

# 2023 END OF YEAR REPORT

## California Association of Recreation and Park Districts

Prepared By:

**Alyssa Silhi**  
Director of Government Affairs  
Phone: (916) 505-4978  
[asilhi@publicpolicygroup.com](mailto:asilhi@publicpolicygroup.com)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TRANSMITTAL LETTER .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2023: YEAR IN REVIEW .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>RPPG/CARPD HIGHLIGHTS 2023.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CLIENT COMMUNICATION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>OTHER RPPG EFFORTS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>LOOKING AHEAD: 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>CHANGE IN COMMITTEE CHAIRS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>LOOMING BUDGET DEFICIT.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>A SLOWDOWN IN HOUSING LEGISLATION...NOT SO FAST .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY ACT .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>CLIMATE BOND .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WILDFIRE INSURANCE .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>LOOKING AHEAD: 2024 GRANT FUNDING .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PARKS AND RECREATION.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>FIRE RESPONSE AND WILDFIRE MITIGATION.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION .....</b>	<b>23</b>

# TRANSMITTAL LETTER

November 15, 2023

To: Matthew Duarte  
Executive Director  
California Association of Recreation and Park Districts

From: Alyssa Silhi  
Director of Government Affairs  
Renne Public Policy Group

Dear Mr. Duarte,

On behalf of the Renne Public Law Group, LLP [DBA Renne Public Policy Group (RPPG)], I want to thank you, your team, and the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts (CARPD) for engaging our firm for state legislative advocacy services. This end of year report provides an overview of the services provided by our firm to CARPD during the 2023 legislative year, as well as insights and potential next steps in preparation for the 2024 legislative year. Additionally, this report provides a recap on efforts currently underway for the 2024 legislative session.

Our work with the Association began on December 1, 2022. Since that time, RPPG has worked diligently with CARPD executive leadership, board members, the legislative committee, and individual member districts to take an aggressive approach to raise the Association's profile in Sacramento. We did this first by building relationships within the broader local government stakeholder coalitions through positioning as a statewide leader on Brown Act modernization, then with members of the legislature, policy committee staff, key leaders at state agencies, and within the Administration. 2023 proved to be an extremely productive inaugural year in RPPG's representation for the Association, as we continued to build upon CARPD's presence in the Capitol and educate decision makers on the Association's top priorities.

RPPG established the Association's first ever legislative platform in coordination with Association leadership and introduced CARPD's first ever sponsored bill. We executed CARPD's legislative priorities in Sacramento through the following mechanisms: forming essential working relationships with key stakeholder groups; elevating its Capitol profile through relationship building with legislators, staff, and the Administration; drafting sponsored legislation, fact sheets, background materials, sample letters and talking points, and helping to draft lead witness testimony; and providing memos, information on legislative and administrative actions, and detailed policy and political analysis on significant items of interest to CARPD. This resulted in over 540 individual "touchpoints" between RPPG and the Association, actively working with 25 stakeholder groups to advance CARPD priorities and organizing 5 visits to Sacramento for CARPD staff and/or executive leadership.

In 2023, RPPG monitored and/or engaged on over 250 pieces of state legislation, with 70 identified as priority measures of interest. In total, CARPD officially positioned on 24 pieces of state legislation, with 22 active positions. On behalf of the Association, RPPG engaged on state legislative measures in the areas of climate, emergency response and disaster preparedness, parks and recreation, homelessness,

constitutional amendments, public contracting, governmental operations, and employment issues with specific applicability to CARPD members.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to serve the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts, it's truly a pleasure. We are grateful for the positive working relationship that has developed between our teams and greatly look forward to continuing this relationship into the 2024 legislative session. We believe there is still much more work to be done and are eager to build on the successes we have achieved together!

Sincerely,



---

Alyssa Silhi  
Director of Government Affairs  
Renne Public Policy Group

CC: Doug Nickles, Board Member  
Michael Seaman, Board Member  
Michelle Lacy, Board Member  
Dennis Waespi, Board Member

## 2023: YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2023-2024 session of the California State Legislature began with both houses convening in early December 2022 for an organizational session. During this time, Members in each house took their oaths of office and passed their respective chamber rules. The first formal action taken by the Assembly was to adopt a leadership transition plan (House Resolution H.R. 1) which solidified the transition of Assembly Speakership from Anthony Rendon (D, Lakewood) to Robert Rivas (D, Hollister) effective July 1, 2023.

In the Senate, Toni Atkins (D, San Diego) was re-elected President pro Tempore and Mike McGuire (D, Healdsburg) was re-elected as Majority Leader. However, there was a changing of the guard on the Senate Republican side with Brian Jones (R, Santee) replacing Scott Wilk (R, Santa Clarita) as Minority Leader.

Additionally in December, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a special legislative session to introduce a gasoline price gouging measure in response to rapidly rising prices at the pump throughout the state during 2022. The measure, [SBX1-2](#), was carried by Senator Nancy Skinner (D, Berkeley) and authorizes the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission to set a maximum gross gasoline refining margin and to establish a penalty if this margin is exceeded. The measure was signed into law by the Governor on March 28 and went into effect on June 26. While this measure did not have a direct impact on local government authority or operations, RPPG closely monitored this action to ensure that there was momentum to modify SB 1 allocations.

The Legislature reconvened for the regular 23-24 legislative session the first week of January 2023. With 35 newly elected Members coming to Sacramento (25 Assemblymembers and 10 Senators), California saw the largest number of new state-elected representatives join the Legislature since modified constitutional term limits for state lawmakers were approved by the voters in 2012.

While historically new legislators tend to ease into their newly minted roles—introducing only a handful of new legislation in year one—this new class took a different approach. As a result, we saw nearly 3,000 individual legislative and budgetary measures introduced in 2023 alone. This was the most in the first year of session in more than a decade. Major themes and priorities of the 2023 session included:

- Major overhaul of the state’s behavioral health system and its funding.
- Policies that further streamlined housing production and fast-tracked critical infrastructure projects.
- Significant labor dispensations and extensions.
- Attempts to address the ongoing fentanyl crisis.
- Preparation and mitigation for climate change.
- Advancement of several constitutional amendments and statewide funding measures for voter consideration in 2024.

In early January, Governor Newsom unveiled his proposed budget for fiscal year (FY) 2023-2024. Contrary to the historic budget surpluses in the previous fiscal years, the Governor confirmed that the state was projecting a \$22 billion deficit moving into the new year. Factors the Administration cited included a drop in anticipated personal income tax revenues, a generally slowing economy, high inflation, and Federal Reserve interest rate increases. Despite these negative drags on the economy, the Administration did not project a recession in the budget. In response, the Administration proposed a combination of triggered spending cuts, funding delays, shifts in funding sources, and the issuance of bonds to close the gap and pass a balanced budget.



Given the sheer volume of legislation introduced, the spring of 2023 was a remarkably hectic time for the Legislature and advocates alike. All told there were more than 150 legislative, fiscal, and budgetary hearings dispensing with measures that directly impacted local government. The timing of these policy hearings coincided directly with Governor Newsom's "May Revise" in which the Administration proposed an increase of \$9 billion in total spending along with an increase in the state's projected deficit—now surpassing \$30 billion.

