

**To:** East Contra Costa Fire Protection District  
**From:** Townsend Public Affairs, Inc.  
**Date:** April 7, 2022  
**Subject:** Legislative Report for ECCFPD – March 2022

---

## STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND OUTLOOK

The month of March saw amendments to hundreds of bills, the introduction of numerous legislative proposals with major budget impacts, and the Legislature returning to its full pace as it works to consider the 2,115 bills introduced during the 2022 legislative session. Below is an overview of notable legislative happenings from the month of March.

While February marked the deadline for new bill vehicle introductions, it did not mark the deadline for new legislative language. Assembly and Senate leadership set hard mid-March deadlines for major amendments and amendments to “spot” legislation to be submitted, meaning the month of March featured hundreds of major amendments to existing legislation – many of which completely altered the scope and intent of their previous versions.

### Multiple Proposals Emerge to Offset High Gas Prices

This month featured multiple proposals to help offset the cost of soaring gas prices, which include issuing hard-cash rebates to Californians, foregoing the gas tax, and combinations of both. Below is an overview of each proposal:

- *Governor Newsom champions “gas tax holiday,” then adds cash rebates for all drivers* – During his presentation of the January budget framework proposal and his subsequent State of the State Address, Governor Newsom announced that his budget includes a “gas tax holiday,” which foregoes the gas tax authorized by SB 1 (Beall, 2017) that funds critical transportation infrastructure projects. California's gas tax is 51.1 cents per gallon, the second highest in the nation. It's scheduled to increase slightly for inflation on July 1. Governor Newsom initially proposed pausing that for one year.

However, following calls for more action and a rivaling proposal from Democratic Legislators, this month Governor Newsom expanded on his original “gas tax holiday” proposal and released details for a more comprehensive rebate plan. This plan includes \$11 billion in budget surplus funds for the following programs:

- \$400 debit cards to every CA vehicle owner, which will be distributed via DMV records to cover those who don't earn enough to pay taxes. Owners of electric vehicles and individuals who lease cars will also be eligible,



- \$750 million to provide three months of free public transit throughout the state,
- Up to \$600 million to pause the diesel sales tax for one year; and
- \$523 million to pause the gas inflation adjustment, set to become effective July 1, 2022.

Ultimately, this proposal will require legislative approval. Assembly and Senate leadership have signaled that they are against pausing the gas inflation adjustment, which they say is a critical component to financing transportation infrastructure improvements throughout the state.

- *Democratic Legislators Announce Gas Rebate Plan for all tax-paying Californians* – This month, Assembly Member Petrie-Norris and other members of the Assembly Democratic Caucus gathered on the capitol steps to hold a press conference unveiling a new legislative proposal to offer all *tax-paying* Californians a \$400 tax rebate to offset high gas and goods prices. The proposal would dedicate approximately \$9 billion of the state’s budget surplus toward providing \$400 rebates to all Californians who pay state income taxes, regardless of their income. Assembly Member Petrie-Norris, who led the press conference, said the rebates should be sent out as soon as possible and that the state should not wait until the Legislature and Governor Newsom agree on the entire state budget, which is traditionally completed in late June. When asked about the chosen dollar amount, Assembly Member Petrie-Norris said the \$400 tax rebate figure was used because it equals the amount a typical Californian pays in state excise taxes on gasoline per year. She said California drivers on average fill up their gas tanks 52 times a year. California’s gas tax is 51 cents per gallon.

The proposal framework was in response to the rising price of gas and presents an alternative solution to Governor Newsom’s proposal to issue a “gas tax holiday” before the gas price inflation readjustment period on July 1. Following the Governor reiterating his intentions to do so, Assembly and Senate leadership responded with an alternative solution to provide tax relief without “taking critical funds away from road repair and improvement.”

This proposal differs from the Governor’s plan in that it would be extended to all tax-paying Californians – regardless of car ownership status. It also does not include a gas tax suspension.

