

Sierra Club California Legislative Priority List 2019 (September 14, 2019)

Each year, Sierra Club California staff and volunteer leaders work together to analyze and determine Club positions on hundreds of bills at the legislature. From among those on which we take a position, a number rise to the top as priority bills that deserve special attention. We encourage our members to bring these bills to the attention of their legislators.

Below is the Sierra Club California list of priority bills in 2019 with our position and each bill's status as of the date above. This list is updated periodically. We cover and take positions on dozens of bills. This priority list is *not* a complete list of all the bills we take a position on or lobby. Each bill is linked to its page on the California Legislative Information website. [Click on the links for the latest status on bills and their location in the legislative process.](#)

The priority bills are grouped below by topic area and listed within those by house and in ascending numerical order. Bills introduced by Assembly members begin with AB and bills introduced by Senators begin with SB. Those without any highlighting are actively moving through the legislative process. Those bills highlighted in **gray** have been converted to two-year bills or are otherwise inactive this year. Those that have been passed through the legislature and are awaiting action by the governor are highlighted in **aqua**, and those signed by the governor to become law have been highlighted in **green**. Those highlighted in **red** have been vetoed by the governor.

California Deal

AB 966 (Bonta) Reducing Emissions in Cement Plants

California's eight cement factories are the largest consumers of coal and petroleum coke in the state. This bill would require cement plants to reduce their carbon emissions in a transparent way by preparing a facility-specific Environmental Product Declaration. **SUPPORT. Converted to a two-year bill.**

AB 1276 (Bonta) Green New Deal

This bill would significantly increase renewable energy production, invest in building debaronization, reduce carbon emissions and promote the green job economy within 10 years. **SUPPORT. Converted to a two-year bill.**

SB 1 (Atkins) California Environmental, Public Health and Workers Defense Act of 2019

The bill would defend California's standards that protect our natural resources and public health from the Trump administration's reckless attempts to repeal or undermine environmental regulations. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

AB 5 (Gonzalez) Worker Status: Employees and Independent Contractors

This bill would codify the California Supreme Court's Dynamex decision that clearly lays out definitions of contractors and employees. The bill would make it harder for transportation companies to elude regulations requiring less-polluting vehicles. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

Clean Electricity and Efficiency

AB 961 (Reyes) Community Energy Benefits

This bill would require the California Public Utilities Commission to develop a methodology to take into account non-energy benefits of clean energy and energy efficiency programs in disadvantaged communities. **SUPPORT. Passed Assembly Energy Committee. Held in Assembly Appropriations Committee.**

AB 1690 (Flora) Biomass Contract Extensions

This bill would allow biomass incinerators in the most polluted air basins in the state to receive contract extensions to burn trees from the forest. **OPPOSE. Converted to a two-year bill.**

SB 386 (Caballero) Gutting our Renewable Energy Goals

This bill will jeopardize California's clean energy goals by giving an exemption to count hydropower from dams as renewable energy. The state does not consider hydropower from dams as renewable because developing and using that power creates environmental harms to waterways and fish and wildlife. **OPPOSE. Converted to a two-year bill.**

SB 772 (Bradford) Energy Storage

This bill would open the way for a large-scale pump storage facility, known as Eagle Crest, that will impair critical water sources used by wildlife within Joshua Tree National Park. **OPPOSE. Converted to a two-year bill.**

Clean Water and a Smart Water System

AB 1204 (B. Rubio) Delaying Drinking Water Standards

The bill would extend the amount of time public water systems have to comply with drinking water standards from one year to three years. Californians could be exposed to contaminated water during this multi-year extension. **OPPOSE. Converted to a two-year bill.**

SB 307 (Roth) Mojave Desert Aquifer

The federal government has refused to conduct an environmental review of a project that would pump 16 billion gallons of water annually for 50 years from the Mojave Desert aquifer. The bill would prohibit the water transfer unless the state finds that it will not adversely affect the natural resources of those federal and state lands. **SUPPORT. Signed.**