All told the final FY 23-24 budget consisted of \$310 billion in total spending. The final budget advanced by the Legislature contained appropriate cuts to close the \$31.5 billion deficit and was signed by the Governor on June 27 to adhere to constitutional deadlines. The Administration's and Legislature's priorities in the FY 23-24 budget were consistent with previous years which dedicated funding to homelessness, climate change, healthcare, education, and housing. The current budget deficit is projected at just \$15 billion, but a continued deferral of the personal income tax filing deadline by the IRS to November 16 is complicating the State's fiscal planning for the 24-25 Fiscal Year.

Governor Newsom, along with Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin (D, Thousand Oaks) and Senator Susan Eggman (D, Stockton), announced in mid-June a behavioral health policy package. The two measures that comprise this behavioral health package, [AB 531](#) (Irwin) and [SB 326](#) (Eggman), were signed into law on October 12 and will be put to voters on the March 2024 ballot as Proposition 1. AB 531 will provide \$6.38 billion in new funding for behavioral health infrastructure efforts. SB 326 will rename and modernize the Mental Health Services Act passed by the voters as Proposition 63 in November 2004. AB 531 and SB 326 received bipartisan support on both the Assembly and Senate Floors.

Robert Rivas was sworn in as the 71<sup>st</sup> Speaker of the State Assembly on June 30. He made several changes to Assembly leadership on July 3, including appointing Isaac Bryan (D, Los Angeles) as the new Majority Leader and Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D, Winters) as the new Speaker pro Tempore. Additionally, Juan Carrillo (D, Palmdale) was appointed the new chair of the Local Government Committee. Speaker Rivas was elected to the Legislature in 2018 and with 12-year term limits could potentially hold his leadership position until he terms out in 2030.

Senator Atkins announced in late August that the Senate Democratic Caucus had determined that Senator McGuire will be the Pro Tem "Designee", with a specific transition date to be announced in January 2024. Senator Atkins has served in the Legislature since 2012. As an Assemblymember she rose to power—becoming Speaker of the Assembly from 2014-2016 before running for State Senate. Senator Atkins then became the Pro Tem of the Senate in 2018. She terms out of the Legislature in 2024. Senator McGuire was elected to the Senate in 2014 and has served as Majority Leader since 2022. He terms out of the Legislature in 2026 and has filed paperwork to run for Insurance Commissioner.

By the evening of September 14, the legislature had advanced a total of 1,046 bills to the Governor for his consideration. By October 14, the Governor had signed 890 measures into law and vetoed 156—an approximate rate of 85% to 15%. The Legislature is now adjourned and will resume the second year of the two-year legislative session on January 3, 2024.

# RPPG/CARPD HIGHLIGHTS 2023



**250+**

### PIECES OF LEGISLATION TRACKED ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION

Legislation tracked and assessed for impacts on Association operations, legal and/or local decision making.

**17/22**

### SUCCESS RATE ON LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT — MAKING THE ASSOCIATION'S VOICE HEARD

RPPG achieved the desired outcome or secured critical amendments to dramatically reduce adverse impacts on the Association. (Desired outcomes OR significantly improved based on RPPG's engagement.)

**540+**

### COMBINED DELIVERABLES AND TOUCHPOINTS PROVIDED TO AND ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION

Legislative updates, legislative and budgetary position letters, policy, and political analysis, meetings with Association and/or state legislature on behalf of the Association.  
*\*As of October 31*

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

At its core, legislative advocacy is working with individual lawmakers, committee staff, the Governor's administration, and regulatory officials to support the Association's policy goals. Equally important is the ability to work with those same stakeholders to mitigate legal, operational, or fiscal impacts that state legislation may have on CARPD.

Successful legislative advocacy is predicated on raising awareness and education. Being able to empower Association members is critical in any effort to advance legislative efforts. In Sacramento, direct advocacy can range from working personally with a legislator, an aide, policy committee staff, and/or the Administration on the wording of a bill to mobilizing broad coalitions that align with the Association's cause. This work includes educating legislators, supporters, and the public about the issue, potentially working with the media, and continuously seeking out allies and being persistent over long periods of time.

Over time, a sustained legislative advocacy effort will help the Association form strong allies. Working with lawmakers and familiarizing them with your concerns often results in lawmakers becoming champions for your specific issues. Establishing personal relationships with legislators – and encouraging member districts to solidify relationships with their legislative delegation – provides the Association with the credibility needed to have a meaningful impact during the legislative process. While there is no guarantee that a sustained effort will lead to success on any particular issue of importance, a lack of a sustained effort will lead to state policies that will remove local decision making and create new financial, legal, or operational challenges for CARPD. Below is a condensed narrative outlining many of the highlights and key performance indicators of success during the 2023 legislative session.

### Highlights: Legislative Advocacy Success

#### ✓ **SPONSORED LEGISLATION: AB 817 (Pacheco) Open meetings: teleconferencing: subsidiary body (CARPD Sponsor)**

CARPD introduced its first ever sponsored legislation in 2023, choosing to spearhead an effort to build on prior Brown Act modernization legislative efforts by putting forth a legislative proposal that would allow non-decision-making bodies to meet remotely without posting of location. This would reduce barriers to entry for community members who experience challenges to local engagement on important boards and commissions due to distance, age, socio-economic issues, child-care needs, disability or other limitation and provide elected decision makers with valuable representative input as they seek to craft local solutions. This approach strategically threads the needle between community needs and legislative concern of local overreach and reduced transparency.

RPPG met with over twenty legislators to introduce the Association, propose the bill concept, and seek authorship. Ultimately, Assemblymember Blanca Pacheco (D-64) enthusiastically authored AB 817 on behalf of the Association. RPPG successfully secured nearly every major local government association as a co-sponsor of AB 817, including CalCities, CSAC, RCRC, UCC, as well as CAPA-IHSS (a non-profit association comprised of the State-created Brown Act bodies In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Public Authorities throughout all 58 counties in California.) This established CARPD as a leader and as a trusted partner in the overall local government coalition lobby. Additionally, RPPG convened a large group of stakeholders, working with other advocates to bring their clients on board in support. This placed CARPD on the map and resulted in a long list of supporters for the bill.

On behalf of the Association, RPPG created fact sheets, talking points, coalition support letters, template support letters for local agencies, newsletter content, author statements, committee background, and email



updates that contained CARPD priorities, logos, and key messaging. These materials were used not only in CARPD advocacy efforts, but also in Lobby Days materials and external content sent by cities and counties, further positioning CARPD as a statewide leader.

However, the Assembly Local Government committee staff had significant concerns about advancing any Brown Act modification legislation and requested a slew of amendments. RPPG worked to find middle ground with CARPD, bill sponsors, the author's office, the Chair's office, committee staff, co-authors, and stakeholders to broker a deal on committee proposed amendments. The bill was amended March 16, 2023, and set for hearing in Assembly Local Government April 18, 2023. However, the committee staff and Chair chose to pull the bill from committee late on April 17 and ultimately would not re-set the measure for hearing unless CARPD agreed to poison-pill amendments.

