

25A. Administrative Items – Legislative Report

Today's Item	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action <input type="checkbox"/>
Receive updates on state and federal legislation and regulatory activity, and consider providing direction to staff on potential actions.		

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)

Background

Commission staff has identified state legislation that may affect the Commission's resources and workload, or may be of interest to commissioners, and provides the status of those bills during this legislative session as of January 28, 2026. The Department has provided a report on bills it is tracking during the second half of the 2025-26 two-year legislative session (Exhibit 1).

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 state or federal legislation.

Legislative Calendar Highlights

Both houses of the California State Legislature returned from an interim study recess on January 5 for the second half of session. Other calendar highlights include:

- January 1, 2026: Most statutory changes from the first half of session took effect
- February 16: Presidents' Day
- February 20: Last day for bills to be introduced
- March 26: Spring recess begins
- March 30: César Chávez Day observed by the legislature (note that March 31 is a holiday for state agencies)
- April 6: Legislature reconvenes from spring recess
- April 24: Last day for policy committees to hear and report to fiscal committees fiscal bills introduced in their house
- May 1: Last day for policy committees to hear and report to the floor non-fiscal bills introduced in their house

Bills Introduced During the 2025-2026 Session

One senate bill (SB) that may be of potential interest to the Commission is active this legislative session as of January 28.

- SB 575 (Laird) – California Sea Otter Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund. Status: 1/26/2026 - In Assembly. Read first time. Held at Desk.

This bill would create the California Sea Otter Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund and allow taxpayers to contribute to the fund via voluntary designation on their tax returns. This fund is for sea otter conservation work, including investigation, prevention, and

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enforcement actions related to sea otter mortality, competitive grants/contracts to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for research, protection, projects or programs related to the Federal Sea Otter Recovery Plan or improving the nearshore ocean ecosystem, and for public outreach to encourage contributions. Fund allocation is split between the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) and the California State Coastal Conservancy. The January 15, 2026, amendments exempt the fund from the \$250,000 minimum contribution requirement and change the sunset date to 2033.

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

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

1. [Department legislative report](#), dated January 28, 2026

Motion (N/A)



Department of Fish & Wildlife Legislative Report

February 2026
(As of January 28, 2026)

AB 35

(Alvarez D) Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024: Administrative Procedure Act: exemption: program guidelines and selection criteria.

Status: 1/27/2026-In Senate. Read first time. To Com. on RLS. for assignment.

Memo

The Administrative Procedure Act outlines how state agencies should adopt and implement regulations. The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024, passed as Proposition 4, approved issuing \$10 billion in bonds for various environmental and agricultural projects. Typically, regulations required for such programs can be adopted as emergency regulations, needing to be filed with the Office of Administrative Law. However, this bill exempts the adoption of regulations for these programs from the Administrative Procedure Act. Instead, state entities receiving funding must develop draft project guidelines and submit them to the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, who will post them online. The bill permits the use of existing guidelines and criteria and is set to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

AB 946

(Bryan D) Natural resources: equitable outdoor access: 30x30 goal: urban nature-based projects.

Status: 1/27/2026-In Senate. Read first time. To Com. on RLS. for assignment.

Memo

This bill would direct state funding agencies, including the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), to allow for urban nature-based projects on degraded lands to be eligible and competitive for state funds. The January 5 amendments replace the entirety of the previous language, which was related to Section 27771 of the Government Code regarding Chief Probation Officer and Designee.

AB 1382

(Castillo R) Ethics Over Aesthetics Act.

Status: 1/16/2026-Read second time. Ordered to third reading.

Memo

The bill would prohibit the for-profit importation, sale, or offering for sale of genetically modified pet animals when the genetic modification is made primarily for cosmetic or aesthetic purposes rather than the animal's health or welfare. Violations would be subject to civil penalties of at least \$5,000 per animal, with each unlawfully sold or offered animal constituting a separate offense. Overall, the measure is intended to address ethical and animal welfare concerns associated with "designer" or novelty pets created through cosmetic genetic engineering. The January 5, 2026 amendments add definitions for transgenic trait and transgenic pet animal,

among other things.

SB 575

(Laird D) California Sea Otter Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund.

Status: 1/26/2026-Read third time. Passed. (Ayes 39. Noes 0.) Ordered to the Assembly. In Assembly. Read first time. Held at Desk.

Memo

This bill would create the California Sea Otter Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund and allow taxpayers to contribute to the fund via voluntary designation on their tax returns. This fund is for sea otter conservation work, including investigation, prevention, and enforcement actions related to sea otter mortality, competitive grants/contracts to public agencies and nonprofit organizations for research, protection, projects or programs related to the Federal Sea Otter Recovery Plan or improving the nearshore ocean ecosystem, and for public outreach to encourage contributions. Fund allocation is split between the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) and the State Coastal Conservancy. The January 15, 2026, amendments exempt the fund from the \$250,000 minimum contribution requirement and change the sunset date to 2033.

For more information call:

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