- *Republican Legislator proposes legislation to suspend California’s excise gas tax for six months, legislation is amended to impose a new tax on gas suppliers* – Republican Assembly Member Kevin Kiley twice introduced a bill to suspend California’s gas excise tax for six months. After failing to pass through the policy committee process, the legislation was gut and amended in the Assembly Transportation Committee to impose a new tax on gas suppliers when the price of a gallon of gas is “abnormally high” compared to the cost of a barrel of crude oil — and send the tax revenue back to California drivers via a rebate. Despite the author’s objections to the amendments, Democratic Committee members voted to move it forward without changing the name of the author.



## COVID-19 Updates

Assembly Member Buffy Wicks Announces she will not move forward with vaccine Mandate legislation - This month, Assembly Member Wicks announced she will hold [AB 1933](#) during the 2022 session. The bill would have mandated vaccines for workplaces (for both employees and independent contractors) and require employers to verify that their workers are immunized. New hires would need to have at least one shot by their first day — and the second within 45 days. Assembly Member Wicks cited strong public safety union opposition and the decline in COVID-19 cases as reasons for holding the bill. AB 1933 constituted the most comprehensive push for vaccine mandates/reform as it pertained to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other legislation, like Senator Scott Wiener’s SB 866, which would allow minors aged 12 years and older to consent to a vaccine without parental oversight, is still active.

California to lift all masking mandates for vaccinated individuals and school settings – Following the State’s announcement lifting the indoor statewide masking mandate, on February 28, the Governor announced the state would lift all masking mandates, including mandates that apply to school children and school personnel. On March 1, the state officially lifted indoor masking mandates for unvaccinated individuals. On March 11, masks were no longer required in schools and childcare facilities. In addition, both the Assembly and Senate lifted their indoor masking mandate within Capitol and Capitol-adjacent spaces on March 7.

Legislators consider, and vote to not repeal the COVID-19 state of emergency – This month, the Senate Committee on Governmental Organization considered the merits of SCR 5 (Melendez), which would end the COVID-19 State of Emergency and all of the current Executive Orders related to the emergency if passed by both houses. It was the first hearing the bill received since Senator Melendez introduced the bill in 2020. The measure failed on a 4-8 party line vote. However, it was granted reconsideration to allow Senator Melendez to bring it forward at a later date.

During the bill’s discussion, proponents iterated that the existing State of Emergency constituted a violation of the separation of powers doctrine and that the decline in COVID-19 should lead to the end of the emergency. Opponents of the measure noted that the State of Emergency allows for the coordination of aid and resources across federal, state, and local agencies and provides for the stability of existing Executive Orders relating to COVID-19, such as remote meeting flexibility. Representatives from the California Professional Firefighters Association and the California Hospital Association spoke in opposition to the measure, citing concerns that ending the Emergency could impact hospital and public safety staffing, and the ability for emergency services to respond.

## Governor Unveils New “CARE Court” Proposal to Address Homelessness and Mental Illness

This month, Governor Newsom unveiled a new proposal to address California’s mental health and homelessness crisis. The proposal, which is called the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment ([CARE](#)) Court, will implement a court-ordered response to mental illness and substance abuse disorders would accelerate the state’s strategy to help thousands of people get much-needed services.



Current law provides local governments and courts with a select number of tools to address mental health crises. These tools include the use of conservatorships, which are typically reserved for a narrow group of people experiencing severe mental illness with a long-demonstrated history of continued crisis. “CARE Court is really not a replacement for conservatorship,” said Jason Elliott, Newsom’s top advisor on housing, adding that it is a “new tool.” The CARE Court proposal is crafted to provide intervening supportive services earlier than conservatorships or incarceration.

Under the CARE Court proposal, the statewide network of civil courts will be able to utilize a new tool to service those in need, with a focus on those with severe psychotic disorders. The proposal would create a mandatory program for all 58 of California’s counties, with penalties associated with local governments that do not comply with requirements. CARE Court provides for a much broader list of people who can refer others to the court – including behavioral health specialists, family members, city outreach workers, and emergency services personnel. Once referred, the Court will work with health specialists to determine a diagnosis and develop and implement a treatment plan. Treatment plans are set to last anywhere from 12-24 months. Counties and local service providers will be tasked with implementing the ordered services to stabilize these individuals, with an emphasis on connections to permanent supportive housing.

