



January Recap from Assemblymember Damon Connolly

Dear Friends,

I'm thrilled to share my first official newsletter as your new State Assemblymember. It's truly an honor to be your local voice in Sacramento and to serve the beautiful counties of Marin and Sonoma. Those who subscribed to my newsletters as a County Supervisor, know that I try to make sure North Bay residents always have the information they need to stay updated on local and statewide developments.

It is my hope that my Assembly newsletters (sent once-a-month) will serve as a resource to keep you informed on everything happening in Sacramento and the California State Legislature. Most importantly, I want you to know what my office is doing to serve the community and the resources and work happening in the North Bay. Even though it's only been one month since I was sworn in, we've hit the ground running and I have *a lot* to share!

AD 12 Updates

Swearing-in

Staffing Up!

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Swearing In Ceremony

On December 5, I had the incredible experience of being sworn in as Assembly District 12's new representative. The ceremony was held in the historic State Assembly chambers, which has been the heart of the Legislature [since 1849](#). It was truly special to share this moment with my wife Dawn and our two daughters. An interesting and inspiring note: my newly elected colleagues have made the Legislature the [most diverse](#) than at any point in California history!



In addition to family and my staff, nearly 40 supporters from Marin and Sonoma made the trip to Sacramento to watch the ceremony and see our new Capitol office, which I hope you'll get to visit soon.



Staffing Up: Capitol & District Hiring

Former U.S. Congressman Lee H. Hamilton recognized the importance of public service as a calling and a career. He once described this path, saying "...*public service is a stimulating, proud and lively enterprise. It is not just a way of life, it is a way to live fully.*"

I wholeheartedly agree with this sentiment - our representatives, as well as their staff, should carry a passion and fierce dedication to this job and the people they serve.

One of my first and most important duties upon getting sworn in as an Assemblymember was to hire an experienced team dedicated to serving the communities of the North Bay and achieving bold policy goals. With an 18-year background in local public service, I know the importance of building a team with an appreciation for responding to the needs of *the people* and tackling the most pressing issues facing our state. I'm thrilled to report that I have found that team and hired a group of diverse, experienced, energetic, and local public servants who will serve our district well. This includes my Chief of Staff, who grew up in Mill Valley, longtime local Marin and Sonoma staffers like my District Director and Field Representatives, and a dynamic legislative team who have decades of policy experience. Below, I've included names, titles, and emails of my staff in case you would like to reach out to them. Our door is always open.

District Team

Melissa Apuya - District Director

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Aidan Lynch - Senior Field Representative, Marin County

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Anna Tamayo - Senior Field Representative, Sonoma County

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Capitol Team

Aaron Vad - Chief of Staff

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Michael Gonzales Dyar - Legislative Director

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Susan Chan - Chief Consultant: Joint Legislative Committee on Climate Change Policy

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Cristina Sanchez - Scheduler & Legislative Aide

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McKenna Woodward - Legislative & Press Aide

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New Legislation

Although I've only been in office for about a month, we've crafted a robust bill package and introduced key pieces of legislation. I'm excited to share some bills that I've already introduced, and the issue areas tackled by my upcoming bills. We've already received great [local media coverage](#) on some of these bills, including getting cartooned by the Marin IJ! I'm looking forward to continuing to improve our legislation with feedback and ideas from the community.

Introduced Bills

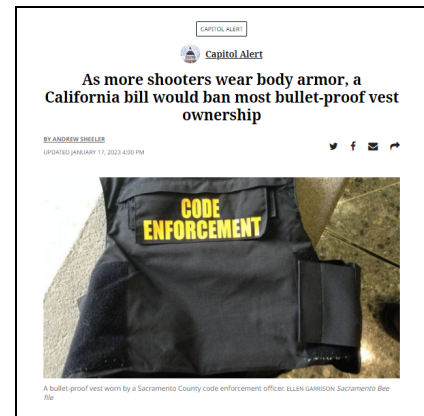
AB 99: Banning Pesticide Spraying on Local Highways

This bill stops harmful pesticide spraying along highways in counties that restrict the use of such chemicals, many of which are known to be carcinogens and cause damage to the environment.



AB 92: Restricting Body Armor in Response to Mass Shootings

This bill, modeled after a law passed in New York following the mass shooting in Buffalo, restricts the sale of body armor to only certain professions, like law enforcement. Over the past decade, body armor vests have become an increasingly common tool worn by mass shooters, which allows them to prolong their rampages and take more innocent lives.



AB 319: Closing Conflict-of-Interest Loopholes with Housing Inspectors

This bill resolves inadequacies within the conflict of interest code that regulates the inspectors of mobile home parks. AB 319 requires mobile home inspectors to provide greater transparency regarding their investment in properties and implements a more thorough annual review of such disclosures.

Upcoming Legislation: Issue Areas

- Climate change & emissions reductions.
- Expanding organic farming opportunities.
- Wetlands restoration.
- Protecting home insurance for seniors in high wildfire areas.
- Expediting grant funding for wildfire mitigation projects.
- Youth suicide prevention.
- Water conservation.



Committee Appointments

Assignments to the numerous policy and budgetary committees in the Legislature are extremely important. These committees analyze policy in different issue areas and determine the allocation of millions in State funding. I am honored that the Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon entrusted me with robust legislative and budgetary committee appointments, which I'm excited to share with you.