While AB 817 met with significant challenge in the Local Government committee when Chaired by Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry and is now a 2 Year Bill, Aguiar-Curry was tapped as the new Assembly Speaker Pro-Tempore and is no longer committee Chair. Instead, Assemblymember Juan Carillo is now Chair and has a favorable local government background that may be favorable for a path forward. RPPG has worked closely with Assemblymember Pacheco and staff in the interim, who plans to aggressively continue to advance AB 817 in 2024 and is meeting with targeted lawmakers personally to secure support.

Despite the resistance AB 817 met in the committee process, sponsoring this high-profile measure with statewide impact and interest as an inaugural sponsored effort introduced CARPD to the greater Capitol community, established the tone for engagement moving forward, and created an opportunity for the Association to form new relationships with local government groups, diverse stakeholders, and legislators and staff – including establishing close ties to Pacheco who is an LA lawmaker and has no CARPD member districts in her district.

*On April 25, AB 817 was postponed for hearing by the Local Government Committee. This is now a two-year eligible bill and active effort continue to move forward in 2024.*

✓ **AB 262 (Holden) Children's camps: safety and regulation (CARPD Oppose Unless Amended to Neutral)**

AB 262 would have defined "Children's Camps" and included local agency programs in the entities that would have been subject to regulations to be promulgated by the Department of Social Services. RPPG coordinated with a large coalition of stakeholders in opposition to work to defeat the bill as proposed. However, CARPD was the sole local agency association engaging with the bill's author to address impacts to local agency parks and recreation services. As such, CARPD had differing concerns in its opposition, not opposing the additional regulation of day camps – in fact supporting additional guardrails to ensure child safety, but opposing further regulation and oversight of local agency programs that are already held to a higher standard. RPPG was able to work with the author to broker amendments removing the regulatory requirements in the bill and instead creating a working group that will make recommendations back to the Legislature after conferring with Stakeholders. RPPG was able to secure amendments that enumerated special district recreation and park districts as part of that stakeholder process. These amendments removed CARPD opposition.

*On September 11, AB 262 as amended to remove CARPD opposition was placed on the inactive file and is an eligible two-year bill.*

✓ **AB 334 (B. Rubio) Public contracts: conflicts of interest (CARPD Support)**

Public agencies are experiencing contracting issues when seeking to partner with independent contractors such as engineers, land surveyors, architects, and geologists on public works infrastructure projects, due

to the prior unclarity in the law and case law. This bill updates current law to allow an independent contractor who performs one phase of a project for a public entity to enter into a subsequent contract for a later phase of the same project without being considered an “officer” for the purpose of state law that prohibits public officers and employees from being financially interested in any contract made by them in their official capacity, or by any body or board of which they are members, if specified conditions are met. RPPG worked closely with the bill sponsor, American Council of Engineering Companies, California (ACEC) to gain support for the measure and ensure its passage through the committee and Floor vote process.

RPPG secured the opportunity for CARPD Executive Director Matthew Duarte to be a lead witness in support in both the Assembly Elections and Senate Elections policy committees to represent special districts providing recreation and parks services statewide and provide the local government perspective. RPPG worked with CARPD to prepare testimony and arranged for Matthew to meet directly with Assembly member Rubio in her Sacramento office to discuss strategy.

*On September 30, Governor Newsom signed AB 334 into law.*

✓ **AB 557 (Hart) Open Meetings: local agencies: teleconferences (CARPD Support)**

AB 557 is a simple but important tool for local governments to continue to be accessible to the public during a Governor-declared state of emergency and continue to provide essential services to residents by eliminating the sunset provision in AB 361 (R. Rivas, 2021) pertaining to remote authority and the Ralph M. Brown Act. This permanently authorizes local agencies to meet remotely and without posting agenda location in instances where the Governor has declared a state of emergency and it would be impossible to meet in-person safely, such as during extreme flooding or wildfire. Additionally, this measure extends the period for a legislative body to make the necessary findings related to a continuing state of emergency to not later than 45 days after the first teleconferenced meeting, instead of within 30 days, and extends the renewal period from every 30 days to every 45 days. Historically, any measure that relates to Brown Act modernization is instantly controversial with Capitol committee staff and faces a harsh backlash from watchdog groups. RPPG worked closely with AB 557’s sponsor, the California Special District’s Association (CSDA), to support the effort by working with CSDA advocates to target key lawmakers to secure votes, lobbying legislators and committee staff, and providing testimony.

*On October 8, Governor Newsom signed AB 557 into law.*

✓ **AB 1572 (Friedman) Potable water: nonfunctional turf / AB 1573 (Friedman) Water conservation: landscape design: model ordinance (CARPD Oppose to Neutral)**

AB 1572 prohibits the use of potable water for irrigation of nonfunctional turf located on commercial, industrial, or institutional properties as specified, and authorizes the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to create a form for compliance certification. Initially this bill was opposed unless amended by ACWA and a coalition of statewide associations, including CMUA, CSDA, and Cal Cities. The largest concern was that this measure’s definition of non-functional turf was broader than the emergency regulations put in place by the Governor which expire in 2024 and that the proposed prohibition applied to multifamily housing. Additionally, it would have inappropriately allowed water wholesalers and other entities that do not have a direct relationship with individual customers to enforce the provisions of this bill. The opposition coalition negotiated amendments to mitigate these impacts, however the amendments ultimately defined functional turf and non-functional turf in such a way that it would have prohibited some recreational spaces, such as fenced baseball fields, parks, and dog parks from being watered with potable water. RPPG quickly collaborated with the CSDA for additional leverage and jointly engaged the author’s office as the sole entities remaining with concerns to broker further amendments to mitigate CARPD’s impacts. Ultimately, RPPG and CSDA negotiated language that allowed for current use of these

recreational facilities to continue and to apply the bill's restrictions on watering only to areas of turf enclosed by fencing or other barriers that would *permanently* preclude human access for recreation or assembly. CARPD took a neutral position on the measure, as amended.

*On October 13, Governor Newsom signed AB 1572 into law, as amended to remove CARPD opposition.*

AB 1573 would make changes to required provisions in the Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance (MWELO), developed by the Department of Water (DWR), including the use of more nonnative plants that are non-invasive, provide pollinator benefits, are low-water use, and native plants, and prohibiting the use of nonfunctional turf in nonresidential landscape projects. However, AB 1573 shares the definition of functional and non-functional turf that is in AB 1572. When AB 1572 was amended to cause concern for CARPD member districts, the same provisions were placed into AB 1573. The RPPG and CSDA negotiated language that allowed for current use of recreational facilities to continue and to apply the bill's restrictions on watering only to areas of turf enclosed by fencing or other barriers that would *permanently* preclude human access for recreation or assembly was amended into both bills. As a result, CARPD took a neutral position on the measure as amended.

