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Bills in Committee: May 11-15

The Capitol is gearing up for the expected release of Gov. Jerry Brown's May Budget Revise next week. Cities will be especially watching for any modifications to the Department of Finance's proposal to change the redevelopment dissolution process. In the Assembly, just one League Hot Bill will be heard, AB 35 that would provide funding for affordable housing, an important resource for cities after the redevelopment dissolution. The League's full [2015 Hot and Priority Bill list](#) is available online. *For more, see Page 2.*



Assembly Budget Subcommittee Shelves ACA 1 Requiring Three-Day Print Rule

Local government officials frequently hear a great deal about the benefits of transparency from the Legislature and are expected to comply with the Brown Act, Public Records Act and other laws. However, the Assembly's Budget Subcommittee #6 on Budget Process, Oversight and Program Evaluation action on Thursday, May 7 to dispose of Assembly Constitutional Amendment 1 (ACA 1) quietly by placing it a "suspense file" reveals a lack of Legislative interest in limiting their ability to take rapid and less-transparent legislative actions. *For more, see Page 2.*



California City Solutions: Azusa Creates Program to Boost Health of English as Second Language Adults, Builds Community Connection

*This story is part of an ongoing series featuring Helen Putnam Award entries. The 2014 entries are available on the League's website as a resource for cities in a searchable database called [California City Solutions](#). Azusa's English Lessons for a Healthy Life program was submitted in 2014 for the Health and Wellness Programs award category. *For more, see Page 3.**

'Bills' Continued from Page 1...

[A full listing](#) of Senate and Assembly hearings is available online. Hearing times are subject to change. Bill language and any available position letters on legislation can be found through the bill search function on the [League's website](#).

Monday, May 11

Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 126

- **HOT [AB 35 \(Chiu\)](#) Income taxes: credits: low-income housing: allocations increase.** *League position: Support.*

Senate Committee on Appropriations, 10 a.m., State Capitol, Room 4203

- **[SB 254 \(Allen\)](#) State highways: relinquishment.** *League position: Support.*

Tuesday, May 12

Senate Judiciary, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, John L. Burton Hearing Room (4203)

- **[SB 201 \(Wieckowski\)](#) California Public Records Act.** *League position: Oppose Unless Amended.*

Wednesday, May 13

Assembly Committee on Local Government, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 447

- **[AB 341 \(Achadjian\)](#) Financial affairs: reports.** *League position: Support.*
- **[AB 57 \(Quirk\)](#) Telecommunications: Wireless Telecommunication Facilities.** *League Position: Oppose.*
- **[AB 718 \(Chu\)](#) Local government: powers.** *League Position: Oppose.*

Senate Committee on Governance and Finance, 9:30 a.m., State Capitol, Room 112

- **[SB 593 \(McGuire\)](#) Residential units for tourist or transient use: hosting platforms.** *League position: Support if Amended.*

Senate Committee on Insurance, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 112

- **[SB 604 \(Hall\)](#) California Insurance Guarantee Association: definitions.** *League position: Support.*

'ACA 1' Continued from Page 1...

When presenting the measure, Assembly Republican Leader Kristin Olsen (R-Modesto) outlined the benefits of a three-day print rule, which included the obvious: time for legislators and the public to have a chance to be aware of the measure and understand potential impacts before voting. There are also exceptions in the measure to account for disasters declared by the Governor.

Organizations in support included the League, Common Cause and California Forward. League Senior Director for Legislative Affairs Dan Carrigg pointed out in his testimony the harm that had occurred to numerous cities though the passage of SB 89 of 2011, which swept local vehicle license fees in a matter of hours with no public hearing, causing significant harm to recently incorporated cities and cities that had annexed inhabited areas in reliance on those revenues. The League's [support letter](#) is available online.

As the hearing concluded, the author mentioned that the bill had been referred to a total of four committees and questioned whether she would have the opportunity to have an actual vote on her bill; from the committee's response it was not clear that she would. But all may not yet be over. This is a priority for the Assembly Republican Leader and there are no internal deadlines that apply to proposed constitutional amendments, so the discussion could emerge again as the session continues.