SB 559 (Hurtado) Friant-Kern Canal

The bill would appropriate \$400 million to repair the Friant-Kern Canal, a water conveyance built as part of the federally funded Center Valley Project that has suffered from subsidence due to agriculture's over-draught of aquifers along the canal's 152-mile length. The bill provides funding with no bounds to ensure steps are taken by the agency responsible for the canal to ensure future subsidence does not occur and that conservation measures are imposed. **OPPOSE. Converted to a two-year bill.**

Clean Transportation for Clean Air

AB 40 (Ting) A Strategy for Zero Emission Cars by 2040

This bill would require a state agency that regulates zero-emission vehicle technology to develop a strategy for ensuring that, by 2040, all new cars and new light-duty trucks sold in the state are zero emission. **SUPPORT. Assembly Transportation Committee Chair stopped the bill's progress, making this a two-year bill. However, the essential element of this bill was signed into law via the 2019/2020 budget act.**

[AB 210](#) (Voepel) Smog Check Exemptions for Old Cars

This bill is an “evergreen” bad bill. It is reintroduced nearly every two years and if it passes, it would allow old, dirty, highly polluting cars identified as “collector” cars avoid smog check and smog control devices. This bill would open the door to more pollution at a time when we need clean air more than ever. **OPPOSE. Bill pulled by author before first committee, but may be revived in 2020.**

[AB 753](#) (E. Garcia) Fuels, Vehicles and Fueling Infrastructure Incentives

This bill would shift incentive funds now available for zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure to so-called near-zero vehicles and the methane fuels they use. Methane is an extraordinarily potent greenhouse gas. **OPPOSE. This is now a two-year bill.**

[AB 1406](#) (O’Donnell) Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program

This bill would require that the California Energy Commission invest in biofuels production and incentivize methane-fueled vehicles. This legislation would undermine California’s efforts toward a zero-emission transportation future. **OPPOSE. Passed in Assembly. Held in Senate Appropriations Committee.**

[AB 1424](#) (Berman) Undermines Reliable and Equitable Electric Vehicle (EV) Charger Access

Electric vehicle drivers should be able to charge their car at charging stations conveniently with a credit card. This bill would reverse the Air Resources Board’s rule requiring chip credit/debit/prepaid card readers on new EV charging infrastructure. **OPPOSE. Passed in Assembly. Held in Senate Appropriations Committee.**

[AB 1411](#) (Reyes) Sustainable Freight

Heavy-duty vehicles are a major source of pollution in California. Freight causes 23 percent of transportation emissions and consists of only 3 percent of vehicles in the state. The bill would require the deployment of 200,000 zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles by 2030 and would direct the state to update the integrated action plan for sustainable freight. **SUPPORT. Author held the bill.**

[SB 210](#) (Leyva) Truck Inspections and Maintenance

This bill would beef up and enforce pollution control programs that will make sure heavy-duty truck pollution controls are maintained and operated correctly to discourage high-polluting trucks from California roads. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor’s action.**

Cutting Waste & Toxics

[AB 1080](#) (Gonzalez) and [SB 54](#) (Allen) California Circular Economy and Plastic Pollution Reduction Act

Single-use products—typically plastic packaging—is overflowing our landfills and fouling our oceans and streets. Current disposal and recycling policies cannot resolve these problems. These two identical bills will require the reduction, composting or recycling of 75 percent of single-use packaging by 2030. **SUPPORT. Converted to two-year bills.**

[SB 458](#) (Durazo) Protect Children from Brain-Damaging Chlorpyrifos Act of 2019

Pregnant mothers and children can be exposed to chlorpyrifos, a dangerous pesticide, through food residue and contaminated water, which causes brain damage in infants and children. This bill would ban the use of chlorpyrifos. **SUPPORT. Passed Senate Committee on Health and Environmental Quality. Held in Senate Committee on Appropriations.**