Two bills – one in each house (AB 2830 (Bloom) and SB 1338 (Umberg)) – have emerged as the vehicles to provide implementing language for the proposal. The language included in both bills is both non-substantive and nearly identical, signaling that the Administration, Legislature, and stakeholders are in the process of negotiating details. Throughout the month of March, Governor Newsom has been convening “CARE Court Roundtables” with relevant stakeholders to discuss the proposal.

### **Governor Newsom Issues Executive Order to Bolster Drought Response**

Following the driest first three months of a year in the state’s recorded history, this month Governor Gavin Newsom took steps to drive water conservation at the local level, calling on local water suppliers to move to Level 2 of their Water Shortage Contingency Plans, which require locally appropriate actions that will conserve water across all sectors, and directing the State Water Resources Control Board to consider a ban on the watering of decorative grass at businesses and institutions.

Governor Newsom signed an [Executive Order](#) that directs the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to evaluate the adoption of regulations banning irrigation of “non-functional” turf (or grass), such as decorative grass adjacent to large industrial and commercial buildings. The ban would not include residential lawns or grass used for recreation, such as school fields, sports fields and parks. The Department of Water Resources estimates this ban alone will result in potential water savings of several hundred thousand acre-feet. An acre-foot of water serves the needs of approximately three households for a year.

In addition to the water supplier conservation measure, the Order includes a number of key directives for local governments:

- *New Local Well Permitting Requirements*. Local governments may not approve a permit for a new groundwater well or alteration of an existing well in a basin with a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (medium- or high-priority) without first obtaining written verification



from the managing Groundwater Sustainability Agency; and must determine that the groundwater will is not likely to interfere with nearby wells and/or cause subsidence that may damage nearby infrastructure. This excludes small and domestic wells.

- *Certain Water Hauling Ordinances Suspended.* Suspends all local prohibitions on hauling of water for human consumption, cooking, or sanitation out of a water basin of origin, or public agency jurisdiction.
- *Groundwater Recharge Projects Expedited.* Expedites and reduces permitting requirements for groundwater recharge projects to support future flood-flows.
- *Expanded Illegal Diversion Enforcement.* Expands State Water Board inspections for illegal diversions and/or waste and unreasonable use of water.
- *Funding Requests for State Agencies.* Requests state agencies to submit proposals for drought mitigation by April 15, 2022 for inclusion in the Governor’s May Revision budget.

## PRIORITY LEGISLATION

The legislative deadlines to introduce legislation in the new session was February 18<sup>th</sup>. The Assembly and Senate combined to introduce over two thousand bills for consideration in 2022. Over the coming weeks, the two Houses will hold numerous policy committee hearings to consider these new proposals.

Below are the upcoming relevant dates for the Legislature:

**April 29<sup>th</sup>** – Last day for policy committees to consider house of origin bills with a fiscal impact

**May 6<sup>th</sup>** – Last day for policy committees to consider house of origin non-fiscal bills

**May 20<sup>th</sup>** – Last day for fiscal committees to consider house of origin bills

**May 27<sup>th</sup>** – Last day for bills to pass out of their house of origin

Below are bills that have been introduced that may be of interest to the District:

### ***AB 1770 (Rodriguez) Ambulance patient offload time.***

Current law requires the Emergency Medical Services Authority to develop, using input from stakeholders and after approval by the Commission on Emergency Medical Services, and adopt a statewide standard methodology for the calculation and reporting by a local emergency medical services (EMS) agency of ambulance patient offload time (APOT). Current law defines APOT as the interval between the arrival of an ambulance patient at an emergency department and the time that the patient is transferred to an emergency department gurney, bed, chair, or other acceptable location and the emergency department assumes responsibility for care of the patient. Current law requires the authority to report twice per year to the commission the APOT by local EMS agency jurisdiction and by each facility in that jurisdiction. This bill would instead require the authority to report the APOT data to the commission every 6 months. ***This bill was approved by the Assembly Emergency Management Committee (7-0) on April 4<sup>th</sup>. The measure has been referred to the Assembly Health Committee.***