*On September 7, AB 1573 as amended to remove CARPD opposition was placed on the inactive file and is an eligible two-year bill.*

✓ **AB 1637 (Irwin) Local government: internet websites and email addresses (CARPD Oppose to Neutral)**

As initially proposed, AB 1637 would require all local government agencies to use a .gov or .ca.gov web address for all sub-pages or redirect traffic to one of these top or second tier domains and assign a matching email address to all staff by January 1, 2026. No compensation would be provided for this requirement, placing extreme fiscal burden under an unrealistic timeline resulting in little, if any, additional cybersecurity. RPPG engaged aggressively with a broad local government coalition to oppose the measure and defeat its forward motion. However, it became clear the measure had secured the political will to move through the legislative process. RPPG shifted gears, seeking to mitigate the bill's impacts to CARPD while continuing to engage in the opposition meetings with committee staff and target lawmakers. Ultimately, we worked in tandem with California Association of Special District (CSDA) advocates and the measure was amended to remove special districts from the bill's provisions. AB 1637 now requires cities and counties that maintain websites to utilize a ".gov" or ".ca.gov" by January 1, 2029.

*On October 8, Governor Newsom signed AB 1637 into law as amended to remove special districts. However, it is anticipated that the author may seek to expand the bill to special districts in future legislation and RPPG will continue to closely monitor activity.*

✓ **ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry) Local government financing: affordable housing and public infrastructure: voter approval (CARPD Support)**

This proposed constitutional amendment, if approved by a majority of statewide voters, would increase the taxing ability of local governments to fund public infrastructure and affordable housing. This measure reduces the existing local vote threshold requirement from two-thirds (2/3rds) to fifty-five (55) percent for local public infrastructure and affordable housing financing proposals using: general obligation bonds, sales and use/transaction and use taxes, or parcel taxes. If approved, the reduced vote threshold applies to local measures, including those appearing on the same ballot. RPPG provided the Association several memos analyzing the impacts of the measure at the local level and provided real time updates to staff on the measure's progress. This measure was heavily lobbied in support by non-profit housing groups and backed by labor organizations, as well as by the full spectrum of statewide local government associations

and individual agencies. However, ACA 1 faced fierce opposition from realtor and taxpayer accountability organizations who bombarded lawmakers with misinformation in the final days of session and nearly caused the measure to fail. RPPG worked in coordination with Assemblymember Aguiar Curry's office to target key members in the Senate and Assembly and strategized with the bill sponsors and stakeholders to mobilize and flip votes. In the last days and final hours of session RPPG advocates met with legislators in flux to combat misinformation and secure the votes needed to ensure the measure would pass.

*As a direct result of the advocacy efforts of RPPG and a coalition of stakeholders, ACA 1 passed the Legislature on the last day of session and was transmitted to the Secretary of State's office. Per SB 789 (Stats 2023, Ch 787; Allen), will be placed before voters on the November 5, 2024 ballot.*

### ✓ **ACA 13 (Ward) Voting thresholds (CARPD Support)**

This proposed constitutional amendment, if approved by a majority of statewide voters, would require that an initiative measure approved after January 1, 2024 that increases the voter approval requirement to adopt any state or local measure must receive a proportion of votes in favor of the initiative that is equal to or greater than the highest voter approval requirement imposed by the initiative. The measure also provides a right for local agencies to place advisory vote measures on local ballots. If approved, the new vote threshold applies to those qualifying measures appearing on the same ballot. This measure was introduced as a direct response to the California Business Roundtable (CBRT) initiative that has qualified for the November 2024 ballot and would greatly impact operations and taxing authority for public agencies. RPPG provided the Association several memos analyzing the impacts of the measure at the local level and provided real time updates to staff on the measure's progress. ACA 13 was heavily lobbied in support by labor organizations as well as the full spectrum of local government associations and individual agencies. However, it faced fierce opposition from the California Business Roundtable and taxpayer accountability organizations, who shared prolific and successfully confusing misinformation campaigns in the final weeks of session that led to lawmakers and supporters withdrawing support for the measure. RPPG advocates worked diligently in the final days to combat this misinformation campaign by disseminating myth busters to local agencies and legislators and working with the measure's sponsors and Assembly member Ward's staff to determine key messaging and target outreach lists. RPPG met directly with key individuals and lawmakers to shore up swing votes and, ultimately, ensured the measure's passage in the final hours of session.

*As a direct result of the advocacy efforts of RPPG and a coalition of stakeholders, ACA 13 passed the Legislature on the last day of session. The measure was "held at the desk" until after the deadline for March 2024 ballot measures and has now been transmitted to the Secretary of State's office, where it will be placed before voters on the November 5, 2024 ballot.*

### ✓ **SB 706 (Caballero) Public contracts: progressive design-build: local agencies (CARPD Support)**

Burdensome procurement requirements delay and create unnecessary cost to local government infrastructure projects. Currently, priority community projects can take years longer than needed to plan, fund, and build in some cases because progressive design-build authority has been extremely limited for local agencies, and in most cases available only for specific types of water projects. SB 706 expands local agency progressive design-build authority to any type of project for up to 10 public works projects in excess of \$5 million that are not on state-owned or state-operated facilities. On the Association's behalf, RPPG worked with the Association to craft support letters, testified in committees, and met directly with committee staff responsible for the bill's analysis to provide support and reasoning for the need for the measure. Throughout the process, RPPG worked in coordination with other stakeholders in support to ensure the



measure had the votes necessary to successfully pass through the Legislature and ultimately be signed by the Governor.

*On October 8, Governor Newsom signed SB 706 into law.*

✓ **SB 799 (Portantino) Unemployment insurance: trade disputes: eligibility for benefits (CARPD Oppose)**

SB 799 was a last minute gut and amend of a bill in the Assembly brought forward by Senator Portantino, Senate Appropriation Committee Chair, and Assemblymember Holden, Assembly Appropriation Committee Chair, just days before the legislative deadline to hear all fiscal measure on the suspense file. This is significant, as it was a power move to ensure compliance and votes in the measure's favor which resulted in lawmakers waving their rules and allowing the measure to be heard in policy and fiscal committees outside of regular deadlines and secured an easy pathway for the bill. This measure would have made a significant change to the current use of the State's Unemployment Insurance (UI) fund by providing unemployment to workers who are currently employed, and not seeking other employment, but have chosen as a labor negotiating tactic to go on strike. In the event of a strike that lasts over two weeks, SB 799 would have allowed all striking workers to claim UI benefits for up to 26 weeks. In this situation, a local government agency would experience simultaneous claims that would significantly increase UI costs. While CARPD member districts, like all local agencies, are self-insured through the use of JPAs that provide coverage via taxpayer dollars, many agencies also utilize and pay into the State's UI account. These costs would impact public employers, including cities, counties, special districts, and joint powers authorities. Additionally, CARPD indicated the measure could further erode good faith negotiations at the bargaining table for local government employers which could result in longer lengths of impasse, higher costs associated with protracted Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) proceedings, and a decline in quality of public services. Despite the rushed timeline providing for very little opportunity to create the will of lawmakers to strike down the measure, RPPG worked with a broad coalition of public employer stakeholders including CSDA, CalCities, CSAC, RCRC, UCC, ACHD, CAJPA, ACSA, and ultimately the UC Office of the President to oppose this measure. RPPG met multiple times with the author's office, committee staff, key lawmakers, and the Governor's office to discuss the impacts to local agencies and highlighting the very real potential for impacts to be amplified by other pending measures including AB 504 concerning sympathy strikes AB 1484 relating to collective bargaining for temporary employees (also CARPD Oppose).

