

## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

2023–24 REGULAR SESSION

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# ASSEMBLY JOURNAL

RECESS JOURNAL NO. 26

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## FINAL RECESS

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Assembly Chamber, Sacramento  
Thursday, September 26, 2024

Pursuant to the provisions of Joint Rule 59, the following Assembly Journal for the 2023–24 Regular Session was printed while the Assembly was in Final Recess.

**MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR**

The following veto messages from the Governor were received and ordered printed in the Journal:

**Veto Message—Assembly Bill No. 99**

Governor’s Office, Sacramento  
September 25, 2024

*To the Members of the California State Assembly:*

I am returning Assembly Bill 99 without my signature.

This bill would restrict the use of herbicides and pesticides by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for vegetation management along state roads and highways. The bill would also require Caltrans to comply with stricter local ordinances, and publish annual reports on pesticide use, among other requirements.

While I appreciate the intent to promote environmental stewardship, this bill raises several concerns. By allowing local ordinances to override state standards, the bill conflicts with existing state law, which preempts local regulation of pesticide use. The bill also uses unclear terminology, creating implementation and enforcement challenges, and leading to a regulatory patchwork that complicates Caltrans’ ability to manage vegetation safely and efficiently across the state. This would increase administrative burdens and limit Caltrans’ ability to use the most effective vegetation management tools along state highways.

California has made significant progress in sustainable pest management through the Sustainable Pest Management (SPM) Roadmap, developed in collaboration with state agencies and stakeholders. This roadmap reflects a holistic, long-term approach to managing pests while protecting human health, the environment, and the economy. Caltrans’ existing Integrated Vegetation Management Plan aligns with these efforts. Furthermore, earlier this year, I signed

Assembly Bill 2113 (Chapter 60, Statutes of 2024), codifying California's commitment to sustainable pest management.

Moreover, these requirements would result in millions of ongoing costs that were not accounted for in the 2024 Budget Act. In partnership with the Legislature this year, my Administration has enacted a balanced budget that avoids deep program cuts to vital services and protected investments in education, health care, climate, public safety, housing, and social service programs that millions of Californians rely on. It is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

GAVIN NEWSOM

**Veto Message—Assembly Bill No. 718**

Governor's Office, Sacramento  
September 25, 2024

*To the Members of the California State Assembly:*

I am returning Assembly Bill 718 without my signature.

This bill would require, upon appropriation, the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to establish a program to fund an academic study of mental health among women veterans in California and to submit a report summarizing the findings and recommendations of the study to the Legislature no later than July 31, 2025.

While I am supportive of the author's goal of advancing research on mental health among women veterans in the state, approving this measure would presume funding in next year's budget cycle, and the timeline established by this bill would not provide CalVet adequate time to provide a substantive report. I encourage the author to work to secure the necessary funding for this study within the annual budget process.

In partnership with the Legislature this year, my Administration has enacted a balanced budget that avoids deep program cuts to vital services and protected investments in education, health care, climate, public safety, housing, and social service programs that millions of Californians rely on. It is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

GAVIN NEWSOM

**Veto Message—Assembly Bill No. 828**

Governor's Office, Sacramento  
September 25, 2024

*To the Members of the California State Assembly:*

I am returning Assembly Bill 828 without my signature.

This bill excludes small community water systems serving disadvantaged communities and managed wetlands from Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) extraction limits and fees.

Ensuring safe and reliable drinking water for disadvantaged communities remains a key priority for this Administration. In the last five years, we have distributed more than \$1 billion in grants to disadvantaged communities to rectify failing drinking water systems. While I appreciate the author's intent to address the needs of small water systems serving these communities, excluding some groundwater extractors from GSAs does not align with the goals of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to analyze groundwater basins comprehensively to ensure future long-term sustainability.

Groundwater accounts for 40 to 60 percent of our water supplies, and many communities, especially in the Central Valley, are groundwater-dependent. SGMA serves as a critical buffer to protect drinking water supplies against the impacts of drought and climate change. Successful implementation of SGMA is also integral to protecting state infrastructure from the effects of subsidence.