***AB 2186 (Grayson) Housing Cost Reduction Incentive Program***

This bill would establish the Housing Cost Reduction Incentive Program, to be administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, for the purpose of reimbursing cities, counties, and cities and counties for development impact fee reductions provided to qualified housing developments and for the reasonable interest costs associated with impact fee deferrals. Upon appropriation, the bill would require the department to provide grants to applicants in an amount equal to 50% of the amount of development impact fee reduced for a qualified housing development and grants to applicants in an amount equal to the accrued interest on a deferred development impact fee. This bill would require the department to administer these grants by issuing a Notice of Funding Availability before December 31 of the year that the program receives funding and accepting grant applications after the subsequent year. ***This bill was approved by the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee (6-0) on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The measure has been referred to the Assembly Local Government Committee.***

***AB 2258 (Wood) Property Assessed Clean Energy program: wildfire safety improvements***

This bill would authorize a public agency that has established a PACE program, as specified, to enter into voluntary contractual assessments with property owners to finance the installation of wildfire safety improvements that are permanently fixed to real property and would provide that wildfire resiliency and safety improvements that contribute to the defensible space. ***This bill has been referred to the Assembly Local Government Committee. The measure has not yet been set for a hearing.***

***AB 2377 (Muratsuchi) Chief of Wildfire Prevention***

This bill would establish within the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection a Chief of Wildfire Prevention, to be appointed by the Governor. The bill would require the chief to be responsible for certain activities, including prioritizing acres for fire and fuels treatment and executing those treatments. ***This bill has been referred to the Assembly Natural Resources Committee. The measure is scheduled to be considered on April 18<sup>th</sup>.***

***SB 896 (Dodd) Wildfires: defensible space: grant programs: local governments.***

This bill requires the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection when reviewing applications for the local assistance grant program, to award a 5 percent scoring bonus to any local government entity qualified to perform defensible space assessments in very high and high fire severity zones for using the common platform to report that information. ***This bill was approved by the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee on March 8<sup>th</sup>. The measure is currently on the Senate Floor awaiting consideration.***

***SCA 8 (Nielsen) Wildfires: funding***

The California Constitution establishes the California Fire Response Fund and requires the Controller to transfer from the General Fund to the California Fire Response Fund a specified amount. The California Constitution requires moneys in the California Response Fund to be appropriated by the Legislature in each fiscal year exclusively for specified fire prevention purposes. The California Constitution establishes the Special District Fire Response Fund as a subaccount in the California Fire Response Fund, to be appropriated to special districts that provide fire protection services. This measure would, contingent upon voter approval of an additional specified proposition at a statewide general election, revise and recast the California Fire Response Fund and the Special District Fire Response Fund, by among other things, requiring the Treasurer to annually transfer an amount equal to 1% of specified state revenues



from the General Fund to the California Fire Response Fund. ***This bill was approved by the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee (5-0) on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The measure is currently in the Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments awaiting consideration.***

## FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND OUTLOOK

The month of March saw massive progress made on the appropriations front. The \$1.5 trillion government spending bill was signed into law, which allocated over \$766 million in direct spending to California. Following the enactment of the spending package, Congress and the Biden Administration have been looking prospectively toward the 2023 appropriations process.

### President Signs Omnibus Spending Bill into Law

This month, President Biden signed into law a \$1.5 trillion “omnibus” government spending bill that includes financing for initiatives specifically written by lawmakers seeking to boost their local universities, roadways or parks with federal dollars. Nearly 500 of the projects are in California, constituting over \$766 million in direct spending.

