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Sierra Club California Releases 2016 Legislative Report Card: If Scores Were Grades, Many Legislators Would Flunk Out

SACRAMENTO – Sierra Club California released today its 2016 Report Card on the performance of legislators on environmental issues, and for 55 of the 119 currently sitting members of the legislature, the report is downright bad.

“Nearly half the legislature received scores lower than 70 percent. In terms of standard grading, that means that they’re carrying home report cards with Ds and Fs,” said Kathryn Phillips, director of Sierra Club California. “Given that most Californians really care about the quality of their air and water and natural areas, the low-scoring legislators are clearly failing their constituents.”

To prepare the scorecard, Sierra Club California staff selected 13 bills (a baker’s dozen) that represent a cross-section of environmental and environmental justice issues and were among the top priority legislation the Club’s staff and volunteers engaged in this year.

How each legislator voted on each bill was noted and a score was calculated by dividing the number of times the legislator voted with the Club’s recommendation by the total number of bills for which the legislator was present to cast a vote.

The Republican members of the legislature all ranked among the lowest performers on the scorecard.

The highest score among Republican legislators was 36, and 13 received zeros, meaning they never voted with the environment on the scored bills.

Among Democrats, the lowest score was 36 and was earned by 3 Democratic assembly members, including one from the Bay Area, where support for environmental quality is particularly high. Most of the Democrats in the legislature scored above 70 percent.

“The low-scoring legislators’ votes reflect a great sensitivity to the demands of special interests like industrial agriculture and the oil and gas industry,” said Phillips. “Issues such as air quality or the survival of the planet take second place or don’t place at all in their voting calculation.”

Eighteen assembly members and 19 senators earned scores above 90 percent, or A grades. Of those, there were 6 assembly members and 11 senators who received perfect scores of 100 percent.

“The A-grade legislators are protecting California’s environment and working to make sure we all have a future with clean air, clean water, healthy natural areas and environmental justice,” said Phillips.

The scorecard is [available online](#) at Sierra Club California’s website.

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Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the 13 Sierra Club chapters in California, representing more than 380,000 members and supporters statewide.