Oil & Gas: Reducing Dependence

AB 342 (Muratsuchi) Prohibiting Oil Infrastructure on State Lands

Opening California's public lands to oil production would put the state's most treasured landscapes at risk. This bill would prohibit the state from authorizing new construction of oil- and gas-related infrastructure on public lands. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

AB 345 (Muratsuchi) Oil Drilling Setbacks

This bill would mandate a 2,500 foot health and safety buffer zone between new oil and gas wells and homes, schools, hospitals and other sensitive sites. **SUPPORT. Converted to a two-year bill.**

AB 936 (R. Rivas) Tar Sands Oil Spill Contingency Plan

The bill would require the state to amend California's oil spill contingency plan to include response activities for non-floating oil (tar sands crude oil) spills. It would also require operators that receive or ship non-floating oils to provide advanced notice of transport. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

AB 1083 (Burke) Assessing Clean Energy Procurement Requirements

This bill originally threw a wrench into any future legislation to advance renewable energy and battery energy storage by opening up the ability to require an extensive study of all impacts of such requirements. **Bill amended and we removed opposition. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

AB 1299 (Salas and Hurtado) Petroleum refineries: air monitoring systems.

This bill would undermine California's environmental and public health protections in underserved, rural communities by exempting certain oil refineries from complying with air monitoring requirements. **OPPOSE. Late introduction in Senate. Converted to two-year bill.**

SB 169 (Jackson) Oil Pipeline Regulations

The bill would require that all pipelines in California follow consistent regulations. Currently pipelines that operate at partial capacity adhere to less stringent rules. It also ensures that pipeline inspectors have the proper tools to verify that all pipelines are operating in compliance with the law. **SUPPORT. Converted to a two-year bill.**

SB 457 (Hueso) - Biomethane Incentive Program Extension

In 2015 the California Public Utilities Commission established a \$40 million incentive program to support biomethane projects, particularly dairy manure methane digesters, which have their own environmental impacts. This bill would extend the program for another five years. Rather than subsidizing polluting practices, California should instead incentivize farming practices that promote human and environmental health. **OPPOSE. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

SB 463 (Stern) Oil Storage Risk Management Plan Update

This bill would require gas storage operators to include a list of any chemicals used their facilities in its risk management plans. It would also require operators to report any chemical leaks and make it a crime to violate this requirement. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

SB 551 (Jackson) Oil and Gas Infrastructure Cleanup and Remediation

This bill would require that the agency responsible for oil and gas extraction regulation, the Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources, develop a mechanism for estimating the costs of decommissioning, cleaning up and remediating oil and gas extraction facilities. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

Protecting Environmental Review

AB 1673 (Salas) CEQA Lawsuit Disclosure

This bill would require a plaintiff to identify and disclose any individual or business that contributes over \$1,000 in a CEQA lawsuit, which could discourage communities from challenging potentially polluting and destructive projects. Failure to comply would be grounds for dismissal. **OPPOSE. Failed in Assembly Committee on Natural Resources.**

SB 25 (Caballero) Expedited Judicial Review for Opportunity Zones

This bill would require that any CEQA lawsuits challenging opportunity zone projects be resolved within 270 days. These projects are numerous and expansive, requiring sufficient time for a plaintiff to review the environmental documents. By imposing this limitation, this bill would severely interfere with the judicial process and removes the environmental protection that CEQA provides. **OPPOSE. Converted to a two-year bill.**

SB 632 (Galgiani) CEQA Exemptions for Massive Tree Removal

This bill would provide a CEQA exemption for any activity recommended by CAL FIRE's very flawed *DRAFT* Vegetation Treatment Plan. The document is still under development and has been discredited for listing activities that would harm California's wildlands and that have not been subject to adequate CEQA review. **Bill amended and we removed opposition. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

