

## California Special District Association 2019 Major Accomplishments

Advocacy and Public Affairs  
*The Voice of Special Districts*

### *Blocking Mandates and Saving Special Districts Money*

- **Held Off Costly Pension Payments**—Played a leading role in blocking legislation that would have forced public employers to make illegal payments to retirees rather than requiring CalPERS and other retirement systems to certify and protect employee benefits. (SB 266)
- **Deterred Additional CVRA Mandates**—Secured amendments to remove special districts from legislation that will impose expansive new redistricting mandates on local agencies related to the California Voter Rights Act. (AB 849)
- **Defended Local Control of Special District Property**—Negotiated amendments to legislation that would have virtually eliminated the ability for special districts to lease land and would have severely limited opportunities to sell land. (AB 1486)
- **Prevented Further Deterioration of Local Collective Bargaining Process**—Assisted in obtaining a veto of legislation that would have granted additional paid release time for state and local agency union employee representatives to conduct union business. (AB 314)
- **Contested the Expansion of Prevailing Wage**—Joined an amicus brief to the California Supreme Court arguing against an expansion of “public works” that would mandate prevailing wage for services beyond construction and maintenance of structures or property. (*Kaanaana v. Barrett Business Services, Inc.* [S253458])

### *Protecting and Enhancing Local Revenues*

- **Prevented RDA 2.0 Bills from Shifting Property Taxes**—Worked with stakeholders and the State Legislature to prevent new forms of redevelopment from diverting property tax revenue away from special districts without their consent. (AB 11 and SB 5)
- **Ensured Return of Property Taxes Post RDA**—Secured amendments to continue the retirement of former redevelopment agency (RDA) debt and eliminate property tax diversions from special districts instead of allowing former RDA bond proceeds to be used by new developers. (Budget Conference Committee Issue 18, SB 15, and SB 532)
- **Defended Critical Local Infrastructure Funding**—Narrowed a host of legislation seeking to restrict or eliminate the ability of special districts to impose and collect development impact fees to meet the needs of growing communities. (AB 68, AB 1484, SB 4, and SB 13)
- **Fought for Equitable Taxing Authority**—Sought and achieved amendments to legislation that would grant special districts a vote threshold for taxes and bonds similar to that which is currently required for cities and schools in many instances. (ACA 1)
- **Safeguarded Rates from Unconstitutional Referenda**—Joined an amicus brief to the California Supreme Court maintaining that an *initiative*, not referendum, is the appropriate avenue to challenge rates or fees adopted pursuant to the California Constitution. (*Wilde v. City of Dunsmuir* [S252915])

### *Preventing Unnecessary Public Records Act Costs*

- **Defeated Two-Year Email Retention**—Organized and spearheaded a coalition that secured a veto of legislation which would have mandated local agencies retain all emails for two years regardless of the cost or content. (AB 1184)
- **Averted Increased Litigation Costs**—Achieved the veto of a bill that would have eliminated the incentive for plaintiffs to settle California Public Records Act (CPRA) lawsuits pre-trial. (SB 518)
- **Avoided Expansion of Legal Liability**—Garnered amendments to legislation that would have exposed special districts to “reverse” CPRA lawsuits against private entities. (SB 749)
- **Fought Against Attorney’s Fees**—Filed an amicus brief in the Second District Court of Appeal, joined by League of Cities and CSAC, arguing that State law does not permit attorney’s fee awards against a local agency in a “reverse” CPRA lawsuit. (*City of Los Angeles v. Metropolitan Water District of Southern California* [B272169])

### *Getting the Word Out*

- **Established the First Special Districts Week**—Increased public awareness and understanding of special districts and promoted civic engagement by sponsoring legislation that established September 25-29 as Special Districts Week. (ACR 89)
- **Delivered the Message Directly to Decision-Makers**—CSDA public affairs field coordinators met directly with over 50 legislative district offices, more than 30 LAFCO offices, and 11 reporters; they also organized meetings between special districts and six legislators as well as arranged for five guided tours of 18 special districts for nearly four dozen state, federal, and county officials.
- **Met Face-to-Face with Special District Leaders**—CSDA staff visited 755 special districts in-person to exchange the latest information on the challenges and opportunities facing special districts across the State.
- **Bolstered Chapter Participation**—CSDA staff attended 84 chapter meetings throughout the State, a 22 percent increase over last year; CSDA added a new chapter in Solano County, bringing the total to 19 affiliated chapters in California.
- **Grew Grassroots Action**— Increased the average response to CSDA Calls-to-Action by 35 percent over last year, generating 230 letters from special districts on four priority bills.

### **TOTAL NUMBER OF BILLS FOR 2019 LEGISLATIVE YEAR**

- Reviewed 3,033 bills
- Actively tracked 787 bills
- Directly lobbied on 132 bills

Of the 3,033 legislative measures introduced in this legislative session, CSDA actively tracked 787 of them and directly lobbied on 132. Of the 63 bills CSDA opposed, only 13 became law; the other 50 were vetoed, amended to remove CSDA’s concerns, or have become two-year bills. Conversely, 31 of the 69 bills CSDA supported have become law.

### **69 Bills Supported**

31 – Signed into law

1 – Amended to remove support

5 – Vetoed  
32 – Two-year bills

**63 Bills Opposed**

13 – Signed into law  
21 – Amended to remove opposition  
7 – Vetoed  
22 – Two-year bills