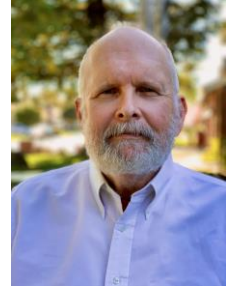


## Legislative Update

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### Legislative Calendar:

- Jan. 1, 2024 – Statutes take effect
- Jan. 3 – Legislature reconvenes
- Jan. 10 – Budget must be submitted by the Governor
- Jan. 12 – Last day for policy committees to hear and report to fiscal committees, fiscal bills introduced in their house in 2023
- Jan. 19 – Last day for any committee to hear and report to the floor bills introduced in that house in 2023. Last day to submit bill requests to the Office of Legislative Counsel
- Jan. 31 – Last day for each house to pass bills introduced in that house in 2023
- Feb. 16 – Last day for bills to be introduced
- Feb. 19 – Presidents Day
- Mar. 21 – Apr. 1 – Spring Recess
- Apr. 26 – Last day for policy committees to hear and report to fiscal committees fiscal bills introduced in their house
- May 15 – ASCE day at the California Capital

### CA Legislature starts 2024 session with big budget challenge

After three-and-a-half months at home, California legislators return to Sacramento today for a seven-month session where a budget deficit and the election will be top of mind. All 80 Assembly seats and half the 40 Senate seats are on the ballot so that many lawmakers will be pulling double duty between policy-making and campaigning. And they won't have as much state money to bring home to their constituents. The estimated \$68 billion shortfall will also mean less money for programs that support health care, housing, education, the environment, and more as lawmakers must reconsider their priorities to help bring the state out of the red. Not only will these interest groups compete with one another, but Democratic legislators who advocate for these issues will have to jockey for a slice of the budget pie. Meanwhile, expect Republicans to grab opportunities throughout the session to propose cuts for programs they already oppose.

### Beavers (AE) on the Loose

California state and tribal agencies released a family of beavers in Plumas County in the Sierra Nevada this fall to re-establish a breeding population there, the first such release of beavers in the state in almost 75 years, *The Sacramento Bee* reports. The project was led by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Maidu Summit Consortium, a nonprofit devoted to

conserving the land and culture of the Mountain Maidu people. Together, the groups released seven beavers into a creek on a tract of tribal land in Plumas County, where the beaver population was abundant before pioneers settled the area. The release represents a milestone in the efforts by the state and the Maidu to conserve the region's ecosystem. Beavers play a crucial role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem, and their aquatic engineering can help make their environments more climate resilient. "It's good to have them back home again," the Maidu Summit Consortium chairman, Ben Cunningham, said. "The beavers are back where they belong."

## **BPELSG Survey**

The Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists, in support of the Governor's Executive Order (N-16-22) strengthening the commitment to a "California for All", is conducting a brief survey. The responses are anonymous and will be open until January 31, 2024. The Department of Consumer Affairs' SOLID Planning Unit will add this feedback to the analysis to help the Board supplement its strategic plan. Please click on or copy and paste the following URL into your browser to get started. <https://www.research.net/r/BPELSGdei>

## **Appointments**

To the Western Water Cooperative Committee: **Erik Ekdahl**, Sacramento, Democrat, deputy director of the Division of Water Rights at the State Water Resources Control Board since 2017.

To the Coastal Commission: **Susan Lowenberg**, San Francisco, Democrat, president of the Lowenberg Corporation since 2011.

## **Reports of Interest**

**Transport Reviews** released [Driver Fatigue in Taxi, Ride-hailing, and Ridesharing Services: A Systematic Review](#). This review examines current research on driver fatigue in the taxi and ride-hailing industries. Fatigue-related accidents are prevalent, potentially linked to optimism bias inducing risky behaviors even when drivers fail to recognize their fatigue. Factors such as extended working hours, limited rest, job demands, poor sleep, algorithmic management, traffic congestion, and added workloads contribute to driver fatigue. None of the reviewed articles used objective measurements, emphasizing the need for direct monitoring of behavioral indicators and advanced technologies. Additionally, the studies identify drivers engaging in secondary activities to combat fatigue, which can lead to distractions, highlighting the importance of strategies to mitigate driver distraction. Effective policies and regulations for the ride-hailing industry should be evidence-based, utilizing methods such as naturalistic experiments and road safety analysis for comprehensive data collection and improved safety.

**Dept. of Water Resources** released its "[Final Environmental Impact Report](#)" to meet the California Environmental Quality Act requirements for approval of the Delta Conveyance Project, which would construct a tunnel for carrying water underneath the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta directly to Bethany Reservoir near Tracy where it can be pumped into the California Aqueduct and delivered south, report includes analysis of resources and mitigation of

the “construction, operations, and maintenance impacts of the project alternatives in a comparative format” with “existing conditions in 2020 at the time of Notice of Preparation;” also includes an analysis on “whether cumulatively significant impacts may occur” for “each of the resource topics,” and if so, “determine whether each project alternative’s incremental effect is cumulatively considerable when evaluated together with past, present, and probable future projects.”

**Legislative Analyst’s Office** released, [“Assessing California’s Climate Policies—Implications for State Transportation Funding and Programs,”](#) finds that “existing state transportation revenues will decline notably as the state pursues” increased “use of zero-emission vehicles” which “will decrease the consumption of gasoline and diesel fuels, and consequently reduce the associated tax revenues that currently support the state’s transportation system;” estimates “that total state transportation revenues will decline by a net of \$4.4 billion (31 percent) over the next decade,” and with a lack of “alternative funding sources, these projected declines will result in state transportation programs having less capacity to support state and local transportation projects and activities;” recommend the legislature “closely monitor state transportation revenues and programs over the coming years to keep track of how quickly these impacts will materialize, while simultaneously beginning to develop a long-term plan for how to address future revenue declines.”

**State Water Contractors**, a non-profit association of 27 public water agencies, releases its [“Annual Science Report”](#) for the 2022-23 fiscal year, details “how the Science Program funded over \$3.3 million in management-relevant water research,” which includes \$2.5 million for the launch of the organization’s “first-ever science solicitation” that requested project proposals “to advance the understanding of the San Francisco Bay, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and upper watersheds” and “encouraged investigations of how secondary (non-flow) mechanisms affect the growth, migration and survival of Delta and Longfin Smelt, Chinook Salmon and Central Valley steelhead.”