

# California State Assembly



## Hearing Agenda

### Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4 on Climate Crisis, Resources, Energy, and Transportation

Assemblymember Steve Bennett, Chair

Wednesday, April 22, 2026  
9:30 A.M. – State Capitol, Room 447

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**Non-Presentation Items:** The following items do not receive a formal presentation from the Administration in order to focus time on the most substantial proposals. Members of the Subcommittee may ask questions or make comments on these proposals at the time designated by the Subcommittee Chair or request a presentation by the Administration at the discretion of the Subcommittee Chair. Members of the public are encouraged to provide public comment on these items at the designated time.

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**Public Comment will be taken in person after the completion of all panels and any discussion from the Members of the Subcommittee.**

## Presentation Items

### Various

#### Issue 1: Elimination of Vacant Positions – Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Food and Agriculture

#### General Background on the Elimination of Vacant Positions and Control Section 4.12 of the 2025 Budget Act

The Governor's budget assumes ongoing savings associated with the permanent elimination of vacant positions across all state agencies and departments. The authorization to eliminate vacant positions was included in [Control Section 4.12 of the 2025 Budget Act](#), which authorized the Department of Finance to adjust items of appropriation to achieve ongoing savings associated with the elimination of the positions. In total, [6,002.4 vacant positions were proposed for elimination](#) beginning in 2025-26, with savings totaling \$478.1 million (\$182.3 million General Fund) and \$487.1 million (\$191.3 million General Fund) in 2026-27, ongoing.

The 2025 Budget Act gave the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) until January 1, 2026, to review and express nonconcurrency to the elimination of a subset of vacant positions. Specifically, JLBC had the authority to review and non-concur with the proposed elimination of positions authorized to implement legislation passed in 2022 and 2023 and positions at nine specified departments. The nine departments included the Office of Inspector General, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Pesticide Regulation, State Water Resources Control Board, Department of Toxic Substances Control, Department of Industrial Relations, Department of Food and Agriculture, and the Department of Veteran Affairs.

In total, the JLBC was authorized to review the proposed elimination of 1,008.7 positions.

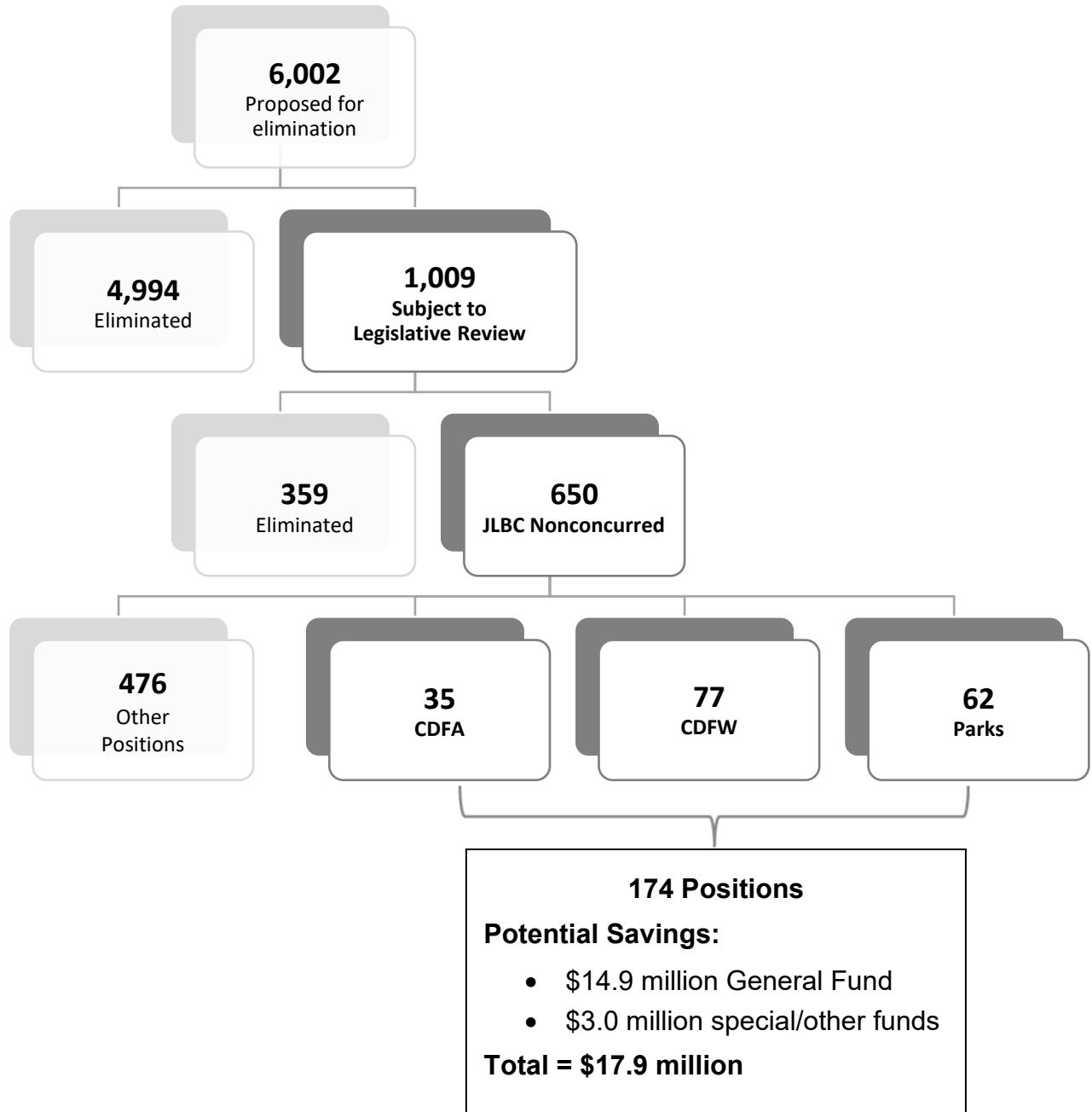
After reviewing responses from the various departments to questions posed by the JLBC, the committee identified 650.1 positions that merited additional review by the Legislature and issued a [response letter](#) on December 29, 2025 non-concurring with their elimination.

The Governor's budget continues to assume savings associated with the elimination of the 650.1 positions in fiscal year 2026-27.

A total of 5,352.3, were effectively eliminated on January 1, 2026.

**Governor’s Proposed Elimination of Vacant Positions**

JLBC Did Not Concur with the Elimination of 174 Positions within the Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Parks and Recreation, and Food and Agriculture.



**Vacant Position Eliminations at the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)**

Of the 6002.4 positions being eliminated, 164.3 positions are within the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). According to the Governor’s January budget, CDFW has a total of 3,312.5 authorized full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

The 2025-26 Budget Act approved in June, estimated the savings associated with the elimination of positions at CDFW to be \$22.7 million (\$10.7 million General Fund). However, the Governor’s January budget revised the total savings to \$11 million (\$10.7 million General Fund) – a reduction of \$11.6 million in non-General Fund savings. The January budget maintains most of CDFW’s special fund spending authority associated with the positions without maintaining position authority. The budget continues to reflect the elimination of all 164.3 positions, including those supported by non-General Fund sources.

Department of Fish and Wildlife Control Section 4.12 Vacant Position Eliminations			
Positions	Savings from Vacant Position Eliminations		
Total FTEs Proposed to be Eliminated	General Fund Savings (# of positions)	Other Fund Savings (# of positions)	Total Savings
164.3	\$10,734,000 (76 FTEs)	\$293,000 (88.3 FTEs)	\$11,675,000

**JLBC’s Review of Proposed Eliminations.** Of the 164.3 positions proposed for elimination, JLBC objected to the elimination of 77.1 full-time equivalents. Maintaining the positions would result in a loss of savings totaling \$4.6 million General Fund. There is no lost special fund savings because the Governor’s budget retains special fund spending authority associated with the eliminated FTEs.

The JLBC identified five areas and non-concurred with positions that performed or had responsibilities associated with those specific activities. The following chart shows the breakdown of responsibilities and the number of positions JLBC non-concurred with:

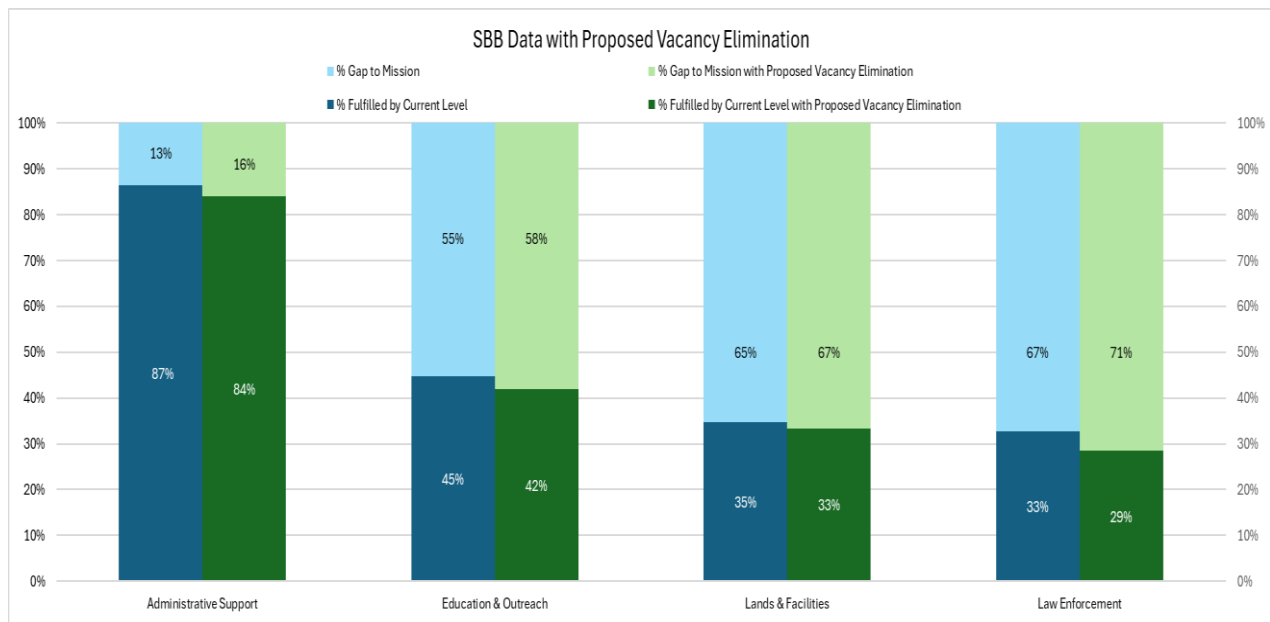
JLBC Non-concur List for CDFW	
Responsibility/Activity Performed by Position	Number of Positions
• California Endangered Species Act Permitting Activities	3
• Streambed/Lake Alteration Activities	12
• Oil Spill Prevention and Response	14.1
• Law Enforcement - Wildlife and Resource Protection	45
• Cutting Green Tape Initiative	3
Total Number of Positions	77.1