### President Biden Releases FY23 Budget Request

On March 28, President Biden released his \$5.8 trillion budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2023. The proposal focuses on more investment in the economy and in Americans, responding to current Russian aggression towards Ukraine, working on the public health system with focuses on serious diseases and mental health, and combatting the climate crisis.

President Biden seeks to reduce the nation’s deficit over the next decade while outlining funding for both military and domestic programs. This budget proposal looks to keep the economic burden of debt low through a proposed new 20% minimum tax on households worth more than \$100 million, an increase of the rate corporations pay in taxes on their profits, and measures to ensure multinational corporations operating within the United States cannot use tax havens to undercut the global minimum tax. To boost productive capacity, the President calls for an increase of affordable housing construction and supply with the hopes of stabilizing housing prices in the long term. The proposal also provides funding for an increase in law enforcement and more resources to tackle gun violence. In response to the current Russian aggression against Ukraine, the proposal includes support for the European Deterrence Initiative and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Lastly, the President also included funding for preparing for future pandemics, building out public health systems, and combatting the mental health crisis in response to the COVID-19 crisis and the need for cures for cancer.

Although the President’s budget proposal is a necessary part of the appropriations process, it is ultimately just a reflection of the President’s values and priorities. Congress will draft their own Fiscal Year 2023 spending agreement in the coming months.

### Update on the Future of Build Back Better

Since December when the Build Back Better Act stalled in the Senate, discussions have been underway to find a path forward for the President’s social spending agenda. Senator Joe Manchin



of West Virginia has been the key figure in the discussions. Because Congressional Democrats are attempting to move the legislation through Congress via the process called budget reconciliation, they need all 50 Democratic Senators to be in agreement on the bill.

This month, Sen. Manchin told a group of climate activists and energy executives he's open to supporting revised Build Back Better legislation narrowly addressing three issues: climate change, prescription drug prices, and deficit reduction. This is the most concrete direction we've seen from the Senator on what he would support and shows that he is serious about returning to the discussions on Build Back Better.

Sen. Manchin outlined a deal that includes roughly \$500 billion for climate and \$1 trillion in new revenue. But the senator isn't indicating any support for universal preschool or any of the other care-economy proposals that were included in Biden's initial "human infrastructure" package. And Manchin is insisting on reducing the deficit with at least half of the revenue from new corporate taxes, as well as the estimated savings from allowing Medicare to directly negotiate the cost of prescription drugs.

In February, White House officials discussed how to recast Biden's social spending and climate plans into a deficit-reduction package, hoping to appeal to Manchin's concerns about inflation. After the president mentioned lowering the deficit by \$1 trillion during his State of the Union address March 1, Manchin indicated he was open to some additional spending.

## DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

TPA works to further the mission of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District in Sacramento and Washington DC. In addition to providing feedback on the priorities of the State and Federal government, the District has its own priorities that we continue to advance.

### Legislative Priority 1 – Chapter 13 EMS System Modifications

California operates on a two-tiered emergency medical services (EMS) system. EMSA is the lead agency and centralized resource to oversee emergency and disaster medical services. The California Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) is charged with providing leadership in developing and implementing local EMS systems throughout California, and in setting standards for the training and scope of practice of various levels of EMS personnel. California has 33 local EMS systems that provide EMS for California's 58 counties.

Local EMS agencies are responsible for planning, implementing, and managing local trauma care systems, including assessing needs, developing the system design, designating trauma care centers, collecting trauma care data, and providing quality assurance.

In late 2019, EMSA issued proposed Chapter 13 regulations that would have aimed to define the standards, policies, and procedures for all local EMS systems. Additionally, the proposed regulations would have clarified and made specific criteria for determining whether a city or fire district that has contracted for, or provided prehospital EMS as of June 1, 1980, has consistently provided that service without any reduction in the level of service since that time. The regulations would have also made specific criteria for the determining when an exclusive operating area may





be created without a competitive process and the process to be used when awarding an exclusive operating area via a competitive process.