On September 16th, we marked the 10-year anniversary of the enactment of SGMA. While I am proud of all the milestones we have met, and the investments my Administration has made, I also recognize there is still much we need to accomplish. I believe we should continue to implement the SGMA framework as is without creating exceptions for certain groundwater extractors.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

GAVIN NEWSOM

**Veto Message—Assembly Bill No. 1975**

Governor's Office, Sacramento  
September 25, 2024

*To the Members of the California State Assembly:*

I am returning Assembly Bill 1975 without my signature.

This bill would require the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to make medically supportive food and nutrition interventions a permanent covered benefit under the Medi-Cal program, and to establish a medically supportive food and nutrition benefit stakeholder advisory workgroup.

I appreciate the author's goal to provide low-income Californians on Medi-Cal with nutritious meals. Increasing access to nutritious foods and encouraging healthy eating habits contributes to the prevention and treatment of chronic conditions. However, this bill would result in significant and ongoing General Fund costs for the Medi-Cal program that are not included in the budget. I encourage the Legislature to explore this policy next year as a part of the annual budget process.

In partnership with the Legislature this year, my Administration has enacted a balanced budget that avoids deep program cuts to vital services and protected investments in education, health care, climate, public safety, housing, and social service programs that millions of Californians rely on. It is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

For this reason, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

GAVIN NEWSOM

**Veto Message—Assembly Bill No. 2734**

Governor's Office, Sacramento  
September 25, 2024

*To the Members of the California State Assembly:*

I am returning Assembly Bill 2734 without my signature.

This bill would update the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Healthy Soils Program (HSP) by authorizing the Scientific Advisory Panel to consult with any relevant advisory bodies. The bill would also allow Healthy Soils grant recipients to request an advance on their grant for incentive payments and require CDFA to provide grants of up to five years for on-farm demonstration projects.

While I support the author's goal to update the HSP to increase program accessibility for farmers, the provisions requiring CDFA to provide grants of up to five years would result in millions of dollars of General Fund cost pressures and should be considered in the annual budget process.

In partnership with the Legislature this year, my Administration has enacted a balanced budget that avoids deep program cuts to vital services and protected investments in education, health care, climate, public safety, housing, and social service programs that millions of Californians rely on. It is important to remain disciplined when considering bills with significant fiscal implications that are not included in the budget, such as this measure.

For this reason, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

GAVIN NEWSOM

**Veto Message—Assembly Bill No. 2757**

Governor's Office, Sacramento  
September 25, 2024

*To the Members of the California State Assembly:*

I am returning Assembly Bill 2757 without my signature.

This bill would establish the Southeast California Economic Region (SECER) to promote regional economic development in those communities most impacted by the extraction and processing of lithium and other minerals from the Salton Sea and align state and federal programs, including the California Jobs First Regional Investment Initiative (RII).

In 2021, my Administration and the Legislature made a historic investment into regional economic development through the RII. Within that initiative, the Southern Border and Inland Empire regions were each provided resources to develop regional economic strategies, which were recently completed. My Administration is currently reviewing these strategies and beginning to identify how this first-of-its-kind effort can evolve to better meet the needs of each of California's regions and communities, including the complexities and unique opportunities within regions.

Economic development in the Salton Sea Region is critical to positioning California as a global leader in sustainable lithium development and renewable energy production. This development should ensure that the economic benefits and opportunities support the growth and success of local communities, including Imperial County. My Administration has been working to support the region through public-private partnerships and leveraging state efforts to maximize coordination and partnership for inclusive economic development.

However, the creation of the SECER at this time would have unintended negative consequences for the RII program implementation. This multi-year program is poised to invest resources in projects that align with the priorities developed during the planning phase. The establishment of SECER would require the creation of new RII administrative entities, restart the area's planning process, and divert funds away from implementation projects, creating challenges for development for the region and local communities.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

GAVIN NEWSOM

**Veto Message—Assembly Bill No. 2899**

Governor's Office, Sacramento  
September 25, 2024

*To the Members of the California State Assembly:*

I am returning Assembly Bill 2899 without my signature.