*In a huge win for local government, as a direct result of RPPG advocacy efforts in coordination with the greater local government lobby – of which CARPD is now an integral member – on September 30 Governor Newsom vetoed SB 799, pointing to the insolvency of the State's UI fund and its \$20 billion debt.*

### Highlights: Measures Amended to Significantly Reduce Impacts to the Association

❖ **AB 1484 (Zbur) Temporary public employees (CARPD Oppose)**

AB 1484 Amends the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA) to require inclusion of temporary employees in the same bargaining unit as permanent employees and defines "temporary employee" to include part-time and seasonal workers, among other provisions. This bill was sponsored by SEIU and was one of their top two priorities for this legislative year. Due to this, opposition was met with heavy resistance from the author's office and committee staff in taking meetings or negotiating public agencies' requested amendments. RPPG joined forces with a coalition of stakeholders, including the California Special District's Association, California League of Cities, California State Association of Counties, Urban Counties of California, Rural Counties Representatives of California, and others to oppose AB 1484, creating Floor Alerts and letters to the Governor and securing additional powerful opposition to add to the effort. On behalf



of the Association, RPPG participated in meetings with committee staff doing Floor analysis and met several times with the Governor's office on AB 1484 (Zbur), SB 799 (Portantino), AB 452 (Addis), and SB 558 (Rubio) as a package of public agency priority oppose bills to persuade Governor Newsom to veto these bills. While these meetings ultimately did not result in a veto of AB 1484, they did result in the Governor's office requiring the bill to be substantially amended to remove two of CARPD's three top priority concerns with the bill language: 1) a provision that would have granted temporary employees access to the full grievance process after 30 days was struck entirely – which was CARPD's main priority, and 2) amendments were added to clarify that the temporary employee provisions of this bill do not apply to contracted employees secured through third party staffing entities.

*On October 10, Governor Newsom signed AB 1484 into law, as substantially amended to remove two out of three of CARPD's top concerns.*

#### ❖ **SB 399 (Wahab) Employer communications: intimidation (CARPD Oppose)**

SB 399 would prohibit an employer from subjecting, or threatening to subject, an employee any adverse action because the employee declines to attend an employer-sponsored meeting or affirmatively declines to participate in, receive, or listen to any communications with the employer, the purpose of which is to communicate the employer's opinion about religious or political matters. SB 399 provisions apply to all employers, including private employers as well as public employers such as local governments and the State of California and defines "Political matters" as matters relating to elections for political office, political parties, legislation, regulation, and the decision to join or support any political party or political or labor organization. While public employers do not appear to be the primary focus of SB 399, cities, counties, special districts, and all other local government employers are swept up in the bill's provisions. However, the author's office and bill sponsors – California Labor Federation, California Teamsters Public Affairs Council – were unwilling to consider amendments to the proposed bill as lawmakers in policy committees and on the Senate floor voted to pass the measure as proposed. RPPG joined forces with a substantial public agency coalition and coordinated closely with the private employer coalition to seek to defeat the bill, including CSDA, CalCities, CSAC, RCRC, UCC, and ACHD. RPPG participated in several meetings with the author's office, bill sponsors, committee staff, and the Governor's office to discuss the overly broad provisions of SB 399 that pose serious concerns for local jurisdictions. RPPG and the opposition coalition argued that many of the issues before a local agency, including special district member boards, would fall under "legislation" or "regulation" and are incompatible with the proper and legitimate functioning of government. While RPPG was unable to broker amendments through the legislative process, through the coalition's ongoing discussions with the Administration regarding impacts and cost of impacts the Department of Finance registered an official oppose position because it creates new state costs not included in the FY 2023 budget. This provided enough leverage to have the measure shelved for the remainder of the 2023 legislative session, providing RPPG and other coalition advocates time to build upon that momentum and work toward a solution that removes potential impacts to the ability of local agencies to conduct routine and critical community business.

*SB 399 was held under submission in the Assembly Appropriations committee and is an eligible two-year bill.*

## Client Communication

Client communication is a critical component of our overall advocacy approach. The better informed our clients are, the better the advocates we can be for them. One way to achieve this goal is to provide memos which include client-specific analyses of legislation, of regulatory matters, and of the overall legislative process, as needed. RPPG has sent more than 70 memos to your team in 2023 which have detailed legislative analyses that illustrate client-specific impacts and/or potential funding sources for the

Association and which keep it apprised of specific legislation and policies that may be of interest to Association members or impact district operations, including but not limited to the following areas:

- Recreation and park services.
- State budget, including infrastructure trailer bills.
- Constitutional amendments.
- Ballot measures.
- Regulatory actions.
- Transportation and public works.
- Public employer-employee relations and conditions.

In 2023, RPPG has conducted monthly Zoom meetings with the Association to keep it updated on what is happening in Sacramento. We call these check-in meetings the “bookends”; in between these meetings, our team connects with Association staff almost daily via calls and emails. Additionally, we prepared agendas, supporting materials, and presented to legislative committee members at all legislative committee meetings in 2023, including presenting at the Association’s annual conference. We also presented slide decks to the Board, as requested, on legislative developments and on the Association’s engagement in the legislative process.

RPPG has provided the Association with a legislative summary each month which informs the Association of key developments in the Legislature and of announcements by the Administration, and which updates the Association on any positioned legislation and RPPG activities on its behalf. Additionally, our team has provided Monthly Activity Reports, which detail every touchpoint RPPG has had with and on behalf of the Association. These reports highlight work product, including:

- Planning meetings with Association executive staff, the Board of Directors, and legislative committee members.
- Providing opportunities for the Association to establish and maintain relationships with members of the Administration, lawmakers and legislative committee staff, and executive staff at key state agencies.
- Sponsored legislation efforts and stakeholder outreach.

## Other RPPG Efforts

At RPPG, the job does not begin and end with state legislative advocacy. We worked tirelessly throughout this year to assist CARPD in any way we were able. This includes helping to solve local issues that have a state nexus, working with Association staff on new policies of relevance, providing education and awareness to Association members, and providing opportunities to showcase Association leadership before the Legislature.

**Development of CARPD’s Legislative Platform:** The legislative platform is a set of guiding principles that reflects the overarching ideals and vision of the Association. This document is critical in an overall legislative advocacy program as it provides broad policy statements that enable the Association and its legislative advocacy firm to sift through the thousands of legislative proposals introduced each legislative session to evaluate those measures that fall within the scope of the platform. Working in conjunction with Association staff and with legislative committee and Board input, RPPG developed the Association’s first ever legislative platform.

**Detailed Legislative Analysis:** RPPG provided detailed analyses of several pieces of legislation. These analyses have been critical in helping the Association assess potential implications that pending legislation may have on the Association’s member operations, local discretion, and/or authority. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Standalone analysis of ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry).
- Standalone analysis of ACA 13 (Ward).
- ACA 1 and ACA 13 and Interfacing with the CBRT measure, Combined Analysis.
- ACA 13 Myth Buster talking points.
- Standalone analysis of the proposed Government Transparency Act.
- Standalone analysis of Proposition 1: Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act of 2024.