The EMSA proposed regulations garnered opposition from numerous entities. Additionally, CFCA's legal counsel requested that EMSA withdraw the proposed Chapter 13 regulations for failure to comply with certain substantive and procedural requirements for rulemaking under the Administrative Procedures Act. Ultimately, in August 2020, EMSA gave notice that it decided not to proceed with the rule making action related to Chapter 13.

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Assembly Member Rodriguez, the Chair of the Emergency Management Committee, introduced AB 1770 which would increase the reporting frequency of APOT data to the state. AB 1770 received positive consideration by the Assembly Committee on Emergency Management and has since been referred to the Assembly Committee on Health. The bill is scheduled to be considered in the committee on April 26<sup>th</sup>. AB 1770 is supported by the California Fire Chiefs Association, as well as the Fire Districts Association of California.

### Legislative Priority 2 – Mitigation Fee Act

Under existing law, the Mitigation Fee Act authorizes local agencies to impose fees to offset the impacts of new development in the form of new services and/or facilities required. The Mitigation Fee Act also imposes a variety of administrative requirements on the fees collected. No voter approval is required to impose impact fees. The same does not apply to a District board, who is prohibited from charging a fee on new construction or development.

In 2020, numerous bills were introduced that attempted to modify the Act in ways that would have resulted in a decreased ability for public agencies to collect impact fees. The aim of these legislative efforts has been to reduce the overall cost of housing in California and provide more opportunities for home ownership or for people to be able to afford to rent housing near employment centers. However, once the coronavirus pandemic hit, and there was concern about declining revenues for local governments, the Legislature did not consider many significant bills in 2021 related to the Mitigation Fee Act.

In February, Assembly Member Grayson introduced AB 2186, which attempts to reduce the overall cost of housing by reducing the cost associated with mitigation fees, but in a manner that would not be harmful to local agencies. The Assembly Member's bill would call on the Department of Housing and Community Development to reimburse local agencies 50% for any reduction or elimination of mitigation fees that they provide to qualified rental housing developments. While this measure does propose to provide state funding to offset the loss of impact fees, the bill would only backfill half of the impact fee reduction.

In addition to AB 2186, another impact fee related bill that is being closely monitored in AB 2063 (Berman). This measure would prohibit the charging of impact fees on a housing development's density bonus units. Currently, cities and counties are prohibited from collecting impact fees on a housing development's affordable housing units, and when combined with this proposal, could result in local governments only being able to charge a fraction of the impact fees that would otherwise be necessary to support a specific housing development. AB 2063 has been approved by the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee and has been referred to the Assembly Local Government Committee.



### Legislative Priority 3 – Professional Services

Under existing law, the Public Contract Code provides that contracts over \$25,000 must be awarded to the lowest bidder. In addition to be a low threshold, Section 20812 is inconsistent with the requirements for many public agencies, and inconsistent with other laws pertaining to Professional and Special Services.

This session legislation was introduced last year by Assembly Member Gallagher, AB 577, which would establish a \$50,000 threshold amount for county drainage districts, levee districts, and reclamation districts for the requirement to award to the lowest bidder. AB 577 was referred to the Assembly Local Government Committee for consideration, but was not set for hearing by the committee, and as such, the measure is now a two-year bill. It is possible that additional legislation will be introduced in 2022, but it is unclear if there will be any appetite within the Legislature to advance this type of legislation this year.

### Legislative Priority 4 – Parcel Tax

Currently, a parcel tax requires a two-thirds vote to pass and must be applied to all parcels equally. This means that a residential property, a commercial property, and an undeveloped property would have to be assessed the same amount for fire service even though they place different levels of demand for service on the Fire District.

On December 7<sup>th</sup>, Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry reintroduced ACA 1 which would create an exception to the 1% limit that would authorize a city, county, or special district to levy an ad valorem tax to fund the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or replacement of public infrastructure, affordable housing, or permanent supportive housing, if the proposed tax measure is approved by 55% of voters. For purposes of the bill, “public infrastructure” includes public safety buildings or facilities, equipment related to fire suppression, emergency response equipment, or interoperable communications equipment for direct and exclusive use by fire, emergency response, police, or sheriff personnel.