Committee on Utilities & Energy: Oversees utility companies, electric generation, the grid, utility rates & more.

Committee on Judiciary: Analyzes policy relating to the judicial system, procedures, & court system.

Committee on Agriculture: Handles agriculture & food issues, farmers markets, farming, food labeling, livestock & poultry.

Committee on Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials: Supervises issues regarding toxic substances, hazardous materials, hazardous waste regulation, drinking water regulation, & pesticides.

Committee on Budget + Budget Subcommittee 3: Oversees & manages the State Budget, as well as allocations relating to the climate crisis, natural resources, energy, & transportation.

Vice Chair - Joint Legislative Committee on Climate Change Policy: Provides oversight on the State's climate policies & provides recommendations on programs, policies, & investments related to climate change.

January Storms: Recovery & Infrastructure Investments

North Bay residents know better than anyone that the major storms that hit our community were *anything* but ordinary. I was proud to see my staff step up during this crisis - some of them even posted their personal cell phone numbers on NextDoor so constituents could contact them at any time, day or night. My office was able to help residents impacted by the storms by connecting them with emergency services and expediting power restoration in certain cases, like medical emergencies. These events illustrated the urgent need for increased investments in flood protection, stormwater capture systems and strong infrastructure. I wanted to share some promising allocations that were included in the most recent draft of the [Governor's State Budget](#) proposal. This funding will better prepare us for the next storm and help build a more resilient North Bay.



New investments include:

- **\$135 million** to reduce the risk of urban flooding.
- **\$40.6 million** General Fund for ongoing Delta projects that reduce risk of levee failure and flooding, provide habitat benefits, and reduce the risk of saltwater intrusion contaminating water supplies.
- **\$7 million** to establish a new foundation for long-term improvements in water conservation and drought planning to adapt to climate change.

As a member of the Assembly Budget Committee, I will be fighting to preserve these investments and bring additional funding back to the North Bay for projects that will strengthen our water infrastructure and flood resistance. Stay tuned for more information as we continue to negotiate the State Budget!

Rally for Women's Rights

On the day following what would have been the 50th Anniversary of Roe v Wade, [I joined](#) Planned Parenthood, First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom, Assembly colleagues, and my amazing staffer Cristina Sanchez, who bravely shared a personal story illustrating the importance of fighting for reproductive freedom. I was so proud of Cristina, who has been an integral part of my Capitol team, for sharing her story to highlight the importance of preserving the unalienable right for



women to have access to reproductive healthcare services, including abortions. Rallying on the steps of the State Capitol, we were also joined by award-winning actress Connie Nielsen and the Legislative Women's Caucus to officially introduce the new Planned Parenthood project called "*My Body, My Voice*." This is a traveling art and interactive storytelling installation that captures stories from Californians across the state in the fight for equity and reproductive freedom. I hope we can host this installation in the North Bay soon!

District Events

The most important duty of our local representatives is to be responsive to the constituents they serve. For me, that means maintaining my open door policy to *all* North Bay residents who want to meet, hosting community events where constituents can share ideas and concerns, and having a responsive district staff who can resolve government issues and help you cut through bureaucratic red tape. I have enjoyed attending as many community events as possible and speaking with constituents in both Marin and Sonoma. Additionally, I have been working with my district team to host local events. We've already hosted several successful district events that I'm pleased to share with you. Stay tuned for upcoming events and meeting opportunities, which will be listed on my [website](#).

Marin & Petaluma Community Coffees

I was thrilled that over 70 people attended each of our community coffees that were hosted in San Rafael and Petaluma. These events are excellent opportunities to share ideas and give feedback on how we can work together to address issues that affect our North Bay communities. I look forward to hosting these events in every city throughout AD 12.

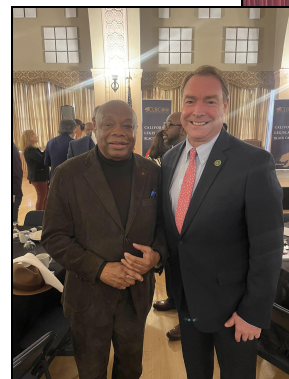


Sonoma County Environmental Discussions

Collaborating with local environmental leaders in Sonoma County, I hosted two meetings to share my environmental priorities and took away important recommendations and ideas to continue strengthening our climate goals.

Black Caucus Celebration & Marin City MLK Commemoration

I had the privilege of attending the California Legislative Black Caucus' annual MLK Jr. Celebration with my legislative colleagues. It was an honor to connect with California and Bay Area political legend Willie Brown! I also joined community members in Marin City to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and commit to the work still before us. With the help and collaboration of Ida Times Green, Marin City CSD, & local partners, this was a truly inspiring event.



Santa Rosa Electric Bus Launch

It's always exciting to see clean energy projects come to fruition in the North Bay. I joined city officials in Santa Rosa to celebrate the launch of 4 battery-electric city buses, which are already in operation! By 2025, the city expects to have over half of their fleet transitioned to all-electric buses.

As always, my door is open and my staff are available to assist you. Feel free to contact me through my website, or by calling one of my offices below.

With gratitude,



Damon Connolly
Assemblymember, 12th District

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