**Updates on the Legislative and Fiscal Process:** RPPG provided timely informational updates during critical stages of the budget and policy processes. These updates provided CARPD members with the necessary situational awareness of statewide trends, fiscal updates, what the Association is positioned on, and how RPPG is engaging on their behalf. Examples include but are not limited to reports on:

- Bill introduction deadline
- House of Origin deadline
- Suspense file updates
- End of session legislative update
- Budget updates: January proposal, May-Revise, June budget update, and final budget update
- Budget Trailer bill update: Governor's infrastructure package
- Call to action: ACA 13 (WARD) Voting thresholds and ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry) Local government financing

**Grant Funding Opportunities:** Each month, the RPPG Grants team sends out a comprehensive Funding Opportunities Catalog. The purpose of the Catalog is to inform clients of upcoming, current, and forecasted grants opportunities. The Catalog is sorted by subject area (Sustainability, Transportation, Hazard Mitigation, etc.). In addition to the Catalog, RPPG sends targeted Grant Alerts highlighting recently announced programs. The Funding Catalog in addition to the Grant Alerts keep our clients up to date on all grant funding opportunities impacting the public sector. To date, 10 Grant Funding Catalogs and 38 Grant Alerts have been sent to clients in 2023.

**Sacramento Lobby Day:** RPPG organized a lobby day for the CARPD Board on March 15, 2023. The CARPD Board held their Board meeting in Sacramento in RPPG's conference room. RPPG also secured a conference room in the "Swing Space," where the Legislature meets while the Capitol is under construction, for the Board to meet with Members and staff of the Legislature. These visits included:

- Principal Consultant, Assembly Committee on Local Government
- Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Budget
- Principal Consultant, Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, Wildlife
- Assemblymember Quirk-Silva, Chair, Committee on Sports, Entertainment, and Tourism
- Assembly member Blanca Pacheco, AB 817 author
- Legislative Director, Senator Anna Caballero, Chair of Senate Governance and Finance committee
- Consultant, Senate Committee on Natural Resources

RPPG additionally arranged for several State agency officials to come to the RPPG offices to speak with the Board and engage in a roundtable discussion on Association priorities. These officials included:

- Deputy Director of Planning, Preparedness, and Prevention at California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)
- Interim Division Chief, CalPERS, Office of Stakeholder Relations
- Director of Office of Grants and Local Assistance (OGALS), Department of Parks and Recreation

**Providing opportunities to showcase the Association:** RPPG positioned the Association for greater visibility, through participating in lobby days and federal special district discussions, arranging for CARPD

executive staff to testify before state committees, and showcasing the Association's leadership.

Examples include arranging for:

- CARPD's Executive Director to serve as a lead witness on AB 334 (B. Rubio) before both the Assembly and Senate Elections committees.
- A personal one-on-one meeting with Assemblymember Rubio, accompanying CARPD to this meeting to discuss pre-committee planning and testimony messaging directly with the author.
- Members of the Board and CARPD staff to present the Legislator of the Year award to Assemblymember Pacheco in her Capitol office.
- A gallery viewing of session and a Capitol tour for CARPD staff by working directly with Assemblymember Joe Patterson, the member who represents the district in which CARPD offices are located and educating him on the Association's mission and statewide membership.

Further, RPPG:

- Attended CSDA lobby days on the Association's behalf, meeting directly with members and member staff to discuss district recreation and park operations.
- Participating in National Special District Coalition stakeholder discussions.
- Assisting the Recreation and Park district showcased in the CSDA legislative tour with planning for their presentation and messaging to attendees, which included key legislative staff and agency appointees.

## LOOKING AHEAD: 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### Change in Committee Chairs

With one of the most publicly contentious Assembly leadership changes in recent memory, it is a forgone conclusion that there will be major turnover in committee chairs. Upon the official transition, Speaker Rivas made swift changes to empower his closest allies—replacing Speaker Emeritus Rendon's entire team. However, given the timing of the transition, committee chairs have mostly stayed in place. As previously mentioned, the only two policy committee chair changes both have big impacts to local agencies with Isaac Bryan, the former Elections chair, elevated to Majority Leader and Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, former Local Government chair, elevated to Assembly Speaker pro Tempore. It is likely we will see major turnover in other committees directly impacting local government including Appropriations, Budget and Budget sub-committees, Natural Resources, Water, Parks and Wildlife, and others. Any such changes could potentially impact the pathway of priority legislation, either by creating new opportunities or further obstacles. It is widely anticipated that committee appointments will be announced sometime this month.

At his inaugural ceremony in the Capitol, Speaker Rivas spoke to tackling the state's housing and homelessness crises, improving public services and infrastructure, and combating climate change as his priorities. At the end of session, the current Chair of the Assembly Labor Committee credited the leadership of Rivas "for making labor legislation a priority and helping position it to pass." Given the Speaker's agricultural roots, strong personal lived experiences and ties to the labor movement, we can expect the Speaker to continue to put his power behind these proposals in 2024 and into the future. Just prior to the Assembly adjournment of the 2023 Legislative session, Speaker Rivas indicated 2024 would include a focus on homeowners' insurance, housing, public safety, homelessness, and the fentanyl crisis.

We also may see changes to committee chairs in the Senate due to the President pro Tempore change from Senator Atkins to Senator McGuire, who are also similarly ideologically aligned. However, this passing of the baton was not due to acrimonious dissent as in the Assembly, and it remains to be seen the extent to which McGuire will alter committee composition once he steps into the role of Pro Tempore. Senate

committees for which turnover is most likely to impact local governments include Governance and Finance, Appropriations, Judiciary, and any potential changes to the Budget committee or JLAC. Although no changes in the Senate have yet been made, we can expect announcements in January after the leadership change becomes official. Given that Senator McGuire's district is heavily affected by wildfires, it is likely that we will see this continue as a priority for the Legislature.

## Looming Budget Deficit

As projected in the final budget released in June, 2024 will see continued budgetary problems and likely additional cuts. The Legislature's non-partisan Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) recently released a report estimating that the FY 23-24 budget solved a \$27 billion deficit, which is notably below the \$31.5 billion deficit that the budget closed. The LAO attributes this difference to policies that had originally been projected to be included in the FY 23-24 budget but were ultimately not enacted. The LAO had previously projected a \$9 billion deficit for the next couple of budget cycles, though these forecasts may change when Governor Newsom releases his FY 24-25 budget proposal in January. The Administration is projecting a \$15 billion deficit, though the reality hangs on the actual revenues received once all personal income tax receipts are collected after the IRS's November 16 deferral deadline has passed. It was projected in the May revision of the FY 23-24 budget that in a recession scenario and depending on the circumstances, general fund revenues could shrink up to \$100 billion below current projections through FY 26-27.

For local government, an extended period of state fiscal uncertainty has the potential of cutting both ways. On the one hand, policies that aim to reduce local authority by mandating a new program have the potential of being held due to the state's budgetary concerns associated with new state reimbursable mandates. On the other hand, the Legislature has a long history of raiding local budgets to close that gap on its own budgetary challenge. We have already seen the elimination of redevelopment agencies and the redirection of local property taxes to the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund in order to close state budget gaps. Local governments need to remain vigilant in aggressively fighting any attempts by the state to reduce local funding formulas, or other longstanding tools that local agencies rely on to provide critical services.