This bill would require the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to notify a hospital, complainant, and their collective bargaining agent of any actions taken on substantiated violations of nurse-to-patient ratios. Further, if no fine is imposed, CDPH must prepare and submit a statement of reasoning to the complainant and their representative.

Currently, CDPH publicly posts detailed findings of its investigations of nurse-to-patient ratios on its Cal Health Find Database website and informs the complainant of the action. The publicly posted information includes a description of the investigation, CDPH's determinations, and the evidence considered. The database also includes the number of penalties assessed against a facility for nurse-to-patient ratio violations.

Nurse-to-patient ratios are important and CDPH takes reports of potential violations seriously. However, the requirements of AB 2899 are duplicative.

For this reason, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

GAVIN NEWSOM

**Veto Message—Assembly Bill No. 2903**

Governor's Office, Sacramento  
September 25, 2024

*To the Members of the California State Assembly:*

I am returning Assembly Bill 2903 without my signature.

This bill would require state agencies and departments administering homelessness programs to report cost and outcome data annually to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) using standardized procedures, beginning September 1, 2025. It would also require Cal ICH to compile and publicly release this data each year starting April 1, 2026.

While I fully support efforts to increase accountability and the effectiveness of our state homelessness programs, similar measures are already in place. Legislation enacted as part of the 2024 Budget Act (Assembly Bill 166, Chapter 48) includes enhanced reporting requirements for two of the state's largest homelessness programs. Specifically, Assembly Bill 166 mandates monthly reporting of outcomes for all rounds of the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Program, and annual outcome reporting for the Encampment Resolution Grants Program. These reports will be made publicly available by Cal ICH. Additionally, I recently signed Assembly Bill 799, which addresses the same objectives as this bill in a more targeted and cost-effective manner.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

GAVIN NEWSOM

**Veto Message—Assembly Bill No. 3263**

Governor's Office, Sacramento  
September 25, 2024

*To the Members of the California State Assembly:*

I am returning Assembly Bill 3263 without my signature.

This bill pre-authorizes private electric utilities to finance and securitize categories of costs that would be recovered through a volumetric charge on customers' electric utility bills, including costs for vegetation management and other operational and maintenance expenses related to wildfire mitigation, and costs stemming from a state or federal emergency declaration. This bill also pre-authorizes a private electric utility to issue recovery bonds for vegetation management expenses.

I share the author's concern about the pace of increasing electric costs and its impact on customer electric rates and bills. Managing these costs and ensuring affordable electric bills for all customers is essential for electrifying our economy with clean energy resources and meeting the everyday energy needs of Californians. This is why I am deeply committed to advancing efforts both administratively and in partnership with the Legislature over the next several years.

While the premise of this bill aligns with efforts to ensure electric bill affordability, I am concerned that this bill attempts to circumvent the CPUC's existing authority to review and authorize the financing and securitization of certain electric cost categories. In addition, allowing the pre-authorization of bonds to finance private utility yearly expenses, including but not limited to vegetation management expenses, may reduce electric rates and bills marginally in the near-term, but could ultimately lead to higher electric rates and bills for ratepayers in the medium-term, unless the financing costs are offset through other means.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,

GAVIN NEWSOM

Receipt of Bills

I acknowledge receipt this 25th day of September, 2024 at 5:22 p.m., of the following Assembly bills without the Governor's signature, together with statements of his objections thereto, signed by the Governor, delivered to me personally by Jasmine Valle:

Assembly Bills Nos. 99, 718, 828, 1975, 2734, 2757, 2899, 2903, and 3263.

SUE PARKER  
Chief Clerk of the Assembly

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ROBERT RIVAS, Speaker

DANIEL ALVAREZ, Assistant Minute Clerk

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Messages from the Governor were printed on this day relative to the following bills:

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