A [sample letter](#) is available on the League for cities wishing to support ACA 1.

The city of Azusa has a population of more than 46,300 residents with more than one-quarter reporting that they speak English "less than very well." According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, 31 percent of Azusa's residents were born outside of the United States. These demographics inspired the Azusa City Library to form a partnership and develop English Lessons for a Healthy Life (ELHL). The program provides adults where English is a Second Language (ESL) classes to learn vocabulary, grammar and communication, while teaching healthy lifestyle choices.

According to the American Medical Association, poor health literacy is "a stronger predictor of a person's health than age, income, employment status, education level, and race." Various studies have found that \$73 billion is spent annually for health care as a result of low health literacy skills among more than 90 million adults nationwide. A significant number of these patients are unable to read basic health materials, do not comprehend directions for taking medications and cannot understand appointment or informed consent documentation. Research also found that emergency room patients with inadequate literacy were twice as likely to be hospitalized.

Adults for whom English is a second language are among those most at risk for health-related problems due to low health literacy. They residents face compromised communication skills, as well as cultural barriers related to health care practices and navigating the U.S. health care system.

In June 2012, the library conducted a health literacy assessment developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with 14 Azusa Neighborhood Wellness Center (NWC) clients. Results indicated that four of the 14 had a "high likelihood" of limited literacy and five had a "possibility" of limited literacy.

That fall the Azusa City Library received funding from the Canyon City Foundation to develop and implement *English Lessons for a Healthy Life (ELHL)* in partnership with the Azusa NWC and the Azusa Pacific University (APU) Department of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). The program was developed to provide ESL adults English reading and writing exercises related to topics such as nutrition, exercise, and preventing diabetes and other chronic diseases. The model enables each agency to collectively leverage its resources while remaining focused on its unique mission. The library provides leadership, program administration and logistics, student recruitment, reporting, and fiscal management.

Azusa's NWC supervised APU nursing students who regularly visit classes to monitor and document blood pressure readings and steps walked each week (measured on a pedometer), and answer medical questions. In addition to helping program participants learn how to improve their health and the health of their families, nursing students learn strategies to overcome potential language misunderstandings and communication issues which would affect positive health outcomes for patients.

APU's TESOL Department provides curriculum development and classroom instruction. Graduate students pursuing a Master's degree are supervised as they teach the ESL classes. This gives the TESOL students direct practice in applying the teaching skills and theories they have learned.

The program objectives are:

- 1) Teach basic English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills to adults;
- 2) Encourage student application of learning by making better nutritional choices, exercising more frequently, controlling blood pressure, etc.; and
- 3) Motivate students to share information they learn with others.

The first 8-week session began in October 2012 using curriculum developed by the supervising APU assistant professor. The Level 1 curriculum targets beginning level ESL students and includes an introduction to exercising, learning about diabetes, and includes a strong focus on nutrition. Each family is given *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* book to read with their families to encourage talk about healthy food choices.

Level 2 was developed in September 2013 to include lessons on reading labels and gaining a deeper understanding of how to assess risk and prevent diabetes. They developed a new course in May 2014 focusing on mental health, in response to discussions in earlier classes about depression, stress, and similar issues.

More than 75 students have participated in ELHL. After one round of classes, reports indicated:

- Ninety-one percent of students shared the health information they learned with individuals outside of class;
- All of the students said they improved their health behavior as a result of the class, with changes in eating habits and increased exercise; and
- TESOL instructors observed a majority of the students improved their English skills.

APU TESOL Assistant Professor Tasha Bleistein and three graduate students presented the program during the Los Angeles Region TESOL Conference in March 2013. They shared how focusing on health topics can provide a well-rounded environment for improving participants' English skills and building confidence. Several students were interviewed prior to the presentation and reported that they can now better understand conversations and have improved their vocabulary, while their confidence in speaking English and knowledge about good health has also increased.