## A Slowdown in Housing Legislation...Not so Fast

Over the past four years we have seen well over 120 new housing laws that are designed to increase the production of housing at all income levels. In 2023 alone we saw more than 150 housing-related measures introduced and about half of them were signed into law. Despite these legislative efforts, California has yet to realize the production boom that Governor Newsom has hoped for. Local government planning and land use is often easier for legislators to focus on rather than grappling with the realities of private markets, allocating major funding for subsidized housing, and challenging developers, environmental organizations, and other powerful interest groups. While local governments certainly have a responsibility to set the table and streamline local approval processes, it is arguable that much of this has already been addressed by layers of state laws, including many recently approved laws that local agencies are working diligently to implement.

To that end, an [October 13, 2023 LA Times Editorial](#), Jason Elliot, the Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff and the Administration's unofficial "Housing Czar", was quoted saying, "*The next challenge is implementing the ambitious housing laws that have been passed over the last seven years. All the pieces are in place. It is now time for California to put those pieces to work, to permit the housing, to say yes to new housing and to hold local governments accountable for their responsibilities.*"



So, will this mean a slowdown in the sheer volume of housing and homelessness-related legislation introduced next year? Likely not. It is expected that we will continue to see measures that aim to further bolster oversight and enforcement authority to the Attorney General and the Housing and Community Development Department. Moreover, it is likely that we will see more focus on measures that require local agencies to prioritize infill streamlining that fit within a jurisdiction's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), resulting in increased heights and densities near transit. Measures such as [AB 68](#) (Ward), which did not advance this year, would have required local governments to demonstrate the necessity for housing growth in suburban areas in order to meet housing mandates. These policies will be a top priority for housing advocates.

With the continual focus on development, it will be imperative to ensure that negotiations regarding eliminating or cutting back on impact fees are not revived and to ensure that the essential community and quality of life services provided by special district recreation and park services are included in discussions.

## Government Transparency Act

Earlier this year, nonprofit Consumer Watchdog proposed a ballot measure that, if passed by voters, would require a considerable increase in both state and local agency responsibility and cost, and would likely result in a high volume of frivolous litigation filed under the California Public Records Act. Titled the "Government Transparency Act," it is currently in the process of qualifying for the November 2024 ballot. Due to the severe costs that the requirements of the Act would impose on all public agencies, it is expected to face strong response from the Legislature and the Administration. The measure has until June 28, 2024, to qualify for the November ballot. Should this occur, we have major concerns that Legislature may cut a deal with ballot proponents by passing legislation which exempts the state while enacting the same or similar provisions currently being proposed impacting local government. Should a deal be reached, this would happen quickly, and we be in exchange for the proponents withdrawing the measure from the ballot. Should this happen, local governments are at risk of being left "holding the bag." We saw a similar process occur in 2018 when the California Business Roundtable pulled its tax measure in exchange for the state banning the ability of local governments to enact local soda taxes for 12 years.

## Climate Bond

Given that Governor Newsom balanced the FY 23-24 budget on a future resources bond, and that climate remains a top priority for the Governor and the Legislature, we anticipate such a bond to continue to advance next year and to be put to voters on the November 2024 ballot. The bond authors, currently Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia (D, Coachella) and Senator Ben Allen (D, Malibu), and other stakeholders, are currently aiming for a bond in the \$10-12 billion range. Both resources bonds, AB 1567 (Garcia) and SB 867 (Allen), are currently around \$15 billion, but the determination of the final amount, what's included, and which vehicle will carry the final package are all still under deliberation. Administration priorities will play a large role in shaping the end product. The expectation is that legislative leaders may push a bond through the legislative process much faster than usual in January so that stakeholders have ample time for voter outreach to be successful on the ballot. However, starker economic conditions may shape the final outcome and may change the overall debt load that the Governor is willing to endorse at the ballot box. Given the delay in income tax return collections due to IRS filing extensions, the Administration has warned the Governor's January budget proposal may have to be premised on significantly limited revenue data. Timing of the bonds may be impacted and unable to move as quickly as legislative leaders hope while the state is forced to play catch up on determining updated projections based on final returns.

## Wildfire Insurance

Governor Newsom [signed](#) an [executive order](#) on September 21 which requested that the Insurance Commissioner take regulatory action in the state's insurance market. That same day, the Insurance Commissioner [announced](#) a package of executive actions "aimed at improving insurance choices and protecting Californians from increasing climate threats while addressing the long-term sustainability of the nation's largest insurance market." Additionally, on October 9, the Assembly Insurance Committee and the Assembly Select Committee on Wildfire Prevention held an informational hearing on the state of the homeowner insurance market in California. Leaders agreed on the need for mitigation and for insurers to adjust rates based on mitigation efforts that homeowners have taken. However, there was disagreement whether insurance companies were taking an appropriate response to the wildfires. It is likely that this will be a hot topic in 2024, particularly given the new Senate President Pro Tempore, Mike McGuire, has a personal connection to the issue as his district has experienced multiple catastrophic wildfires in recent years. We anticipate we may see legislation in 2024 related to the homeowner insurance market, that may include measures relating to streamlining regulations, incentives for homeowners to take mitigation actions, or funding for communities to build additional defensible spaces. Given the domino effect of any impacts to the insurance market in California, alterations to the residential market could lead to a gap in the commercial insurance available to districts or to even higher premiums.

## LOOKING AHEAD: 2024 GRANT FUNDING

Over the past several years, we have seen unprecedented levels of discretionary spending at the state and federal levels. However, due to the state budget deficit, trends in state spending will begin to decline. California faces a \$31.5 billion deficit to be addressed through various strategies such as funding delays, triggers, and reductions. Programs involving water conservation, climate action, parks, and libraries have been particularly impacted. Major programs involving transportation, public safety, housing, homelessness, and community infrastructure remain stable, and proposed solutions to close the deficit aim to make as little impact on discretionary spending as possible.

In tandem with state spending strategies, funding programs at the federal level, specifically from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), will help mitigate the budget deficit. Funding for these programs remains stable but may be impacted by the upcoming 2024 Presidential Election. It remains critically important that local governments prepare themselves to take advantage of these opportunities sooner rather than later.

RPPG will continue to monitor new developments in the coming year as we look at these potential changes in the grant funding opportunity landscape. However, we encourage all clients to proactively begin considering potential projects that align with these grant programs to prepare for solicitation releases throughout the upcoming year.



### Parks and Recreation

#### Outdoor Equity Grants Program

The 2023 State Budget allocates \$25 million for the Outdoor Equity Grants Program, making \$50 million available for Round Two funding. This program improves the health and wellness of Californians through new educational and recreational activities, service learning, career pathways, and leadership opportunities that strengthen a connection to the natural world. OEP's intent is to increase the ability of

residents in underserved communities to participate in outdoor experiences within their community, at state parks, and other public lands.

- **Deadline:** 12/14/2023. Future funding TBD.
- **More information:** [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=30443](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30443)

### Habitat Conservation Fund

The Habitat Conservation Fund allocates approximately \$2 million each year to cities, counties, and districts. Eligible projects include nature interpretation programs to bring urban residents into park and wildlife areas, protection of various plant and animal species, and acquisition and development of wildlife corridors and trails.