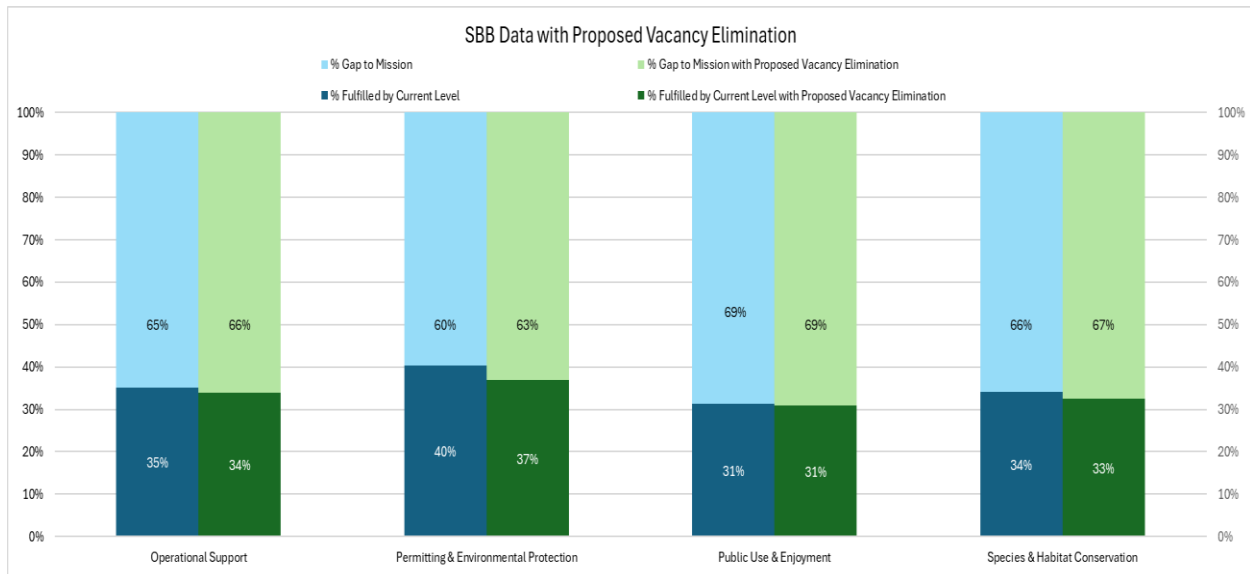
**Impact of Position Eliminations on CDFW’s Service-Based Budgeting Gaps.** SB 854 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 51, Statutes of 2018, directed CDFW to conduct a service-based budget (SBB) review. SBB is a task-based budgeting approach that describes the services the department provides and informs budgeting and operational approaches by identifying current staffing at the task level, projected staffing needs to meet its mission, operational improvement actions that may reduce costs, and revenue sources supporting specific activities. SBB is a budgeting approach that identifies the tasks needed to accomplish the department’s mission. This review informs future budgets based on staff time needed to complete these tasks. The SBB approach is task-based, labor-focused, and organized by CDFW’s services to the public. The SBB organizes CDFW into eight service areas, reflecting its core programs:

- Public use and enjoyment
- Species and habitat conservation
- Permitting and environmental protection
- Lands and facilities
- Law enforcement
- Education and outreach
- Operational support
- Administrative support

Last year, CDFW provided the Senate Budget Subcommittee #2 with a status update on the SBB which identified gaps in meeting its service-based missions.

The chart below shows how the proposed eliminations of the 164.3 positions will increase the service gaps by up to 4%, depending on the mission.





**Vacant Position Eliminations at Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks)**

Of the 6002.4 positions proposed for permanent elimination, 85 positions are within the California Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) – accounting for savings of \$11.7 million (\$10.4 million General Fund). According to the Governor’s January budget, Parks has a total of 4,743.1 authorized positions.

Department of Parks and Recreation Control Section 4.12 Vacant Position Eliminations			
Positions	Savings from Vacant Position Eliminations		
Total FTEs Proposed to be Eliminated	General Fund Savings (# of positions)	Other Fund Savings (# of positions)	Total Savings
85	\$10,443,000 (71 FTEs)	\$1,233,000 (14 FTEs)	\$11,676,000

**JLBC’s Review of Proposed Eliminations.** Of the 85 positions proposed for elimination, JLBC non-concurred with the elimination of 62 positions. Maintaining the positions would result in a loss of savings totaling \$8.6 million General Fund.

Similar to the review conducted on the positions eliminated at CDFW, the JLBC identified five key missions performed by Parks. The JLBC tried to identify positions, if eliminated, that might have an impact on the department’s ability to protect environmental, cultural and historical resources, provide public safety, address deferred maintenance or provide interpretive or educational experiences to visitors. The JLBC identified five areas of particular concern and non-concurred with positions that performed or had responsibilities associated with those specific activities. The following chart shows the breakdown of responsibility and the number of positions the committee non-concurred with:

<b>JLBC Non-concur List for State Parks</b>	
Responsibility/Activity Performed by Position	Number of Positions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixing State Parks Initiative</li> </ul>	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Safety/Peace Officers</li> </ul>	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for Addressing Deferred Maintenance</li> </ul>	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Environmental, Cultural and Historical Resource Protection</li> </ul>	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide Interpretative and Educational Services</li> </ul>	6
Total Number of Positions	62

**Fixing State Parks/Service-Based Budgeting.** The 2018 Budget Act added 364 full-time positions to improve the state park system, allowing the delivery of critical services that addressed facilities and other infrastructure and increased access to parks. Called “Fixing State Parks and Improving Access for All Californians,” the initiative was designed to increase services across a variety of programs and emphasized those that directly benefitted park visitors by improving access and fixing and maintaining the aging infrastructure of the state parks system. Significant resources were directed to addressing deferred maintenance projects, protecting and preserving biological and cultural resources, improving interpretive and educational programs and visitor safety.

**Concerns with the Elimination of Positions at State Parks.** Based on the responses from the department, the JLBC was concerned that staff reductions may require prioritization of urgent needs and deferral of lower-priority work. As a result, the department may also need to engage outside consultants to fill essential roles and manage the ongoing work. Ultimately, the reliance on private consultants to backfill lost staff positions may have implications for both efficiency and cost.

**Vacant Position Eliminations at Department of Food and Agriculture**

Of the 6002.4 positions proposed for permanent elimination, 69.1 positions are within the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) – accounting for savings of \$6.9 million (\$2.7 million General Fund). According to the Governor’s January budget, CDFA has a total of 2,059.1 authorized positions.

**JLBC’s Review of Proposed Eliminations.** Of the 69.1 positions proposed for elimination, JLBC objected to the elimination of 35 positions. Maintaining the positions would result in a loss of savings totaling \$4,696,000 (\$1,742,000 General Fund).

The JLBC tried to identify positions that, if filled, could assist with pest management and invasive species prevention activities or ensure program integrity through the oversight of the various departmental programs. The positions the committee identified include a wide range of responsibilities ranging from animal health to pest detection, and include positions classified as

pest prevention specialists, environmental scientists, veterinarians, special investigators, and program auditors.

Nineteen of the 35 positions JLBC non-concurred with were associated with the state's pest and invasive species programs including invasive fruit fly detection, sterile medfly production and the Broomrape program authorized by [AB 402 \(Aguiar-Curry\), Chapter 651, Statutes of 2023](#). According to CDFA, some of the roles will be backfilled with seasonal employees or hired into the temporary help blanket until vacant positions are available elsewhere in the department. JLBC was concerned the eliminations could potentially result in a reduction in early detection capabilities, potentially allowing invasive pests and species to spread more quickly.

The remaining 16 positions JLBC non-concurred with, perform audits and investigations across a variety of programs and provide oversight of important departmental programs. These positions include Auditors, Special Investigators, and Environmental Scientists, which help ensure program integrity and compliance with the many programs overseen by CDFA.

According to CDFA, many of the positions that were identified for elimination were unfunded positions that were being held vacant, while the others had been vacant for at least a year (mostly due to hard-to-fill locations or classifications). The department also pointed out that low wages impact recruitment, especially in high cost-of-living areas, making it difficult to hire for some of the hard-to-fill positions.

**Concerns with the Elimination of Positions at CDFA.** Last year, when the administration identified the positions proposed for elimination, a coalition of agricultural industry stakeholders expressed opposition to the proposed cuts. The industry coalition, which is primarily responsible for supporting the department through special funds generated by fees and industry-specific taxes, raised concerns about the impact the position eliminations would have on pest detection and eradication programs that protect crops, public health, and the environment from invasive species such as the exotic fruit fly and Asian citrus psyllid disease surveillance along with the impacts on rapid response systems that protect livestock from threats such as avian influenza or other contagious pathogenic viruses.

