



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY POLICY COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

Friday, June 13, 2025

ATTENDANCE

Members: Max Perrey (Chair); Teresa Acosta; Paul Akinjo; Tricia Almiron; Edward Belden; James Breitling; Margaret Clark; David Cohen; Lisa Craig; Matthew Downing; Debra Garnes; Britt Huff; Tracy Jensen; Leslie Jordan; Sean Kelleher; Eric Knight; Linda Launer; Kevin Lee; Joe Lillio; Elaine Litster; Maika Llorens Gulati; Julio Martinez; Conna McCarthy; Debroah McGarrey; Peggy McQuaid; Melissa Morgan; David Newman; Randall Putz; Gabe Quinto; Candice Rankin-Mumby; David Ring; Arian Rodriguez; Julie Ryan; Matthew Summers; Igor Tregub; Kevin Wilk; Joey Williamson; Thomas Wong

Partners: Jordan Chriss; Haig Kartounian

Staff: Melissa Sparks-Kranz, Legislative Advocate
Zack Cefalu, Policy and Legislative Affairs Analyst

I. **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Perrey welcomed the committee members and introduced themselves and present Cal Cities staff. Each committee member provided self-introductions.

II. **Public Comment**

No public comment was made.

III. **General Briefing**

In accordance with the customary practice of convening all policy committee members for a general briefing prior to the start of policy committee meetings, the Cal Cities advocacy team provided a General Briefing Update, which includes the latest on legislative and budgetary matters affecting cities.

IV. **Climate Forward Cities Research Presentation**

Several graduate students from UC Davis have been working with Cal Cities staff conducting a cross-sector analysis of how cities engage with environmental legislation as their graduate capstone research project. The students were introduced and provided an overview of how they conducted their analysis. The group analyzed 90 bills, eight summary reports, and compiled two survey that were sent out to Public Works and City Planning officials. From these surveys they identified four trends that drove cities' engagement on legislation, these being: funding/staffing concerns, infrastructure gaps, confusion over requirements, and coordination. The group of students reviewed two pathways for impact at both a statewide policy level and Cal Cities member support level and used these pathways to craft 73 recommendations.

V. **Cap-and-Trade Program Reauthorization Presentation**

Chair Perrey introduced Helen Kerstein with the Legislative Analyst's Office. Ms. Kerstein provided an overview of the Cap-and-Trade program's history, benefits, and road to potential reauthorization. The presentation outlined the implication of reauthorization choices and recent updates as to the next steps in the Legislature regarding Cap-and-Trade.

Melissa Sparks-Kranz also provided an update on Cal Cities' recent advocacy efforts as a part of the Climate Safe Infrastructure Coalition advocating for the reauthorization of Cap-and-Trade.

VI. Bill Analyses

Cal Cities staff presented on [AB 443](#) (Bennett) which would require the California Energy Commission as a part of their 2027 Integrated Energy Policy Report, to include an assessment of potential use for curtailed solar and wind generation to produce hydrogen. The committee engaged in a discussion on the importance of utilizing excess solar and wind energy. The motion to recommend a "Support" position on the bill was put to a vote and passed with 30 in favor and 2 abstaining.

Cal Cities presented [SB 540](#) (Becker) which would authorize the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) and the electrical corporation whose transmission is operated by the CAISO to use voluntary energy markets and would propose a new independent regional organization (RO) to govern those markets, so as to engage with other Western states to improve energy reliability and reduce costs. The committee engaged in a discussion debating the merit of California joining a regional voluntary energy market alongside the 10 other states in the Western U.S. The motion to recommend a "Watch" position on the bill was put to a vote and passed with 24 in favor, 4 opposed, and 1 abstaining.

VII. State Legislative and Regulatory Updates

Cal Cities staff provided an overview of priority legislation, including:

- Environmental budget updates
- Legislation on climate change, disaster preparedness, water, coastal issues, energy, solid waste and recycling.

VIII. Adjourn

Next Virtual Meeting: Staff will notify committee members by **August 18** if the policy committee will meet in October. If you have any questions, please contact [Meg Desmond](#), Cal Cities Associate Manager, Legislative Administration.