



**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY POLICY COMMITTEE
HIGHLIGHTS**

Friday, June 5, 2020

ZOOM

[Environmental Quality Policy Committee Slides](#)

Staff: Derek Dolfie, Legislative Representative, League of California Cities
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General Briefing:

In accordance with the customary practice of convening all policy use advocacy team compiled a [General Briefing Update Document](#), which includes the latest committee members for a general briefing prior to the start of policy committee meetings, the League on federal and state legislative matters affecting cities within their respective policy areas.

I. Welcome and Introductions

League President John Dunbar, Mayor, Yountville, welcomed everyone to the second installment of virtual policy committee meetings. He thanked all of the Policy Committee members for the extra effort they give on behalf of California's cities. President Dunbar explained it is a challenging time for cities as they incur significant expenses associated with the public health crisis. He highlighted that the League is calling on state and federal governments to provide direct and flexible funding to all cities, and will be advocating for resources needed to respond to, and recover from, this pandemic.

President Dunbar also addressed the brutal death of George Floyd. He explained that as local leaders, everyone has the power – and responsibility – to confront the underlying racism and civil injustice still present within communities. He said the League would be setting aside time during each policy committee meeting to talk about two key questions on equity and justice. The first question was, "In order to help city leaders focus on equity and justice in our communities, what specific policy issues should we advance in your committee?" The second question was, "What resources do cities need to respond to what is happening in our communities?" President Dunbar explained that the discussions generated by these questions would help inform the League's work in the coming weeks and months to provide the support necessary to make real and positive changes.

President Dunbar introduced Carolyn Coleman, League Executive Director. Ms. Coleman thanked everyone for leading in one of the most challenging times in recent history. She explained that California's cities have been models for the nation, and their actions in response to COVID-19 have saved lives. Ms. Coleman said that besides developing policy recommendations on ballot measures and legislation, the League is asking the policy committees to have a discussion on President Dunbar's two key questions related to equity and justice. Ms. Coleman highlighted that without the committee members' engagement, the League wouldn't be the strong organization it is.

Chair Allan (Doc) Bernstein, Mayor, Tustin, and Vice Chair Chris Rogers, Council Member, Santa Rosa, welcomed committee members and provided an introduction.

II. Public Comment

Chair Bernstein asked if there was any public comment. There was no public comment.

III. COVID-19 Update

League staff provided a COVID-19 update, which highlighted resources such as the League's COVID-19 dedicated [webpage](#), [email](#), and [webinar series](#). League staff also gave an overview of the potential impacts that COVID-19 may have on key state legislative and budget deadlines. Notably, COVID-19 response and recovery, along with issues such as housing, homelessness, public safety, and wildfires, will likely continue to be legislative priorities for this session while other legislative priorities may be delayed until next session.

Additionally, League staff provided an overview of the League's [Support Local Recovery](#) campaign. This highlighted the campaign's goals, which includes securing \$7 billion from the state government and \$500 billion from the federal government in direct and flexible funding to support critical city services. League staff also provided some key takeaways from the League's fiscal analysis, which illustrate that all cities, regardless of size and geography, are being impacted by COVID-19, with over 90 percent of cities reporting that they are considering cutting/furloughing city staff or reducing public services. The League continues to work closely with its federal lobbying team and the National League of Cities regarding a potential fourth stimulus package.

IV. Budget Update

League staff provided an update on the Governor's May Revision proposed budget. The budget proposal has been scaled down to \$203 billion from the \$222.2 billion proposed in January. The focus of the budget is the protection of California's core values: public education, public health, public safety, and people hit hardest by COVID-19. The May Revision proposes to use \$16.2 billion in the Budget Stabilization Account (Rainy Day Fund) over three years. The League's budget analysis can be found [here](#).

V. Legislative Agenda

Mr. Dolfie introduced Senator Ben Allen to discuss [SB 45](#) (Allen), and Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia to discuss [AB 3256](#) (Garcia). Both bills propose multi-billion-dollar climate change bonds. SB 45 and AB 3256 were action items for the committee's consideration.

Speaker: Senator Ben Allen:

Senator Allen began by explaining that one of the most consequential challenges of our time is climate change. He explained SB 45 would help communities adapt to climate change related impacts. Senator Allen highlighted that the Governor's January Budget Proposal included funding for climate change. However, in light of COVID-19, the state is now facing a huge economic shortfall resulting in those funding pots being removed in the May Revision of the Governor's Budget.