#### LAO Comments

***Maintaining Positions Would Erode Savings Administration Assumed in the Governor's Budget...*** The Legislature did not concur with the elimination of 650 positions from the Governor's original proposed amount, including 349 environmental positions. As such, the Governor's proposal is not consistent with the priorities the Legislature expressed through the JLBC letter. However, if departments were able to retain and fill these positions, the budget would not achieve the associated level of savings assumed in the Governor's budget. Consequently, if the Legislature wishes to retain the positions as part of its final budget package, it likely will need to find a commensurate level of savings elsewhere in the budget, at least for those positions supported by the General Fund.

***...However, Maintaining Special-Funded Positions Would Not Directly Affect General Fund Condition.*** JLBC did not concur with the elimination of 349 environmental positions. Of

these, a majority—about 216—receive special fund support, while about 133 receive General Fund support. If all of these positions ultimately are eliminated—as the Governor proposes—they would generate \$19 million in General Fund savings and \$25 million in special fund savings. Depending on their balances and constraints, certain special funds can be tools to help address a budget deficit, such as by providing loans to the General Fund or taking on expenditures previously funded by the General Fund. However, in many cases, the residual positions in question supported by special funds do not have a direct impact on the General Fund and thus do not factor directly into efforts to balance the budget. Consequently, if the goal of eliminating vacant positions is to address the state’s structural imbalance, in many cases, applying this approach to special-funded positions will not help. Rather, the primary fiscal results of this action will be larger reserves of unspent monies in these funds. Moreover, often special funds administered by CNRA and CalEPA departments, CDFW, and CPUC are structured specifically to ensure fee-payers help support regulatory activities and the mitigation of their industry’s environmental impacts. As such, reducing positions and expenditures could mean that funds—at least in the near term—end up sitting unused in account balances rather than supporting the activities that fee-payers have paid the state to undertake.

***Eliminating Certain Positions Could Have Undesirable Programmatic Impacts.*** The environmental positions proposed to be eliminated were authorized to serve important state functions, including related to preserving health and safety and enforcing state laws. This was one of the key arguments JLBC cited for opposing their permanent elimination. For example, at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), positions include game wardens who provide important law enforcement and wildlife and resource protection services. Some CDFW positions also administer various permits, a key function to ensure that projects—from habitat restoration to infrastructure and housing development—can be completed with less damage to the environment. Positions proposed for elimination at the Department of Parks and Recreation include public safety officers and staff protecting environmental, cultural, and historical resources. At the State Water Resources Control Board, positions include staff who help regulate waste discharge into waters of the state, including drinking water sources. Eliminating these positions consequently would come with serious trade-offs.

***Positions May Address Important Needs Despite Being Vacant.*** The administration targeted vacant positions to achieve budgetary savings. Eliminating a vacant position may appear to have less of an impact on a department than eliminating a filled position. However, positions can be vacant for a number of reasons. For example, in the case of recently enacted legislation, departments likely had not yet had time to hire staff and still were in the initial process of filling the newly established positions when the Department of Finance determined that the positions would instead be eliminated. Additionally, positions can be vacant due to recruitment challenges, labor market constraints, or operational or practical considerations (for example, a department may still be filling a position after a recent employee departure), rather than as an indication of reduced program workload. While such challenges can lead to delays in filling positions, they do not mean these roles will not eventually be filled, nor that the responsibilities such staff perform are not important. While eliminating vacancies could appear to be an easy way to achieve ongoing budgetary savings, in some cases doing so could undermine environmental departments’ long-term capacity and ability to achieve the goals and tasks laid out for them in state law.

## LAO Recommendations

**Maintain Special-Funded Environmental Positions Identified by JLBC.** We recommend the Legislature reject the elimination of 216 environmental positions supported by special funds that JLBC identified in its nonconurrence letter to the administration. The costs associated with these positions—totaling \$25 million—would begin to accrue as positions are filled. We find several compelling reasons for maintaining these positions. As described above, these positions serve important purposes and eliminating them could have negative programmatic impacts. Many of these positions may be vacant because they are hard to fill or for point-in-time circumstances, and not because they lack importance. Moreover, the fees used to pay for many of these positions were designed specifically to support the regulation and mitigation of industry’s environmental impacts. Through JLBC, the Legislature already expressed its preference for maintaining these positions and doing so would not have an impact on the General Fund condition.

**Weigh Importance of General-Funded Environmental Positions Against Other Budget Priorities.** For the 133 General-Funded environmental positions identified by JLBC in its nonconurrence letter, we recommend the Legislature consider the relative merits within the context of its overall budget architecture. Although many of the same arguments apply about the programmatic importance of these positions, maintaining them will have an impact on the General Fund condition (about \$19 million) and could require the Legislature to identify other budgetary reductions to accommodate their support. If the Legislature were to maintain these positions, costs would not accrue until the positions are filled. Consequently, the total 2026-27 cost likely would be less than \$19 million.

### Panel

- Stephen Benson, Assistant Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance
- Sonja Petek, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office

Department representatives may also be available to answer questions on department impacts of vacancy eliminations.

### Staff Comments

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. Can CDFA address concerns raised by agricultural industry stakeholders about eliminating vacant positions that support early pest detection and eradication programs, and controlling invasive species?
2. What is CDFW’s current staffing capacity as it relates to permitting? What is the impact of sweeping vacant permitting positions on the department’s ability to meet mandated permitting responsibilities?

3. What do CDFW's game wardens do? How do vacancy eliminations affect the percentage of game warden positions that are filled, and how does elimination positions impact public safety? What areas of the State might be most impacted? What enforcement activities will be impacted?
4. A number of the CDFW positions slated to be cut are land management positions? What CDFW lands will be impacted? Are there any lands that will not have staff to manage them properly? Will there be an impact to public safety with the loss of these positions?
5. Please explain how the loss of park ranger positions will impact State Parks in California? Which state parks will be most impacted? What activities will be impacted?
6. How will lost of maintenance and management positions at State Parks affect deferred maintenance within the Park system?
7. Can the Administration share what criteria were used to decide which positions were proposed for elimination?
8. How does the permanent elimination of vacant positions supported by special funds address the state's General Fund structural deficit?
9. What is the benefit of eliminating vacant positions instead of implementing a temporary hiring freeze?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

**Issue 2: Opening Remarks – Secretary Karen Ross**

The Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary, Karen Ross, will provide remarks on the 2026-27 proposed departmental budget.

**Staff Comments**

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. How has the State’s work been impacted by the Federal Administration and the changes it’s made in the agricultural space? Where are the largest impacts?
2. How have macroeconomic and structural pressures, such as supply chain disruptions, tariffs, inflation, labor constraints, and water scarcity, affected California farmers?
3. What are the most pressing food safety risks facing California today, and what actions is CDFA taking to address them?
4. Drawing on your tenure as Secretary, what lessons can you share about how the State can assist the agricultural sector remain resilient during times of fiscal uncertainty?

**Staff Recommendation:** Informational, no action needed.

**Various**

**Issue 3: Prop. 4 Climate Smart Agriculture 2026-27 Proposed Spending Plan**

Proposition 4 includes a total of \$300 million for a variety of activities related to supporting climate smart agriculture. As shown in the figure below, the Governor proposes to appropriate \$89 million, or 30 percent, of the total \$300 million in 2026-27. After accounting for the \$154 million appropriated in 2025-26, this would leave \$57 million – or 19% – available for future years.

**Chapter 7. Climate Smart Agriculture**  
(\$ in Millions)

Department	Program	2025-26	2026-27 Proposed	Bond Total
Dept. of Food & Agriculture	Healthy Soils Program	\$36	\$26	\$65
	State Water Efficiency & Enhancement Program	\$38	\$0.7	\$40
	Invasive Species Account	\$20	\$0	\$20
	Certified Mobile Farmers' Markets	\$10	\$10	\$20
	Year-Round Certified Farmers' Markets	\$10	\$10	\$20
	Urban Agriculture Projects	\$19	\$0.4	\$20
	Regional Farm Equipment Sharing	\$0.2	\$14	\$15
	Tribal Food Sovereignty	\$0.2	\$14	\$15
Dept. of Conservation	Protection, Restoration, Conservation and Enhancement of Farm and Range Lands	\$7	\$0.2	\$15
	Improve Land Access and Tenure for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, Ranchers, or Tribal Producers	\$0	\$5	\$30
Dept. of Community Services & Development	Farmworkers Housing Component of the Low-Income Weatherization Program	\$0.2	\$9	\$10
California Vanpool Authority	Deployment of Vanpool Vehicles, Clean Technologies and Infrastructure	\$0	\$0	\$15

California Dept. of Education	Grants to Postsecondary Education Institutions to Develop Research Farms to Improve Climate Resiliency	\$15	\$0	\$15
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$154</b>	<b>\$89</b>	<b>\$300</b>

**Descriptions of Programs for Proposed Spending**

Below are brief descriptions of the programs with proposed investments in the Administration’s spending plan:

- Healthy Soils Program – Promotes the development of soil health on California’s farmlands and ranchlands through conservation management practices, using three grant types:
  - *Incentive Grants* provide financial incentives directly to growers and ranchers to implement practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs), and improve soil health.
  - *Demonstration Grants* fund on-farm demonstration projects that collect data, promote and display conservation management practices, and assess the potential of innovative practices in California.
  - *Block Grant Pilot* funds projects by farmers and ranchers through regional block grant administrators, while building their technical assistance capacity.
  