Last year, ACA 1 was supported by a coalition of individual public agencies and associations, including: California Special Districts Association, League of California Cities, California State Association of Counties, East Bay MUD, and East Bay Parks. The measure also received significant support from labor, including from California Professional Firefighters.

ACA 1 has been referred to the Assembly Local Government Committee, which is chaired by the bill’s author, Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry. Since constitutional amendments are not subject to the same legislative timelines as regular bills, so the measure may still be considered by the Assembly Local Government Committee despite being past the deadline for policy committees to consider bills in their House of Origin. Last session, ACA 1 was approved by the committee on a 5-2 vote.

### Legislative Priority 5 – Proposition 218

Proposition 218 restrict local governments’ ability to impose assessments and property-related fees, as well as requires elections to approve many local government revenue raising methods.



Over time, the responsibilities expected of local fire districts have grown, however, their share of local tax revenue has not grown to meet the increased demand.

Every few years, efforts have failed to modify the State Constitution to reduce the vote threshold for parcel tax measures to 55%. That included an effort earlier in the 2019-20 legislative session, ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry). While that measure was unsuccessful, the Legislature was able to approve a measure, ACA 11 (Mullin), for the November ballot, which appear on the ballot as Proposition 19. Proposition 19 was approved at the November 2020 General Election and allows homeowners who are over 55, disabled, or victims of wildfire or natural disaster to transfer their primary residence's property tax base value to a replacement residence of any value, anywhere in the state. An individual could use these rules up to three times in their lifetime. The measure would also limit the ability of new homeowners who inherit properties to keep their parents' or grandparents' low property tax payments. The measure would allocate most resulting state revenue to fire protection services and reimbursement to local governments for taxation-related changes.

In addition to any efforts to legislatively modify the Prop 218 voter thresholds, there is also a counter initiative effort underway that would impact the ability for local governments to raise revenue for government services. The proposed initiative, the Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act, would limit the ability of the state and local governments to enact, modify, or expand taxes, assessments, fees, and property-related charges.

In February, the Attorney General issued [title and summary](#) for the California Business Round Table-sponsored "Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act," which allowed the initiative proponents to begin signature gathering. Proponents must submit 997,139 valid signatures in order to qualify for the November 2022 ballot. The Secretary of State's recommended date to turn in signatures is April 29, 2022. As of March 16<sup>th</sup>, the proponents had reported collecting 25% of the signatures required to place the measure on the ballot.

The Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act would amend the California Constitution to restrict the ability of the state, local governments, other local agencies, and the electorate to approve or collect taxes, fees, and other revenues. It would require voter approval of all state taxes, would further restrict local fee authority by limiting it to the "minimum amount necessary" to provide government services, and would require voter approval for local measures such as franchise fees. Its provisions would make it easier to challenge local revenue measures by increasing the burden of proof on local agencies while disallowing an agency's characterization of a measure from being considered in court.

Initiative opponents comprise a [coalition](#) of organizations including the League of California Cities, California Professional Firefighters, AFSCME, SEIU, and the California Alliance for Jobs.

#### Legislative Priority 6 – Building a Coalition

TPA continues to work with the California Special Districts Association in efforts to further strengthen the relationship between CSDA and the District, as well as to ensure alignment on issues of importance to fire districts. TPA has worked with CSDA and the District to advocate for the District to be represented on the CSDA Legislative Committee. In December, CSDA staff notified the District that Chief Helmick has been selected to serve on the Legislative Committee



for the upcoming year. Since then, the District has been in close coordination with CSDA and their legislative representatives. On numerous occasions, CSDA has reached out to the District to gauge the impact of legislation on not just the District, but on fire districts as a whole. This has led to increased coordination between CSDA and fire-specific organizations, such as FDAC, with the District playing a key intermediary role.