Senator Allen then began to discuss SB 45 in more detail. Specifically, he said the idea of a climate resiliency bond measure is to fund green jobs that will prepare the state for climate related events in the future. Senator Allen explained that climate change will not wait until after COVID-19. He emphasized the benefits of this type of bond would more than triple the state's investment. Senator Allen said these investments are warranted,

and that the voters have an appetite for them since these climate risks are not going away.

Speaker: Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia

Assembly Member Garcia began by explaining that AB 3256 is still moving through the legislative process and the language is continuing to evolve. He emphasized that the bond is centered around creating jobs with a focus on the environment. A committee member asked Assembly Member Garcia if there would be an opportunity or appetite for including funding for organic waste recycling infrastructure to support cities' compliance with CalRecycle's regulations implementing [SB 1383](#) (Lara, 2016). Assembly Member Garcia responded, saying he wants to provide a pathway to success in meeting these recycling goals, and is working on getting language on this included in AB 3256.

Upon the conclusion of the guest speaker's presentations, Mr. Dolfie provided an overview of both SB 45 and AB 3256, which included a funding breakdown. He explained that while both of these bond proposals are continuing to move through the legislative process, it is likely that only one bond will ultimately pass. Mr. Dolfie also emphasized that these bills are bond proposals and that the final bond, which will go before the voters, will have to be reviewed by the Environmental Quality Policy Committee, and approved by the League's Board.

A motion was made to support SB 45 with the caveat that the League will ultimately be supporting one bond, not two, and the League advocates for including funding for organic waste recycling infrastructure. The motion passed. A second motion was made to support AB 3256, with the same conditions detailed for SB 45. The motion also passed.

Committee Action: Support SB 45 and AB 3256 and include ask for the inclusion of organic waste recycling infrastructure funding in the bond proposals.

VI. Legislator Perspective on Disaster and Community Resiliency

Mr. Dolfie introduced Senator Henry Stern to provide a legislator's perspective on disaster and community resiliency.

Speaker: Senator Henry Stern

Senator Stern began by explaining he is a joint author of SB 45, and is trying to keep the measure moving through the legislative process. Senator Stern addressed [SB 1215](#), a bill he is authoring related to microgrids. He said SB 1215 is really about how to expedite backup power in preparation for utility initiated power shutoff events and wildfire season. Senator Stern explained that having access to backup power, this year in particular, is critical as he believes there will be another bad fire season due to the current drought. He said the state should not be pushing for housing growth in fire-prone areas.

Senator Stern also highlighted the Self Generation Incentive Program (SGIP), which offers rebates for the installation of energy storage technology as a tool for emergency preparedness. Senator Stern encouraged cities to apply and expressed intentions to increase the amount of funding for the program.

VII. Legislative and Regulatory Update

Mr. Dolfie provided a legislative update on key bills of interest to the Environmental Quality Policy Committee. These measures related to the California Environmental

Quality Act (CEQA), emergency preparedness and response, energy and utilities, and water quality and supply.

Mr. Dolfie then provided an overview of pertinent regulatory issues. He explained the League submitted comments to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regarding revisions to Electric Rule 20 related to the undergrounding of electrical infrastructure. Mr. Dolfie also said the League submitted comments to the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) on the final round of SB 1383 proposed regulations. The League also sent a letter to, and organized a meeting with, CalRecycle and the California Environmental Protection Agency regarding temporary relief on solid waste and recycling issues in light of COVID-19. Lastly, Mr. Dolfie highlighted that the League signed onto, in conjunction with the California Community Choice Association, a letter opposing a Proposed CPUC Decision issued in March regarding centralized procurement of resource adequacy.

Mr. Dolfie closed the meeting by reviewing the Environmental Quality Policy Committee's 2020 Work Plan. He explained that while COVID-19 has created a consolidated legislative calendar, and altered the policy committee's meeting format, there has still been a lot of work done in pursuance of the Work Plan.

Chair Bernstein then thanked the committee for their hard work and commitment to serving on the League's Environmental Quality policy committee. He reminded the committee to be on the lookout for information from League staff if we will have another policy committee meeting at the League Annual Conference. He then adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting: Staff will notify committee members after August 17 if the policy committee will be meeting in October.