- State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program – Provides financial incentives for agricultural operations to invest in irrigation systems that save water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
  
- Invasive Species Account – Established per AB 2470 (Chapter 870, Grayson, 2018) the account provides funding to the CDFA secretary for the purposes of funding invasive species projects and activities recommended by the Invasive Species Council of California.

Bond language includes that, “preference shall be given to projects that restore and protect biodiversity and ecosystem health. Consideration shall be given to geographic equity.”

For previous appropriations, the Invasive Species Council asked its advisory committee to develop funding recommendations. The advisory committee held public meetings which culminated in forwarding recommendations to the Invasive Species Council. CDFA staff note a similar process would occur to allocate Prop. 4 funds.

- Certified Mobile Farmer’s Market – AB 2786 (Chapter 915, Bonta, 2024) established certified mobile farmers' markets to provide accessibility to foods that are grown, harvested, and produced in California by reaching residents in communities that have

limited access to nutritious foods, supermarkets, and grocery stores, including communities in rural, underserved, and tribal areas.

- Year-round Certified Farm’s Markets – Section 93540(b) provides \$20 million to develop year-round infrastructure for certified farmers’ markets including but not limited to:
  - All-weather infrastructure such as canopies and shade structures, tables and seating, market stalls, restrooms and hand wash stations, tent weights and tie-downs, produce washing stations, barricades and bollards for traffic management and pedestrian safety, bicycle parking racks, and other equipment.
  - Facilities for food preparation, cooking demonstrations, and other nutrition education.
  - Wireless electronic benefits transfer point-of-sale terminals for market managers and producers to process CalFresh transactions.
  - Wireless electronic benefits transfer point-of-sale terminals for producers to accept the electronic cash value benefit through the program designed to implement the federal WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-314) pursuant to Section 123279 of the Health and Safety Code, or equivalent tribal programs.
  - Other equipment to support the seniors farmers’ market nutrition program, as described in Section 3007 of Title 7 of the United States Code, or equivalent tribal programs.
- Urban Agriculture Projects – Projects that create or expand city or suburban community farms or gardens, including community food producers, as defined in Section 113752 of the Health and Safety Code, through in-ground small plot cultivation, raised beds, mushroom growing, rooftop farms, and cultivation of vacant lots and in parks.
- Regional Farm Equipment Sharing Program – Grants for regional farm equipment sharing. Bond language requires that preference be given to projects and programs that benefit small- and medium- sized farms and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.
- Tribal Food Sovereignty – Funding to advance tribes’ food sovereignty to grow, produce, procure, and distribute foods that reflect Native American culture and traditions and support the development of tribal producers and vendors, including, but not limited to, the following projects: (1) Irrigation and water infrastructure; (2) Utility and power infrastructure; and (3) Food processing infrastructure.
- Protection, Restoration, Conservation and Enhancement of Farm and Range Lands – The funding in this suballocation would be split under two existing programs within the Department of Conservation – the California Farmland Conservancy and the Working Lands and Riparian Corridors Program. Together these programs would support funding conservation easements and land improvements on conserved land.

- Improve Land Access and Tenure for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, Ranchers, or Tribal Producers – Under the Department of Conservation, this suballocation would create a new program.
  - A bill to provide policy direction on the implementation of this program was vetoed by the Governor during last year’s legislative session (AB 524, Wilson). The Assembly’s proposed path forward to implement this program is discussed in greater detail in the staff comment section of this discussion item.
- Farmworkers Housing Component of the Low-Income Weatherization Program – Provides low-income farmworker households no-cost energy efficiency upgrades designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by saving energy. This is an existing program under the Department of Community Services and Development.
- Deployment of Vanpool Vehicles, Clean Technologies and Infrastructure – The suballocation for this item – \$15 million – is pending appropriation in the Administration’s spending plan. Funds would be used for the deployment of vanpool vehicles, clean technologies, and related facilities, including, but not limited to, charging and alternative fuel infrastructure, for use by low-income agricultural workers.
- Grants to Postsecondary Education Institutions to Develop Research Farms to Improve Climate Resiliency – All \$15 million from this suballocation was appropriated in the 2025-26 budget; however, funding is contingent upon the enactment of AB 1486 (Soria) in the 2025-26 legislative session.

#### Panel

- Karen Ross, Secretary, Department of Food and Agriculture
- Ahmed Seyam, Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Nate Williams, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office

#### Staff Comments

##### Comments:

Last year, AB 524 (Wilson), the Farmland Access and Conservation for Thriving Communities Act, advanced through the legislative process, but was vetoed by the Governor. In the Governor’s veto message, he stated, “While this bill would authorize the program to receive funds from Proposition 4 - The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 - recent budget action by the Legislature did not explicitly appropriate funding to support this program and there is no sustained funding to support the ongoing cost pressure this program would create... With significant fiscal pressures and the federal government’s hostile economic policies, it is vital that we remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.”

This year, the Administration is proposing to appropriate \$5 million from PRC Section 93550. As the drafters of Prop. 4, the Legislature’s intended use of this suballocation is for implementation of the policy framework in AB 524.

The Assembly is committed to ensuring the Administration has the necessary policy direction to administer this funding as the Legislature intended. Therefore, the Assembly is proposing to include the language in AB 524 as trailer bill language to implement this allocation in the bond. This Assembly proposal will provide the Administration with policy guidance as they develop this new program, and this guidance would be complementary to the proposed \$5 million included in the Administration’s 2026-27 spending plan to stand up the new program.

**Questions:**

1. Can CDFA please provide a status update on the implementation of various grant programs in light of the passage of AB 107 and approval of the Administrative Procedures Act exemption for 2025-26 appropriations?
2. Can the Department of Conservation please share what its concerns are with the language in AB 524, and how the Legislature can work with the Administration to ensure there is adequate statutory guidance to implement funding in Prop. 4?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

**Issue 4: Prop. 4 – Extreme Heat Mitigation 2026-27 Proposed Spending Plan**

Proposition 4 includes a total of \$450 million for a range of extreme heat mitigation programs. As shown in the figure below, the Governor’s budget proposes to appropriate \$241 million in 2026-27 – 54 percent of the total from this chapter of the bond. After accounting for the \$110 million appropriated in 2025-26, this would leave \$99 million – or 22% – available for future years.

**Chapter 5. Extreme Heat Mitigation**  
(\$ in Millions)

Department	Program	2025-26	2026-27 Proposed	Bond Total
Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation	Extreme Heat & Community Resilience Program	\$23	\$24	\$50
	Transformative Climate Communities Program	\$1	\$137	\$150
	Community Resilience Centers	\$0.8	\$55	\$60
Natural Resources Agency	Urban Greening Program	\$47	\$1	\$100
CAL FIRE	Urban Forests Program	\$0.5	\$23	\$50
Dept. of Food & Agriculture	Fairground Upgrades	\$38	\$0.7	\$40
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$110</b>	<b>\$241</b>	<b>\$450</b>

**Descriptions of Programs for Proposed Spending**

Below are brief descriptions of the programs with proposed investments in the administration’s spending plan:

- Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program – projects to reduce the impacts of extreme heat through investments including physical infrastructure, planning, nature-based solutions, and emergency preparedness.
- Transformative Climate Communities – funds community-led development and infrastructure projects that achieve major environmental, health, and economic benefits in California’s most disadvantaged communities.
- Community Resilience Centers – funds neighborhood-level resilience centers to provide shelter and resources during climate and other emergencies, as well as year-round services and programming that strengthen community connections and ability to withstand disasters.

- Urban Greening Program – funds urban greening and forestry projects that reduce GHG emissions, mitigate the effects of extreme heat, and provide additional benefits including a decrease in air and water pollution or a reduction in the consumption of natural resources and energy.
- Urban Forests Program – funds the expansion and maintaining of urban forests in cities and communities to improve air quality, provide shade, and reduce heat islands.

**LAO Comments**

Under the proposal, the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation would receive \$217 million in the budget year to administer three extreme heat and community resilience programs, with the largest allotment for the Transformative Climate Communities Program (\$137 million). This represents a noticeable ramp-up compared to the first year of Proposition 4 grant funding for this program, which was allocated \$1 million to support initial planning activities. Another major recipient of the proposed funding for 2026-27 is CalFire’s urban forests program (\$23 million). The Governor’s proposal includes a small amount of administrative funding for CNRA’s Urban Greening Program, leaving the remaining balance of \$52 million to be appropriated in a future year.

**Panel**

- Courtney Massengale, State Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Lizzie Urie, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office
- Gökçe Sencan, Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office

Department representatives may also be available to answer questions on specific suballocations in the bond.

**Staff Comments**

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. Can LCI please provide an implementation update on its grant programs under this chapter?
2. What did LCI staff learn about organizations that took advantage of the funding set aside in the Transformative Climate Communities Program for technical assistance?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

## 8570 Department of Food and Agriculture

### Issue 5: Advancing Farm to School and Local Food Systems (Budget Change Proposal and Trailer Bill Language)

The Governor's budget requests \$24,600,000 General Fund in 2026-27, \$24,200,000 General Fund in 2027-28, and \$25,200,000 General Fund in 2028-29 and ongoing and 10 permanent positions for the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program. The Governor's budget also requests trailer bill language to codify the Farm to School Program as the "Farm to School Act".

#### Background:

The Office of Farm to Fork within the CDFA currently manages the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, which provides competitive grants to support the adoption and expansion of farm to school practices. Specifically, the program: (1) supports schools and child care centers in procuring locally grown food and providing hands-on food education; (2) assists producers in increasing production capacity to supply food to schools and child care centers; and (3) supports organizations in providing technical assistance to schools, child care centers, and producers that are seeking to implement and advance farm to school practices. The program was first established with \$8.5 million from the General Fund in 2020-21, with subsequent budget packages providing General Fund appropriations of \$30 million in 2021-22 and \$60 million in 2022-23—all provided on a one-time basis. The 2025 budget also included one-time funding of \$24.9 million General Fund for 2025-26 for the California Farm to School Network, the California Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, and Climate Smart Technical Assistance.