One student in particular, Eva Garcia, demonstrated the program's potential to impact lives. A 30-year resident of the United States, Eva attended previous English classes in the community, but she had never used any of the English covered in those classes. While participating in this program, her daughter noticed that for the first time she began to practice English around the house with her family. She faithfully wore her pedometer and tried to walk more steps each day, adopting healthy behaviors with exercise and eating, and lost weight. Eva's story illustrates the hope envisioned by the city for the ELHL program, connecting ESL adults with their community.

APU's TESOL Department has focuses a class course built around each ongoing program. The professor meets regularly with the student teachers and they review, debrief and practice their teaching strategies together. This has increased the effectiveness of the program, and its sustainability.

ARB Releases Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy for Public Review *May 27 Public Meeting Scheduled to Discuss Strategy*

The Air Resources Board (ARB) has released, for public review, a [concept paper](#) to initiate discussion on the development of a Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy.

Short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) include methane, tropospheric ozone, black carbon, and fluorinated gases. They are powerful climate forcers that remain in the atmosphere for a much shorter period of time than longer-lived climate pollutants, including carbon dioxide. Their relative potency, when measured in terms of how they heat the atmosphere, can be tens to thousands of times greater than that of carbon dioxide (CO₂). SB 605 (Lara, Chapter 523, Statutes of 2014) requires ARB, in coordination with other state agencies and local air districts, to develop a SLCP Strategy by the end of 2015 to further reduce SLCP emissions in California.

The Concept Paper presents initial ideas that will be considered and evaluated in the coming months by ARB staff, in coordination with other agencies, as it develops a SLCP Strategy pursuant to SB 605. The concepts included in this discussion draft do not represent commitments at this time, nor do they comprise an exhaustive list of elements or considerations that may be included in the Strategy or shape its development. The intent of the paper is to elicit new ideas and refine strategies to reduce emissions of SLCPs throughout the state.

The Concept Paper will be discussed at a May 27 public workshop. The comments received on the Concept Paper will inform the development of a draft Strategy that ARB expects to release for public comment later this summer. ARB welcomes broad participation among stakeholders, experts and interested parties throughout this process.

The Concept Paper and workshop notice can be found at ARB's [Short-Lived Climate Pollutant website](#). The website also contains a link for submitting written comments. An agenda and presentation will be posted before the workshop.

New Transportation Advisory Committee Hits the Ground Running on Road Charge Pilot Program

The California Transportation Commission (CTC), in consultation with the California State Transportation Agency Secretary, has formed a 15-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) in response to the enactment of SB 1077 (DeSaulnier, 2014).

Under the provisions of this bill, TAC is responsible for developing a framework for a pilot program to explore road charging as an alternative to the gas tax. The pilot program will test the viability of a road charge mechanism for assessing use of the state's transportation system.

TAC will meet monthly throughout 2015 and gather public feedback and comments through a variety of means to help develop the road charge pilot program. Efforts include:

- Providing an easily accessible [website](#) setup to receive emails and comments.
- Reaching out to hundreds of stakeholder groups, state and local elected officials and community leaders. View the [letter to stakeholders](#) sent by Commissioner Jim Madaffer, chair of the California Road Charge Technical Advisory Committee.
- Conducting public surveys and focus groups to substantively probe public attitudes and response.
- Consulting with members of a Work Group assembled to provide expertise and input from key stakeholders and public interests.
- Dedicating time for public comment at the monthly TAC meetings and providing webcast of meetings on the California Road Charge Pilot website.

To share feedback, visit the TAC pilot program website at www.CaliforniaRoadChargePilot.com. All comments received by Aug. 14 will be used to inform the TAC.

Interested stakeholders are also invited to view the Road Charge [Fact Sheet](#) or attend one of the upcoming [TAC meetings](#).

Please contact [Carrie Pourvahidi](#) at (916) 653-3148 for questions or more information about this project.