Protecting Parks, Wildlife and Habitat

AB 454 (Kalra) Migratory Bird Protection

This would expand California's leadership on migratory bird protection and conservation, which is especially important as many migratory bird populations continue to decline due to human activities and as the federal government rolls back federal protections for birds and other wildlife. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

AB 719 (B. Rubio) Promoting Sale of Crocodile and Alligator Skins

This bill tries to block a long-adopted law designed to stop the trade of endangered crocodile skins in California. **OPPOSE. Gutted and amended in Senate. Passed Senate Natural Resources Committee. Held in Senate Appropriations Committee.**

AB 1086 (Bauer-Kahan) Off-highway vehicular recreation: Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area: Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area.

When an identical bill, SB 767 (Glazer) couldn't get out of an Assembly committee for the second year in a row, the bill's co-author reintroduced via a gut-and-amend strategy in the last week of session. This bill would resolve a decades-long effort to protect an ecologically important area in Alameda County. The bill would allow the State Department of Parks and Recreation to sell the area to local entities that intend to preserve the Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area as a park for people, not off highway vehicles. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

AB 1254 (Kamlager-Dove) Bobcat Trophy Hunting Moratorium

Bobcats play an important role in the maintenance of healthy ecosystems and are iconic in California. This bill would place a moratorium on cruel and senseless bobcat trophy hunting in the state. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

AB 1578 (L. Rivas) Pavement to Parks Program

In underserved communities, public schools often represent a student's only opportunity to play outside and enjoy nature. This bill would establish the School Pavement to Parks Grant Program to provide grants to schools in disadvantaged communities to convert pavement areas to green spaces. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

AB 1788 (Bloom) Rodenticide Ban

Anticoagulant rodenticides, a group of dangerous pesticides, have widespread and detrimental impacts on the very carnivores who help regulate rodent populations – including bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, foxes, hawks, eagles and owls. This bill would abolish the use of this pesticide, except in the case of agricultural activities and public health situations. **SUPPORT. Converted to two-year bill.**

SB 402 (Borgeas) Off-Road Vehicles in Inyo County

Inyo County, which is home to Death Valley National Park, has an off-road vehicle pilot program that will expire in 2020. This bill would expand the program until 2025. The program has raised health and safety concerns; noise and traffic increases; air quality impacts from dust and emissions; and significant impacts to natural resources. **OPPOSE. Signed.**

SB 767 (Glazer) Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area

This bill would resolve a decades-long effort to protect an ecologically important area near the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area. The bill would essentially allow the Department of Parks and Recreation to sell the area to local entities that intend to preserve the Alameda-Tesla Expansion Area as a park for people, not off-highway vehicles. **SUPPORT. Passed in Senate. Converted to two-year bill in Assembly Appropriations Committee.**

Protecting People from Wildfire

AB 38 (Wood) State Wildfire Preparedness Board

The intensity and frequency of fires in California have increased to unprecedented levels. Residents in high fire hazard areas can make their homes more fire resistant through low-cost retrofits and establishing defensible spaces. This bill would create the State Wildfire Preparedness Board and establish a Fund to help residents harden their homes. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

AB 191 (Patterson) - Exemptions for Current Building Standards

This bill would exempt homes that are rebuilt after a wildfire or a state of emergency from adhering to current building standards. The structures would only be required to meet the energy efficiency standards from 2006. **OPPOSE. Converted to a two-year bill.**

SB 160 (Jackson) Culturally Sensitive Emergency Planning

This bill would require local government to include cultural considerations in their emergency preparedness plans to help make sure all Californians are appropriately warned, assisted and, if needed, evacuated during an emergency. **SUPPORT. Passed both houses. Awaiting Governor's action.**

SB 182 (Jackson) Comprehensive Retrofit Strategies

This bill would require local governments to develop comprehensive retrofit strategies as part of their local hazard mitigation plan every 8 years. This focuses on common-sense fire safety strategies rather than wildland logging. **SUPPORT. Converted to a two-year bill.**