

Staff Summary for February 12-13, 2025

28A. Legislative Report**Today's Item****Information** ☒**Action** ☐

Receive updates on legislative activity and consider providing direction to staff on potential actions.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

Commission staff has not identified any state legislation that may affect the Commission's resources and workload during this legislative session, as of February 3, 2025. The Department has provided a report on active bills it is tracking during the legislative session (Exhibit 1), noting that the deadline for introducing new bills is February 21.

At any meeting, the Commission may direct staff to provide information to, or share concerns with, bill authors. Today is an opportunity for the Commission to provide direction to staff concerning proposed legislation.

Legislative Calendar Highlights

The legislature reconvened for the second half of the 2024-2025 session on January 6, 2025. Calendar highlights include:

- January 24: Last day for each house to pass bills introduced in 2024 in their respective house
- February 21: Last day for new bills to be introduced
- February 17: Presidents' Day
- March 31: César Chávez Day (holiday observed by legislature)
- April 10: Spring recess begins upon adjournment of the day's session
- April 21: Legislature reconvenes from spring recess

Bills Introduced During the 2024-2025 Session

Legislative bills, their history and their status, may be found at www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

1. [Department legislative report, dated February 3, 2025](#)

Motion (N/A)



Department of Fish & Wildlife Legislative Report

February 2025

(As of February 3, 2025)

[AB 300](#)

([Lackey](#) R) Endangered Species: incidental take: wildlife preparedness activities.

Status: 01/24/2025 - From printer. May be heard in committee February 23.

Summary: The California Endangered Species Act restricts the harm of endangered, threatened, or candidate species but allows for exceptions through permits issued by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The State Fire Marshal identifies fire hazard zones, and local agencies must designate these zones by ordinance within a set timeframe. This bill would allow local entities to submit wildfire preparedness plans to the department for activities in designated fire hazard zones that aim to minimize wildlife and habitat impact. These plans must detail the planned activities, dates, and the species affected. If sufficient information is provided, the department will inform the local agency within 90 days whether a permit is required or if other pathways, such as exemptions, are applicable. They will also provide guidance on species protection measures. By July 1, 2026, a standard submission form for wildfire preparedness plans will be available online, and starting January 1, 2027, the department will annually post summaries of submitted plans.

[AB 317](#)

([Jackson](#) D) California First Time Homeowner Dream Act.

Status: 01/27/2025 - Read first time.

Summary: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires a lead agency to conduct an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for projects likely to significantly affect the environment unless it determines that no substantial impact will occur, in which case a negative declaration is adopted. For projects where impacts can be mitigated, a mitigated negative declaration is needed. Existing laws exempt some projects from CEQA, such as converting certain structures to supportive or transitional housing. This bill proposes to exempt from CEQA the construction of a single-family dwelling meeting specific conditions: the dwelling must be 1,500 square feet or less, intended for a first-time homebuyer, and meet legal requirements. If the project qualifies for exemption, a notice must be filed with relevant offices, adding responsibilities for lead and local agencies under a state-mandated local program.

[SB 70](#)

([Seyarto](#) R) Public contracts: Small Business Procurement and Contract Act.

Status: 01/29/2025 - Referred to Com. on G.O.

Summary: The Small Business Procurement and Contract Act allows California state agencies, including the California State University, to directly award contracts for goods, services, or IT to certified small businesses, microbusinesses, and disabled veteran business

enterprises without needing competitive bidding, as long as the contract value is between \$5,000 and \$250,000. This bill proposes to increase this maximum contract value to \$350,000. Starting January 1, 2026, and every two years thereafter, the Director of General Services must review this maximum value and can adjust it based on changes in the California Consumer Price Index.

SB 73

(Cervantes D) California Environmental Quality Act: exemptions

Status: 01/29/2025 - Referred to Coms. on E.Q. and HOUSING.

Summary: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or a negative declaration for projects with potential significant environmental effects. Certain projects, such as residential and mixed-use developments in transit priority areas, are exempt if they align with an existing specific plan with a certified EIR. This bill would expand exemptions to projects in areas of very low vehicle travel and mandates they follow specific planning guidelines, including development on previously used or qualified vacant sites. It also changes rules for exemptions related to agricultural employee housing, affordable housing, and infill residential projects, potentially allowing these within state conservancy boundaries and adjusting project size and location criteria. Additionally, exemptions for sustainable transit priority projects located in low vehicle travel areas are revised, requiring previous development or specific vacant site criteria. Lead agencies must file notices of exemption for qualifying projects, imposing additional local program requirements.

Legislation from the First Extraordinary Session

ABX1 6

(Patterson R) Forestry: timber operations: maintenance of timberlands for fuels reduction.

Status: 01/22/2025 - From printer.

Summary: The Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 mandates that timber operations cannot proceed without an approved timber harvesting plan by a registered professional forester. Violating the act is a misdemeanor. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the evaluation of environmental impacts for projects, with a report or declaration necessary depending on potential effects. This bill allows noncommercial wildfire fuel reduction projects on timberland, funded partly or wholly by public money, to use a timber harvesting plan instead of complying with CEQA, treating these as timber operations.

ABX1 7

(Essayli R) Budget Act of 2024.

Status: 01/22/2025 - From printer.

Summary: The Budget Act of 2024 allocated funds for the state government's operations for the 2024–25 fiscal year. This bill proposes changes to the act by exempting wildfire prevention projects from complying with the California Environmental Quality Act.

ABX1 9

(Essayli R) Budget Act of 2024

Status: 01/22/2025 - From printer.

Summary: This bill would amend the Budget Act of 2024 to specify that approval of a large electrical corporation's plan to place distribution infrastructure underground is not considered a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). However, any environmental review required by CEQA must still happen before approving projects that would cause physical changes to the environment.

For more information call:

Clark Blanchard, CDFW Deputy Director at (916) 591-0140

Erika Fiske-Sanders, CDFW Legislative Coordinator at (916) 539-2912

You can also find legislative information on the web at <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/> and follow the prompts from the 'bill information' link.