The current proposal, as opposed to previous requests, asks for ongoing program funding in the amount of \$25,200,000 General Fund in addition to requesting Trailer Bill Language which codifies the program as the "Farm to School Act", representing a significant change from the year-on-year funding structure which has previously supported the program.

#### Core programs within the Farm to School Program include:

**Farm to School Grants:** These proposal states that these grants assist educational institutions in increasing access to locally grown, climate friendly, and equitably produced whole or minimally processed foods. This is achieved through projects that increase school resources to identify and access food produced using climate smart agriculture practices, support education programs that help children to engage with nutrition and their food system and make investments in infrastructure that facilitate transportation and the cooking of whole foods.

**Local Food System Resilience:** The Farm to School Program sources food exclusively from producers that implement Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices with the stated goal of increasing Californians' nutrition and access to food long term while also helping to improve environmental outcomes.

**Farmer Economic Development Opportunities:** Local, small-scale and historically underserved agricultural producers and food manufacturers face both production and market development barriers. The Farm to School Program proposal states that the program strives to connect Farm to School producers with better market access. The CDFA Executive Office, through farm equity, will provide ongoing consultation, technical assistance, and activities to benefit small-scale agricultural producers and food manufacturers in targeted economic development.

### Panel

- Karen Ross, Secretary, Department of Food and Agriculture
- Ahmed Seyam, Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Nate Williams, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office

### LAO Comments

Within the LAO's recommended framework for approaching environment budget decisions publication, the LAO recommends rejecting this proposal.

### Reject Proposals That Fail to Meet a High Bar

The Governor's budget includes a few proposals that do not address critical health and safety issues or pressing near-term problems. Under different fiscal conditions, these activities might merit consideration because they advance various policy objectives, such as expanding public access to state parks or reducing greenhouse gas emissions. However, based on our assessment, these proposals do not address urgent needs or mitigate near-term risks. Given the state's current budget condition and the limited capacity for supporting new commitments, we recommend that the Legislature reject the following proposals.

- **CDFA: Farm to School Program.** CDFA proposes \$24.6 million General Fund and ten positions in 2026-27 (as well as a similar amount ongoing) to support the Farm to School Program along with other related food system programs. This program provides grants to educational agencies, food producers, and other organizations and partnerships to increase the amount of locally grown and produced foods in schools. While the program does appear to provide some benefits to farmers, schools, and students, it does not meet a critical health and safety concern or a pressing time-sensitive objective.

Moreover, the state and federal governments provide a total of close to \$5 billion annually for school nutrition programs, and over the past few years the state has allocated supplemental funds to schools in order to improve their ability to provide more healthy meals, procure California-grown foods, and incorporate more freshly prepared foods. (Given these investments in school nutrition, the Legislature also could explore whether some of the farm to school activities could potentially be supported by monies the state must provide to schools to comply with Proposition 98 constitutional requirements.)

**Staff Comments**

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. What percentage of California’s students are served by the program currently?
2. As stated in the LAO’s analysis, the state has provided billions of dollars annually for school nutrition programs. What does the funding for the Farm to Schools program achieve that is not already provided under the other school nutrition programs?
3. How have federal rollbacks and reductions in funding affected the reach of programs with similar goals to Farm-to-School?
4. What are the key differences between the Administration’s trailer bill proposal and AB 675 (2025, Aguiar-Curry)?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

## 0650 Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation

### Issue 6: Baseline Resources Proposals: Administrative and Legislative, Information Technology, and Land Policy Baseline Resources

This discussion item is excerpted from the Legislative Analyst’s Office’s publication title, [The 2026-27 Budget: Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation Proposals](#).

#### Summary

The Governor proposes \$11.2 million in 2026-27, growing to \$12 million annually thereafter through 2031-32, from the General Fund to support LCI’s existing administrative and policy workload and to implement statutorily required activities. The proposal would support 51.5 existing positions and two new positions at LCI (many of which are currently supported by limited-term funding), along with providing funding for some IT equipment, software licenses, and contracts. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the proposals. As shown, the funding request includes \$10.5 million ongoing to support IT, administrative, legislative, and land policy staff and activities.

Figure 1

#### Proposed LCI Baseline Resources Budget Adjustments *General Fund (In Millions)*

Category	Activities	2026-27	2027-28 and Thereafter
Information technology (IT)	Support five existing positions and various IT infrastructure and security activities resulting from LCI establishing its own IT system and office beginning in 2023-24.	\$6.2	\$6.2
Administrative and legislative	Support 37.5 existing positions to conduct activities related to human resources, accounting, budget, contracts, facilities, EEO, and legislative analysis.	3.4	3.4
Land policy unit	Support four existing positions working on land use planning and CEQA-related workload.	0.9	0.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$10.5</b>	<b>\$10.5</b>

Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

LCI = Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation; EEO = Equal Employment Opportunity; and CEQA = California Environmental Quality Act.

## Background

***LCI Is Tasked With Various Responsibilities.*** LCI conducts five primary categories of activities for the state.

- ***California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Resources.*** The office coordinates the state-level guidance for and review of CEQA-related documents, including maintaining a statewide clearinghouse of CEQA environmental documents.
- ***Land Use Planning Information.*** LCI conducts various land use planning activities, including developing guidance and information for local governments' General Plans.
- ***Climate Adaptation Initiatives.*** The office implements various climate-related initiatives including the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program, certain adaptation planning grant programs, and coordinating some statewide climate change research.
- ***Strategic Growth Council (SGC).*** LCI houses SGC, which coordinates work across various state departments and agencies and disburses grants to address statewide climate and land use issues such as extreme heat and sustainable communities.
- ***Statewide Initiatives.*** Certain specific state initiatives are housed under LCI, including the Governor's Military Council and the California Racial Equity Commission.

***Change From the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to LCI.*** The functions that LCI performs were part of OPR until that office underwent restructuring in 2024 and split into two new offices: the Governor's Office of Service and Community Engagement (GO-SERVE) and LCI. LCI continues to report directly to the Governor's Office—rather than to an Agency and Cabinet Secretary—even though it now performs many government functions similar to a traditional department. While the two offices are now separate, LCI provides administrative, cybersecurity, and information technology (IT) infrastructure services to GO-SERVE. GO-SERVE reimburses LCI for the staff time LCI spends providing these services (but not for the cost of maintaining the infrastructure).

***New Responsibilities in the 2020s.*** OPR started out as a small office with the purpose of long-term land use research and planning, as well as advising the Governor and the cabinet on such issues. However, the office's statutory responsibilities have expanded over time, including a new focus on climate change and serving as the state's lead entity on CEQA issues. For example, the Legislature and Governor have tasked the office with additional responsibilities to develop statewide guidance on complying with CEQA and to review applications for projects seeking streamlined CEQA processes. Additionally, in the early 2020s when the state was benefiting from a large General Fund surplus, the budget allocated substantial limited-term funding for LCI and SGC to administer several climate-related grant programs, including some related to extreme heat. While this funding has now mostly been allocated to grantees, Proposition 4—the 2024 climate bond—also assigned LCI and SGC responsibilities for administering bond funding for a number of similar climate programs.

**Civil Service Transition.** As LCI was established under the Office of the Governor, its staff were initially designated as exempt or appointed employees. In 2023, the Legislature approved the administration's request to transition most of the office's employees to traditional civil service status, which required standardization of various processes such as hiring and employee classifications. Because the office's staffing is now structured similarly to other state departments, it also needs to comply with certain standards, such as having an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officer and a bargaining unit analyst in its administrative team. As its staffing numbers and statutory responsibilities have grown, the office has also expanded its fiscal services unit to formalize its operations and ensure compliance with standard government operating procedures such as those related to contracts and accounting.

### Panel

- Samuel Assefa, Director, Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)
- Abby Edwards, Senior Deputy Director, LCI Policy
- Erin Curtis, Executive Director, Strategic Growth Council
- Gabby Gabourel, Deputy Director of Administration, LCI
- Zaid Ridha, Chief Information Officer, LCI
- Courtney Massengale, State Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Lizzie Urie, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office
- Gökçe Sencan, Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office

### LAO Comments

#### Assessment

**Administration Has Provided Reasonable Justification for Proposals.** Our review found a number of well-justified reasons for why LCI is requesting additional funding. In particular:

- **IT Security Needs.** The Legislature approved LCI's request to establish its own IT unit in 2023 with some ongoing support (\$5.2 million and 15 positions) and some limited-term funding (\$3.7 million through 2025-26). The 2026-27 proposal requests the continuation of the limited-term funding to maintain cyberinfrastructure and support workload growth, as well as an additional \$2.6 million to bring the office's IT system into compliance with state and federal requirements and provide ongoing support for five existing positions. LCI states that absent the cybersecurity funding, it will be vulnerable to security incidents, face interruptions in e-mail and document storage services, and risk noncompliance with various cybersecurity requirements. These risks likely would apply to GO-SERVE's operations as well, since that office also relies on LCI's IT infrastructure. Because the Legislature already signed off on LCI's plans to establish its own IT office, providing additional funding to complete that transition and ensure the systems are safe and secure would be consistent with previous legislative decisions. Moreover, our review found that LCI's proposed total of 20 IT staff positions is not out of line with the size of IT units at other comparable state departments.

