsanctioned Substance Use:* Monitor state and federal efforts to report and restrict the misuse of substances, including but not limited to nitrous oxide, ketamine, and esketamine, and support efforts to prevent their misuse.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Vice Chair Katrina Foley, Fifth District

SUBJECT: Homekey+ Project Completion Period Extension

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Under future Homekey+ rounds, allow longer completion periods for projects involving major demolition and rebuild, which are currently limited to twelve months, to expand eligibility to additional housing projects.

PROBLEM: Current Homekey+ guidelines distinguish between acquisition and rehabilitation and new construction, but do not adequately address projects that require full or substantial teardowns. In practice, these projects are often classified as adaptive reuse, repurposing or retrofitting existing non-residential structures into new permanent supportive housing. Because adaptive reuse projects typically involve extensive demolition, structure reconfiguration, and major electrical and mechanical upgrades, they align more closely with new construction timelines than with rehabilitation standards.

BACKGROUND: Homekey+ is a permanent housing initiative funded by recent statewide bond funding. The current timelines and eligibility requirements for Homekey+ project completion vary depending on the project classification. Acquisition or rehabilitation projects must be completed within twelve months and sixty days from the date of award. In contrast, gap financing and new construction projects must be completed twenty-four months and sixty days from the date of award.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *CS-28: Housing:* Support efforts to increase the availability of housing options including small-scale homes, permanent supportive housing and affordable housing. Promote the flexible use of funding and financing mechanisms to meet the needs of individuals and families, including additional funding for the Local Housing Trust Fund Program and expanded definitions of homelessness. Support additional options for the procurement of materials for affordable housing.

County of Orange

County Executive Office

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: OC Waste & Recycling

SUBJECT: Landfill Methane Monitoring Technology Modernization

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Defer to Board

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: Allow the use of alternative methane monitoring technologies, including methane detecting drones and other remote sensing systems, to satisfy compliance obligations, and establish performance-based criteria for the use of these advanced emissions monitoring technologies.

PROBLEM: State statute and regulations require the reporting of routine emissions from stationary sources, mandate the identification and mitigation of localized air quality risks, and support climate policy objectives, including the detection and quantification of methane, a potent short-lived climate pollutant. However, California does not yet allow the use of several advanced technologies for methane monitoring. Authorization to use new technologies will increase the frequency, coverage, and accuracy of methane monitoring while reducing the operational challenges and safety risks associated with traditional ground-based methods.

BACKGROUND: The California Air Resources Board (CARB) establishes the regulatory framework and oversees recordkeeping, reporting, and compliance obligations for methane monitoring at municipal solid waste landfills, in alignment with state and federal law. Although CARB has not yet authorized these technologies within the state, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the technologies in December 2022, and they have since been adopted and implemented in other states nationwide.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY REFERENCE: Per the Legislative Guidelines, departments will adhere to County and department goals, objectives, and priorities and the Legislative Platform when developing legislative proposals and administrative/regulatory changes for which they plan to seek County-sponsorship. Below are the relevant guiding principles and policy statements from the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform that relate to this proposal.

- *IN-45: Technology for Landfill Management & Compliance:* Support efforts that expand the use of new or existing technology advancements for landfill management and regulatory compliance.