- **Funding Cycle:** Anticipated deadline of June 2025
- **More information:** [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=21361](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21361)

### Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) administered by the Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS) provides funds annually to develop non-motorized recreational trails and trails-related facilities. The 2023 State Budget allocates \$25 million to this program for future funding cycles.

- **Funding Cycle:** Anticipated deadline of July 2025
- **More information:** [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=24324](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=24324)

### Statewide Parks Program

Statewide Park Program (SPP) competitive grants will create new parks and new recreation opportunities in critically underserved communities across California. The 2023 State Budget allocated \$53.5 million for future rounds of funding. Note: the FY 23 Round 5 cycle was cancelled due to the budget deficit.

- **Funding Cycle:** TBD 2024
- **More information:** [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=29939](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=29939)

### Urban and Community Forestry Program (Inflation Reduction Act)

The U.S. Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program supports urban tree-planting, urban forest planning and management, and related activities, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

- **Funding Cycle:** TBD 2024. FY 23 closed on June 1, 2023.
- **More information:** <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/urban-forests/ucf>



## Fire Response and Wildfire Mitigation

### Wildfire Prevention Grants Program

The Wildfire Prevention Grants Program provides funding for fire prevention projects and activities in and near fire threatened communities. Funded activities include hazardous fuels reduction, wildfire prevention

planning, and wildfire prevention education with an emphasis on improving public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Funding Cycle:** 1/10/2024
- **More Information:** <https://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/wildfire-prevention/>

### Community Wildfire Defense Grant

The purpose of the Community Wildfire Defense Grant is to assist at-risk local communities and Indian Tribes with planning for and mitigating against the risk created by wildfire. There are two primary project types for which the grant provides funding: The development and revising of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), and the implementation of projects described in a CWPP that is less than ten years old. The program prioritizes at-risk communities that are in an area identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential, are low-income, and/or have been impacted by a severe disaster. This program is funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

- **Funding Cycle:** TBD 2024. FY 23 applications were due October 31, 2023.
- **More Information:** <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/grants>

### Assistance to Firefighters Grant

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) focuses on enhancing the safety of the public and firefighters with respect to fire and fire-related hazards. Agencies can submit applications under three designations: Operations and Safety, Vehicle Acquisition, or Regional Projects. For Operations and Safety applications, agencies may voluntarily designate their proposal as a “Micro Grant” (no more than \$50,000). A mainstay of the annual competitive grant cycle, FEMA typically releases AFG applications in the early Winter.

- **Funding Cycle:** Anticipated release Q1 2024.
- **More Information:** <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters>

### Staffing for Adequate Fire Emergency Response (SAFER)

The Staffing for Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant program provides funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to assist in increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate fire protection from fire and fire-related hazards, and to fulfill traditional missions of fire departments. The SAFER grants are typically available in the early Winter, after the AFG.

- **Funding Cycle:** Anticipated release Q1 2024.
- **More Information:** <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safer>

### Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program (FP&S)

The Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program (FP&S) provides financial assistance for fire prevention programs and programs that support firefighter health and safety research and development. Organizations can apply under one of two categories: Fire Prevention and Safety or Research and Development.

- **Funding Cycle:** TBD 2024. FY 23 closed on March 31, 2023.

- **More Information:** <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safety-awards>

## Sustainability and Climate Adaptation

### Zero-Emission Vehicle Transit Funding

The 2023 State Budget includes a \$1.1 billion appropriation to the new Zero-Emission Transit Capital Program to be distributed through 2026. Zero-emission transit equipment, transit facility and network improvement projects such as those that support replacing aging vehicle fleets with Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEVs), and associated fueling or charging infrastructure or facility modifications, are eligible projects. ZEVs include heavy- and light-rail vehicles, buses, and other ZEVs used for transit service.

Funding from this program will be disturbed by the California Transportation Agency through a population-based formula to regional transportation agencies. [Informal Draft Guidelines](#) for the program were released on September 1, 2023, and include allocation projections for each regional agency (pg. 4).

- **Deadline:** 12/31/2023
- **More information:** <https://calsta.ca.gov/subject-areas/transit-intercity-rail-capital-prog>

### Climate Pollution Reduction Grants

The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$5 billion in funding to provide grants for developing plans to reduce GHG air pollution and implement projects identified in qualifying GHG air pollution reduction plans. As such, Implementation Grants are open to entities that received planning grants to develop Priority Climate Action Plans (PCAPs) under [phase 1 of the CPRG program](#), as well as entities that did not directly receive a planning grant that are applying for funds to implement measures included in an applicable PCAP.

- **Deadline:** 4/1/2024
- **More information:** <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>

### Adaptation Planning Grant Program

The Adaptation Planning Grant Program (APGP) will provide \$25 million to help fill local, regional, and tribal planning needs, provide communities the resources to identify climate resilience priorities, and support the development of a pipeline of climate resilient infrastructure projects across the state.

- **Funding Cycle:** TBD Winter 2023. FY closed on March 31, 2023.
- **More Information:** <https://www.opr.ca.gov/climate/icarp/grants/adaptation-planning-grant.html>

### Urban and Community Forestry Program (CAL FIRE)

The Urban and Community Forestry Program provides funding for projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve functionality of urban forests, arrest the decline of urban forest resources, address climate change resilience, improve the quality of the environment in urban areas, and optimize co-benefits to urban residents.

- **Funding Cycle:** TBD 2024.
- **More Information:** <https://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/urban-and-community-forestry-grant-programs/>



## Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law creates a new competitive grant program to strategically deploy publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure and other alternative fueling infrastructure along designated alternative fuel corridors. The Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants is composed of two categories: Community Charging and Corridor Charging. The Community Charging Grant can be used to install electric vehicle charging and alternative fuel in locations on public roads, schools, parks, and in publicly accessible parking facilities. The Corridor Charging Grant will be used to Deploy electric vehicle charging and hydrogen/propane/natural gas fueling infrastructure along designated alternative fuel corridors and in communities.

- **Funding Cycle:** TBD 2024. FY 23 closed on June 13, 2023.
- **More Information:** <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cfi/>

## Low or No Emission Transit Vehicle Program

The purpose of the Low-No Program, funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, is to support the transition of the nation's transit fleet to the lowest polluting and most energy efficient transit vehicles. The Low-No Program provides funding to state and local governmental authorities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities.

- **Funding Cycle:** TBD 2024
- **More Information:** <https://www.transit.dot.gov/lowno>

## Assistance for the Latest and Zero Building Energy Code Adoption

The Inflation Reduction Act provides \$670 million in grants for states and local governments to adopt building codes that meet or exceed zero energy provisions in the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code or an equivalent stretch code.

- **Deadline:** TBD 2024
- **More information:** <https://www.energy.gov/scep/technical-assistance-adoption-building-energy-codes>

## Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Program

The Inflation Reduction Act invests \$1 billion to replace dirty heavy-duty vehicles with clean, zero-emission vehicles, support zero-emission vehicle infrastructure, and to train and develop workers.

- **Funding Cycle:** TBD 2024
- **More information:** <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/clean-heavy-duty-vehicle-program>

---

**END OF REPORT**