- **Existing Positions Supported by Limited-Term Funding.** LCI reports that it currently is supporting some of its administrative staff functions using a share of the funding it received for limited-term activities and grants. However, while previous General Fund appropriations provided some flexibility to use funding to help cover officewide administrative costs, more recent rounds such as Proposition 4 bond funding came with additional limitations and made this practice more difficult. Once its remaining funding is exhausted, LCI states that it will not have sufficient resources to support its current administrative staffing levels, even though the need for existing staff to oversee programs and grant recipients and to support core office functions such as accounting and contracting will remain.
- **Transition to Civil Service.** As noted earlier, LCI's transition to the civil service model has resulted in additional administrative workload to comply with state law, including related to EEO and collective bargaining. Through its approval of [budget requests](#) in 2023-24, the Legislature essentially signed off on this change in approach. As such, providing the necessary resources to comply with applicable human resources laws and practices would be consistent and appropriate.
- **Increase in CEQA-Related Workload.** LCI's role in providing a centralized resource on CEQA for other state and local agencies helps ensure consistent and efficient implementation of this important state law. However, while the office's CEQA responsibilities and workload have grown, it has not received commensurate increases in ongoing state funds to support all of that work. Rather, LCI states that some of these staff have been funded via a patchwork approach including some limited-term sources (similar to how it has funded some administrative functions). Providing ongoing support for all of the existing LCI staff that work on CEQA guidelines and modernization efforts can help avoid delays or incompleteness of such work and ensure the state continues to provide effective CEQA coordination, technical assistance, and information.

**However, Current General Fund Condition Means Spending Augmentations Will Require Additional Budget Solutions.** Taken together, this set of proposals represents a new ongoing General Fund commitment. While we find that the proposals have merit, like all other General Fund augmentations they must be considered in the context of the state's projected multiyear structural deficits—which are estimated to range from about \$20 billion to \$35 billion annually. In this context, any increases to ongoing General Fund spending would inevitably require commensurate reductions (or revenue increases) elsewhere in order to balance the budget in future years. Therefore, the Legislature finds itself in the position of needing to evaluate whether these activities and staffing expansions at LCI are a higher priority than other existing General Fund-supported activities. If the Legislature determines its budget cannot support the full requested amounts, it could consider downscaling the proposals and providing a lower level of funding. The resulting trade-off would be that LCI would not be able to provide the same level of service. For example, providing less funding for land use policy staff might mean the office takes longer to respond to CEQA-related requests for technical assistance. If it needs to provide less funding, the Legislature could also consider revisiting LCI's statutory requirements, time lines, and associated resource needs.

## Recommendation

***Weigh Merits of LCI Proposals Within Context of Overall Budget Strategy.*** As the budget picture becomes more clear in the next few months, we recommend the Legislature decide whether the merits of these proposals outweigh the resulting additional pressure on the General Fund both in 2026-27 and out-years. Because we find LCI's funding requests to be justified, opting to provide less funding for some or all of these proposals would come with trade-offs. For example, lack of funding could limit the state's CEQA guidance capacity, delay or interrupt the implementation of some of LCI's programs, and result in noncompliance with statutory requirements. However, fully funding these proposals would come at the expense of other existing state commitments. If the Legislature determines that its other existing state commitments are higher priority than the LCI activities that would be funded with these proposals, it could revise existing statutory requirements to downscale LCI's responsibilities and resource needs.

## Staff Comments

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. Should the Legislature approve these baseline funding requests, will more program funding be available to fund projects themselves?
2. What does the office see as the greatest risks to delivering services should positions not receive ongoing funding?
3. How would funding for positions assist with statutorily required expedited judicial review for CEQA on qualifying housing and infrastructure projects, as outlined in SB 7 (2021) and SB 149 (2023)?
4. If the Legislature were to downscale these requests and fund them at a lower level, would LCI prioritize funding for positions within a specific category (for example, prioritize IT over land policy unit)?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

## 3100 Exposition Park

### Issue 7: Exposition Park Utility Replacement and Site Improvements

The Governor's budget requests \$96.5 million one-time (\$76 million General Fund and \$20.5 million Exposition Park Improvement Fund) for utility replacement and site improvements within the park.

**Background:** Originally created in 1872, Expo Park is a mixed use 160-acre tract of land in Los Angeles owned in part by the State of California, with portions of the park being leased by various parties including the City and County of Los Angeles, the Colosseum Commission, and various museums and gardens. Structures and attractions within the park include the California African American Museum, the California Science Center, the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and BMO Stadium, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, and the upcoming Lucas Museum of Narrative Art.

Expo Park welcomes a high volume of tourists each year, with approximately eight million visitors. With upcoming events at the park, including the 2026 World Cup and the Los Angeles 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, Expo Park expects significant increases in visitors. In addition, the park anticipates usage to increase in the short term with expansion of the Natural History Museum and the planned 2026 openings of both the California Science Center Oschin Air and Space Center and the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. The proposal states that increased daily pedestrian and vehicle traffic has created a heightened need to complete these site improvements.

Given current attendance trends and these anticipated increases, the Administration is requesting funding for repairs to Exposition Park's infrastructure. The proposal states that Exposition Park seeks to comply with accessibility, fire, life, and safety regulations, as further deferrals might expose the state to higher construction costs and additional litigation. The park plans to utilize progressive design-build contracting for the work, which Exposition Park and DGS believe will limit cost and timeline risks.

The current proposal requests funding in two key aspects of Exposition Park operation, and justifies the request as follows:

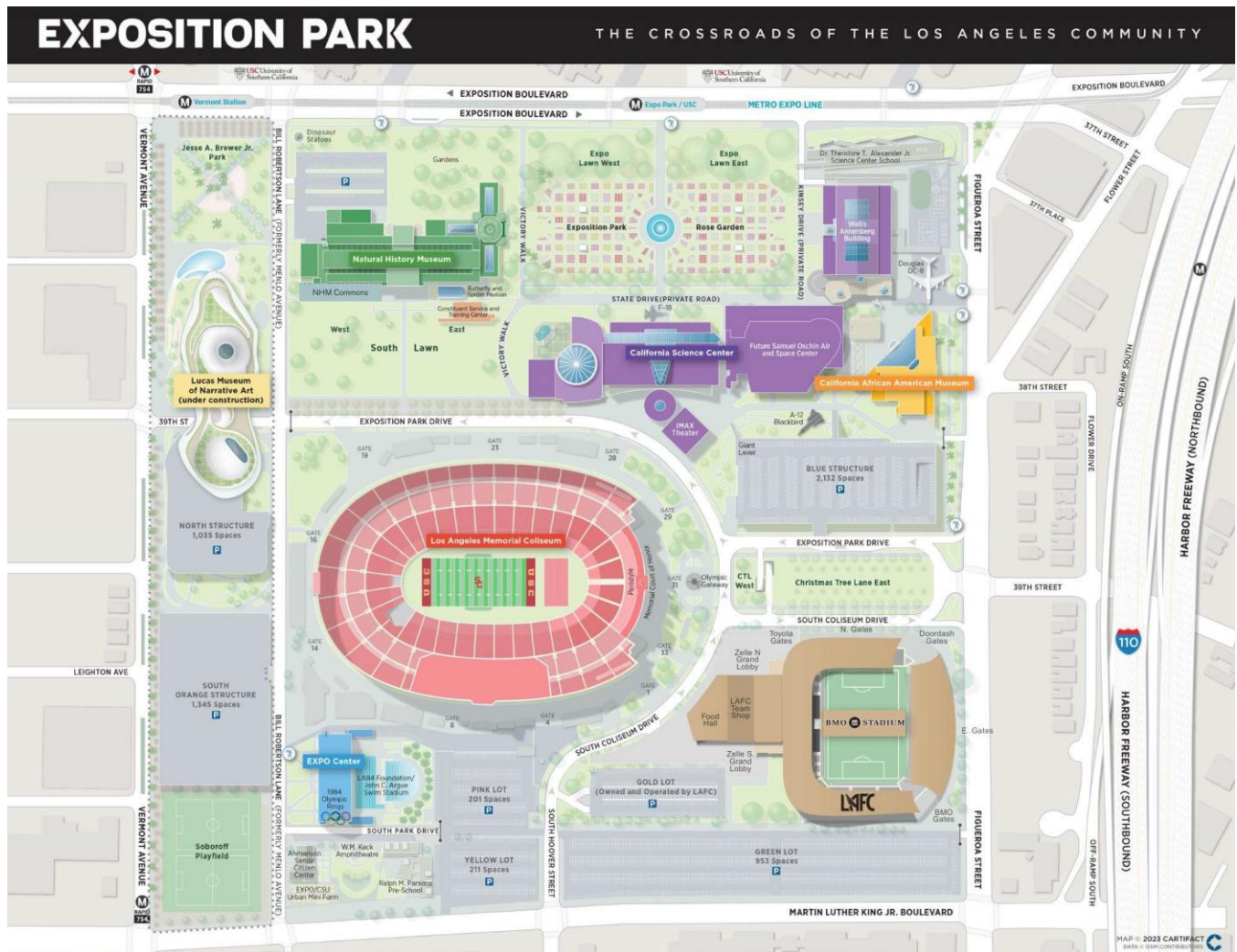
- *Deferred Maintenance – “The requested one-time funding of \$96 million (\$76 million General Fund and \$20 million EPIF) will support high-priority deferred maintenance and infrastructure repair projects through a progressive design build process. The funding will support efforts to address highest priority ADA and other fire, life, and safety orders in areas where work is completed. Without this funding, Exposition Park is at risk of further deterioration that could lead to serious public safety and public health hazards across the Park. Litigation could cost the state tens of millions of dollars in settlements. It is critical to maintain Park safety for the increasing number of visitors, to protect against litigation, and steward the Park in good working conditions for visitors and the community.”*

- Public Safety – *“The requested one-time funding of \$500,000 EPIF addresses the urgent need to modernize safety and traffic systems at Exposition Park. This allocation supports the installation of security bollards, protective barriers, wayfinding systems, and other essential safety features, while also expanding mobile surveillance camera systems to improve coverage in high-traffic areas for real-time monitoring. In addition, the funding allows for upgrades to key security infrastructure, including gates, fencing, perimeter barriers, electronic access controls, and temporary or portable barriers needed for effective crowd and vehicle management. Without these upgrades, OEPM faces significant risks, including compromised public safety, slower emergency response, increased liability exposure, and diminished ability to manage large-scale events.”*

The following is Exposition Park’s draft list of priority project areas, subject to final scoping.

Priority	Description	Cost Estimate	Est Date
1	N. Coliseum Dr. at Christmas Tree Lane curb ramp at Figueroa	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
1	N. Coliseum Dr. at (Parking Structure Side) Curb Ramp	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
1	N. Coliseum Dr. at (Parking Structure Side) Curb Ramp	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
1	N. Coliseum Dr. at (Parking Structure Side) North Walkway	\$2,976,000	1/1/2028
1	N. Coliseum Dr. at Figueroa Entry Sidewalk (Parking Structure Side)	\$3,978,000	1/1/2028
1	N. Coliseum Dr. at Science Center (North Side) Curb Ramp at Science Center Bldg. East side	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
1	Natural History Museum Walkway adjacent to W 39th Street - Curb Ramps	\$604,320	1/1/2028
1	Natural History Museum Walkway adjacent to W 39th Street - Gravel Curb Ramp	\$2,640,000	1/1/2028
1	Curb Ramp at Science Center Southwest Walkway Near West Walkway	\$247,000	1/1/2028
1	Accessible Route Rose Garden South intersection of Main Walkway and South Walkway	\$847,000	1/1/2028
1	Accessible Walkway from Rose Garden North Entry to Exposition Blvd	\$847,000	1/1/2028
1	Accessible Walkway Rose Garden Northeast Side to Armory	\$847,000	1/1/2028
1	Accessible Walkway Rose Garden Northwest to Natural History Museum	\$847,000	1/1/2028
1	Accessible Walkway Rose Garden South from Natural History Museum	\$847,000	1/1/2028
1	Accessible Stairs at CAAM Northwest to State Street	\$879,000	10/1/2027
1	State Street Airplane Walkway at School Entry	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
1	State Street Airplane Walkway at School Entry - Curb Ramps	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
2	N. Coliseum Dr. Roadway at Science Center Parking to Science Center Bldg.	\$3,500,000	1/1/2028
2	N. Coliseum Dr. Roadway at Science Center South Side	\$3,500,000	1/1/2028
2	N. Coliseum Dr. across from NHM	\$3,500,000	1/1/2028
2	S. Coliseum Dr. at Christmas Tree Lane BMO side	\$3,500,000	1/1/2028
2	S. Coliseum Dr. at Christmas Tree Lane near underground parking entry	\$3,500,000	1/1/2028
2	S. Coliseum Dr. Intersection of North Christmas Tree Lane at Science Center	\$3,500,000	1/1/2028
2	N. Coliseum Dr. intersection of North Christmas Tree Lane at Science Center	\$3,500,000	1/1/2028
2	Street at Annenberg Bldg. Between Exposition and State Street	\$2,435,000	10/1/2027
2	Annenberg Bldg. Street at East Entry to Rose Garden	\$2,435,000	10/1/2027
2	S. Coliseum Dr. at MLK to Green Lot Parking Road	\$5,365,000	1/1/2028
2	S. Coliseum Dr. at Green Lot Parking to BMO Lot Road	\$5,365,000	1/1/2028
2	S. Coliseum Dr. at BMO Lot Parking to Green Lot Road (At Parking Striping and Access at Road Curve)	\$5,365,000	1/1/2028

2	S. Coliseum Dr. at Coliseum across from BMO	\$5,365,000	1/1/2028
2	S. Coliseum Dr. at BMO Lot to across from BMO Stadium Walkway West Side	\$5,365,000	1/1/2028
3	Site Communications Data	\$625,000	1/1/2028
4	Site Electrical	\$2,450,000	1/1/2028
4	Site Electronic Safety and Security	\$5,250,000	1/1/2028
5	N. Coliseum Dr. at Science Center Parking and Elevator	\$247,000	10/1/2027
5	N. Coliseum Dr. at Science Center Parking and Elevator	\$247,000	10/1/2027
5	Parking Garage North Elevator near CAAM	\$247,000	10/1/2027
5	Accessible Gravel/DG Path Parking Structure East N. Coliseum Dr. and Figueroa	\$435,980	10/1/2027
6	N. Coliseum Dr. Accessible Walkway to Elevator and Parking Structure	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
6	N. Coliseum Dr. at Science Center Parking and Elevator Curb Ramp to Coliseum	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
6	N. Coliseum Dr. at Science Center Parking and Elevator Curb Ramp to Coliseum	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
7	S. Coliseum Dr. Walkway at West end of Christmas Tree Land Park	\$3,500,000	1/1/2028
7	S. Coliseum Dr. Roadway at West end of Christmas Tree Lane Park	\$3,500,000	1/1/2028
8	Natural History Museum Walkway adjacent to W 39th Street	\$438,798	1/1/2028
8	Natural History Museum Inner (Northerly) Walkway adjacent to W 39th Street	\$598,367	1/1/2028
8	Natural History Museum Walkway adjacent to W 39th Street - Main Curb Ramp at NHM Main Path	\$3,500,000	1/1/2028
9	Loading Space South Science Center adjacent to Walkway	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Accessible Walkway Science Center Southwest connecting to West Walkway	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp at Science Center Southwest Walkway Near West Walkway	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp at Science Center Northwest	\$247,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp North Science Center	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp at Science Center North Main Entry	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp Rose Garden Main Entry South	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp Rose Garden South at Science Center West	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp Rose Garden South at Science Center West	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp Rose Garden South at Science Center East	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp Rose Garden South at Science Center East	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp at Rose Garden Southeast side at Armory	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp Rose Garden South at East to Armory	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp Rose Garden South at East to Armory	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028
9	Curb Ramp at North Accessible Route to State Street	\$1,278,000	1/1/2028



**Panel**

- Andrea Ambriz, General Manager, Exposition Park
- Bryan Cash, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance, Natural Resources Agency
- Lizzie Urie, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office

**LAO Comments**

Within the LAO’s recommended framework for approaching environment budget decisions publication, this proposal is cited as an example where the proposal may be scaled up or down.

**Consider Funding Priority Proposals at a Lower Level.** Several of the Governor’s proposals involve activities that can be scaled up or down, with the level of funding determining the scope of work that can be undertaken. Providing less funding in 2026-27 would still allow the Legislature to make progress toward its intended objectives, albeit at a lower level and slower

pace. Clearly, such a choice would involve trade-offs, including lower levels of service, fewer public health and safety improvements, and less risk mitigation.

- ***Expo Park: Site Improvements and Utility Replacement.*** Expo Park proposes \$96.5 million one-time (\$76 million General Fund and \$20.5 million from the Exposition Park Improvement Fund) to repair the sidewalk curbs, streets, and walkways in the park ahead of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The number of visitors to the park is expected to significantly increase over the next several years and its hardscape is currently deficient, which increases risks of both safety hazards and, consequently, litigation against the state. The proposal prioritizes improvements in high-traffic areas to mitigate this risk and improve public access to newly opening museums and sport facilities which will be used for high-profile international events. Given the budget condition, the Legislature could consider providing less General Fund and downscaling the amount of work to be completed at the park. A key trade-off of funding fewer improvements is that fewer safety risks would be addressed.

### Staff Comments

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. Can Exposition Park clarify whether these site improvements are required as a prerequisite for hosting the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games? If Exposition Park were not involved in the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, would the Park still request funds for these projects?
2. How was the infrastructure timeline for the identified priority projects developed?
3. How many improvements/projects does Expo Park expect to complete within the infrastructure timeline? How was it determined that this was a feasible list under the existing time constraints?
4. What is the status of the underground parking structure project? How will that project interact with the 62 projects/improvements that will be completed as part of this BCP? Will any of the projects as part of this proposal get removed later on as a result of the underground parking structure project?
5. Is there a concern that progressive design build partners in the region will be occupied with other projects already underway in LA, including LAX, Metro, Convention Center, and LA28 projects?
6. What is Exposition Park doing to address long-term deferred maintenance needs within the Exposition Park Improvement Fund, instead of General Fund?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

**Issue 8: California Science Center: Phase III Air and Space Center Facility Operations and Opening**

The Governor's budget requests \$9,325,000 General Fund and 31 permanent positions in 2026-27, increasing to \$10,612,000 in 2030-31 and ongoing, to provide the resources required to open and operate the Phase III Facility for the California Science Center at Exposition Park (Science Center).

**Background:** The California Science Center at Exposition Park is a public-private partnership between the State of California and the California Science Center Foundation. The Science Center was opened in 1998 subject to the first "phase" of a 25-year master plan. The Science Center is currently in Phase III, which has dealt, in large part, with the creation of the new Samuel Oschin Air and Space Center, housing the Space Shuttle Endeavor. The new facility is approximately 200,000 square feet and will nearly double the size of the Science Center and the number of exhibits. The facility expansion consists of four floors and three major galleries, Air, Space, and Shuttle.

The 2025 Budget Act included \$664,000 General Fund and five permanent positions in 2025-26, increasing to \$915,000 in 2029-30 for core operating resources at the Science Center, but did not include resources which would allow for full operation and public opening. The present request for General Fund and permanent positions is in support of full public operations associated with the Samuel Oschin Air and Space Center. Beneficial occupancy of the facility has already begun with installation of artifacts and exhibits expected to be completed in June 2026. The proposal states that its calculations accurately reflect the resources needed to facilitate the public opening of the facility in Fall 2026. Previous state investments of roughly \$6.9 million had funded facility start-up, core operations, and utilities.

The states the resources requested will facilitate the full public opening and operations and maintenance on an ongoing basis of the entire Science Center and expansions and will also be applied towards:

- Recruitment and hiring of custodial, facility operations, exhibit development, and administrative classifications.
- Ongoing resources for facility maintenance supplies and contracting services.
- Recruitment of contracted staff to support specialized functions

**Panel**

- Jeff Rudolph, Executive Director, California Science Center
- Lizzie Urie, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Brian Metzker, Principal Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office

**LAO Comments**

Within the LAO's recommended framework for approaching environment budget decisions publication, the LAO used this proposal as an example where the Legislature could modify the proposal by using an alternative funding source.

**Explore Options for Alternative Funding Sources.** The Legislature could consider supporting some of the Governor's proposals using funding sources other than the General Fund. Shifting fund sources could allow the Legislature to advance at least some of its intended objectives while limiting additional pressure on the General Fund. Pursuing this approach, however, would involve a number of trade-offs. For example, funding activities through new or higher fees would shift costs to the individuals or entities paying those fees. In addition, replacing General Fund support with fee-supported special funds could reduce flexibility and introduce specific statutory or programmatic conditions, potentially requiring changes to the scope or mix of which proposed activities could be implemented. Moreover, alternative funding sources may not be available at the same level as the Governor proposes and their use could require redirecting resources from other activities and priorities.

- **Exposition Park (Expo Park): California Science Center Staffing.** The budget proposes \$9.3 million General Fund and 31 positions (and a similar amount ongoing) to open the Samuel Oschin Air and Space Museum, a significant new addition to the Science Center in Expo Park recently constructed largely using private funds. The proposal would provide administrative, curatorial, maintenance, and support staff to operate the new museum in 2026. Adequate staffing for the museum will allow it to open to the public on time and with the appropriate maintenance, especially as the number of visitors to Expo Park increases in advance of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. However, the Legislature could consider whether at least some funding to operate and staff the new museum could come from sources other than General Fund, such as admission fees (which the museum currently does not charge), higher parking fees, and/or private funds.

**Staff Comments**

The Subcommittee members may wish to ask the following questions:

1. Can the Administration respond to the options the LAO provided as alternative funding sources – such as admission fees, higher parking fees, and private fund – and why the Administration chose to use General Fund?
2. How much private funding has been used to complete Phase III of the Science Center's upgrades?

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

## Non-Presentation Items

### 3100 Exposition Park

### 0540 California Natural Resources Agency

#### Issue 1: Exposition Park Baseline Augmentations for Operational Sustainability and Legal Support

The Governor's budget requests \$1,698,000 Exposition Park Improvement Fund ongoing to support increased baseline public safety and legal services, which will be split between Exposition Park and the Natural Resources Agency

**Staff Recommendation:** Absent member questions or comments, staff recommends approving this item when the Subcommittee takes action.

### 0650 Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation

### 0540 California Natural Resources Agency

#### Issue 2: California's Sixth Climate Change Assessment

The Governor's budget requests \$9.9 million Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) over five years to implement California's Sixth Climate Change Assessment per Chapter 136, Statutes of 2020 (SB 1320). This request will allow California to deliver a scientific assessment to inform California's efforts to reduce climate risks, and will be spread across LCI, CNRA, and the Energy Commission.

#### LAO Comments:

Under the LAO's recommended framework for approaching environment budget decisions, the LAO used this as an example where the Legislature could fund the request at a lower level.

**Consider Funding Priority Proposals at a Lower Level.** Several of the Governor's proposals involve activities that can be scaled up or down, with the level of funding determining the scope of work that can be undertaken. Providing less funding in 2026-27 would still allow the Legislature to make progress toward its intended objectives, albeit at a lower level and slower pace. Clearly, such a choice would involve trade-offs, including lower levels of service, fewer public health and safety improvements, and less risk mitigation. We discuss some options and resulting implications related to the Governor's budget proposals below.

**Various: California Sixth Climate Change Assessment (CCCA6).** The budget proposes \$9.9 million over five years from GGRF for the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, CNRA, and CEC to jointly produce CCCA6. This climate research is required by law to be completed every five years pursuant to Chapter 136 of 2020 (SB 1320, Stern) and provides data and information that state agencies and local governments use to inform their planning and

programmatic decisions. In light of policy changes at the federal level, CCCA6 could help fill in key climate knowledge gaps and relieve other state and local agencies of the task of producing their own data. The absence of such information could lead to inconsistent climate assumptions, plans, and policies across agencies. However, the Legislature could scale down some of the proposed elements, such as the amount dedicated to research grants. This approach would ease pressure on GGRF and, because of the flexibility around how that fund can be used, therefore free up more resources to potentially help the General Fund. A key trade-off of providing less funding is that the topical and geographic scope of the assessment would also be narrowed as a result. (The Legislature could also explore whether other resources, such as climate research funding that was previously provided to the University of California system, could help support this assessment.)

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

## 0650 Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation

### Issue 3: Sustainable Transportation Projects CEQA Exemptions (SB 71)

The Governor's budget requests \$219,000 General Fund in 2026-27 and 2027-28 to support a temporary position to implement Chapter 724, Statutes of 2025 (SB 71). LCI will update guidance on California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemptions for sustainable transportation projects, provide technical support, and determine a methodology and updated process for complying with the requirements to post an updated consumer price index (CPI) on LCI's website to assist with implementation.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends holding this item open, without prejudice, as it requests General Fund.

### Issue 4: Technical Adjustments: Various Reappropriations and Extensions of Liquidation

The Governor's budget requests various reappropriations and extensions of liquidation related to funding received in the Budget Act of 2021 (Chapter 240, Statutes of 2021).

**Staff Recommendation:** Absent member questions or input from the public at this hearing, staff recommends this item be approved as budgeted when the Subcommittee takes action.

**Issue 5: CalHeatScore Implementation**

The Governor's budget requests \$522,000 General Fund and 1.0 position in 2026-27 and ongoing to carry out the statutory requirements of Chapter 264, Statutes of 2022 (AB 2238). These resources will enable the development and execution of a public communications plan for the extreme heat ranking system, provide statewide guidance for local and tribal governments in preparing and planning for extreme heat events, and deliver actionable recommendations on local heat adaptation, preparedness, and resilience measures as required by AB 2238.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends holding this item open, without prejudice, as it requests General Fund.

**8570 Department of Food and Agriculture****Issue 6: Dog Importation Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (SB 312)**

The Governor's budget requests \$187,000 General Fund in Fiscal Year 2026-27 and ongoing and one position to meet the mandates of SB 312 (Umberg), Chapter 480, Statutes of 2025 related to dog Certificates of Veterinary Inspection.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends holding this item open, without prejudice, as it requests General Fund.

**Issue 7: Livestock Carcass Disposal – Composting (AB 411)**

The Governor's budget requests \$228,000 General Fund in 2026-27 to implement AB 411 (Papan), Chapter 613, Statutes of 2025 – Caring About the Terrain, Livestock, and Ecosystems (CATTLE) Act.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends holding this item open, without prejudice, as it requests General Fund.

**Issue 8: Information Technology Resources**

The Governor's budget requests \$382,000 General Fund, \$353,000 Department of Food and Agriculture Fund, and \$75,000 Special Funds in Fiscal Year 2026-27 and ongoing and 4.0 positions to complete Information Technology (IT) operational activities.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends holding this item open, without prejudice, as it requests General Fund.

## 3860 Department of Water Resources

### Issue 9: Central Valley Flood Protection Board – Enforcement Program Efficiencies – Trailer Bill Language

The Governor's budget requests the trailer bill language for the Central Valley Flood Protection Board related to enforcement actions of unauthorized activities. According to Legislative Counsel, among other things, this trailer bill language does the following:

- Authorizes the board, executive officer, or a designee to engage informally with an entity responsible for the encroachment, flood system improvement, or activity before issuance of a notice of violation or an enforcement order.
- Requires additional information to be included in the notice of violation, including, among other things, a stop work order for active work being performed without prior approval.
- Revises and recasts provisions in statute to no longer authorize the issuance of cease and desist orders and instead authorizes the board or the executive officer to issue an enforcement order if the board or executive officer determines that any person or public agency has failed to adequately respond to a notice of violation.
- Authorizes an enforcement order to do various actions, as specified. The proposal would provide specified procedures for the issuance of an enforcement order, including for objection by the receiving party and notice and hearing process.
- No longer authorizes specified civil penalties for a violation of a cease and desist order.
- Authorizes the board to order the responsible person or public entity to pay specified penalties for violations and require the board or executive officer to consider specified factors in determining the penalty for a violation of an enforcement order.

#### Background:

Noncompliant encroachments are the most common reason for "Unacceptable" inspection rating by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, preventing portions of the SPFC from being eligible for federal funding for repairs of storm damage to the flood protection system. Without this funding, the State bears financial responsibility for storm damage repairs. The ability to more efficiently address hazardous encroachments reduces the chance of failure of flood control infrastructure, decreasing flood risk and the associated state liability.

The current enforcement process to unauthorized, noncompliant, and hazardous encroachments affecting the State Plan of Flood Control takes significant time before reaching an enforcement action or penalty and requires formal Board meeting engagement. In addition, current statute is silent on informal action to obtain compliance at the staff level, even when the penalty is not contested.

According to the Administration, the trailer bill language provides the Central Valley Flood Protection Board authority to more efficiently address unauthorized, noncompliant, and hazardous encroachments affecting the State Plan of Flood Control.

**Staff Recommendation:** Hold Open.

This agenda and other publications are available on the Assembly Budget Committee's website at: [Sub 4 Hearing Agendas | California State Assembly](#). You may contact the Committee at (916) 319-2099. This agenda was prepared by Christine Miyashiro.