



DAMON CONNOLLY
Assemblymember, District 12

NEWSLETTER

DEAR FRIENDS,

Returning from Summer Recess, the Legislature has now entered its final stretch of the year's legislative session, which officially adjourns on September 14. All bills need to pass by this date for the Governor to consider signing them into law.

My office has been working hard to pass our bill package and successfully got seven bills to the Senate Floor!

Additionally, I played in the annual bi-partisan charity softball game, held three informational committee hearings, and attended several district events, meetings, and have updates on new state funding for local projects. I'm pleased to share these updates and more with you in this month's newsletter.



AD 12 UPDATES

Legislative Update:
Bills in the Senate

Bi-Partisan Softball Game

Committee Hearings:
Climate Change, Electric Vehicles & Environmental Safety

North Bay Senate Leader!

District Updates



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

BILLS PASSED OUT OF SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Having passed 13 bills through policy committees in the State Senate, these bills had their final hurdle in the Senate Appropriations Committee. This committee assesses each bill's cost and either passes the legislation or holds it on "suspense." While some important bills were unfortunately held back this year, I'm pleased to report we successfully passed seven out of Senate Appropriations. These bills will now be voted on by the full Senate and then make their way to the Governor's desk for his consideration to officially sign them into law!

BILLS PASSED OUT OF SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE OR ON THE SENATE FLOOR:

AB 92: prohibits the sale of body armor to dangerous individuals who are also restricted from purchasing firearms (passed Senate Public Safety 5-0).

AB 319: strengthens protections for mobile home residents (passed Senate Housing 11-0).

AB 404: streamlines organic certification for small farmers (passed Senate Ag 4-0).

AB 620: requires health plans to cover medical nutrition therapy for metabolic and digestive diseases (passed Senate Health 11-0-2).

AB 935: strengthens enforcement for the flavored tobacco ban law (passed Senate Governance & Finance 6-2-0).

AB 1109: restricts the sale of sodium nitrite to teenagers and children, who have increasingly been purchasing this dangerous chemical online and tragically using it to take their own lives.

AB 1132 (joint author): limits the fees a city or county can charge for residential and commercial solar systems (passed Senate Governance & Finance 7-0-1).

BILLS HELD IN THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE:

AB 99: restricts the use of toxic pesticide spraying in communities that have banned or restricted pesticide use (two-year bill).

AB 388: expedites the allocation of wildfire grants.

AB 405: updates outdated registration and payment systems for organic businesses.

AB 953: creates a statewide voluntary vessel speed reduction and sustainable shipping program to reduce air pollution and deadly strikes on whales.

AB 998: issues a report on older biomass facilities to identify opportunities for modernization and emission reductions.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE CONT.

RESPONSE TO SENATE APPROPRIATION'S DECISION TO HOLD AB 99

I wanted to be sure to share my thoughts on the Senate Appropriation Committee's decision to hold one of my bills - AB 99 - which received significant support from North Bay residents and environmental activists. This important bill, which would have restricted pesticide spraying by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) was blocked in our State Senate with no explanation. Needless to say, I am extremely disappointed in their actions and lack of courage to stand up to special interests and powerful bureaucracies like Caltrans. However, we are **not** backing down - I will continue to push AB 99 next year so we can get this important bill signed into law! To read the full press release below, [click here](#).



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 2, 2023

Contact: Aaron Vad
aaron.vad@asm.ca.gov

Connolly Issues Response to Senate Decision to Block Pesticide Restriction Bill

AB 99 would have required Caltrans to respect local decisions banning the roadside spraying of deadly pesticides

SACRAMENTO, CA – Today, Assemblymember Damon Connolly issued a statement in response to the decision of the Senate Appropriations Committee's to block the passage of [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 99](#), a vital bill that would have protected public health and local ecosystems by restricting the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and their widespread program of spraying harmful pesticides alongside highways in counties that adopted official resolutions restricting the deployment of such chemicals. AB 99 was referred to the Senate's Appropriations Committee, where it was made a "two-year-bill," a stalling tactic that blocks its passage until the next legislative session, despite the bill garnering strong support in both houses and already passing through five committees and the Assembly Floor. There was no explanation from the Committee regarding this decision.

"It is extremely concerning that the Senate Appropriations Committee has blocked AB 99, allowing the continuation of widespread pesticide spraying along our highways and local communities by Caltrans, even in communities where the use of such harmful products have been curtailed," said Assemblymember Connolly. "While Democrats maintain a supermajority in both the Assembly and the Senate, it is clear that the elected officials who decide which bills are allowed to pass through the legislature are bowing to the special interests and bureaucracies who want to continue to use potentially harmful products because they are cheap and easy, regardless of the harm these actions may have on public health or the environment in local communities. This fight is not over and I commit to bringing this bill up again next year and passing it through the Senate."

Pesticides can contaminate soil, water, turf, and other vegetation due to pesticide drift, secondary poisoning, runoff into local water bodies, or groundwater contamination. Synthetic herbicides and pesticides are known to cause developmental harm to humans, are not readily biodegradable, and contaminate groundwater. Whether through direct or indirect contact, pesticide exposure is linked to cancer, endocrine disruption, reproductive effects, neurotoxicity, kidney and liver damage, birth defects, and developmental changes in a wide range of species. [According to a study](#) conducted by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, More than 80 percent of U.S. children and adults likely have the chemical glyphosate in their bodies. Presently, RoundUp is the primary tool used by Caltrans for killing brush along California State Highways.

Even though Marin and Sonoma County have [passed ordinances](#) restricting the use of certain herbicides like *glyphosate*, Caltrans is exempt from many local rules and is allowed to spray pesticides with far less oversight and environmental precautions than those required by many North Bay jurisdictions. For example, the Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works (TPW) did not utilize any pesticides in West County and used only 8 gallons of herbicides to manage all County roads in 2021. In contrast, Caltrans used over 745 gallons of herbicides on Sonoma County's State Highways during that year. AB 99 would have restricted the use of pesticides by Caltrans in counties that adopt measures banning or restricting such chemicals.

AB 99 will be eligible to be taken up again next year.



BI-PARTISAN SOFTBALL GAME

Every year, California lawmakers from both parties come together and play a softball game to raise money for Sacramento's Mustard Seed School, which is a free private school for children ages 3-15 years-old who are currently homeless. Mustard Seed School provides a safe space for children while their parents access other services, including breakfast and lunch meals, mental health services, housing information, showers, and more.

In the past, the softball game was a competition between two teams of the Republicans versus the Democrats. However, with so few Republican representatives in the legislature, we now compete between Northern California and Southern California!

I'm pleased to report that the Northern California team won and the game raised over \$60,000 for the Mustard Seed School!

In less positive news, I injured my ankle during warmups, but I didn't let it slow me down! I played all nine innings going 4 for 5 with 2 RBI's, and kept up our defense as the team's first baseman. Unfortunately, it turns out this injury is actually a fracture in my ankle, which will take a few months to heal. If you see me walking with a bright green cast on my foot, you'll know why!





COMMITTEE HEARINGS

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY, ELECTRIFICATION HEARING, & ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY OVERVIEW

As Vice-Chair of the Joint Legislative Committee on Climate Change Policies (JLCCCP), I had the privilege of helping to host an informational hearing that explored ways that California can best maximize and implement Federal climate funding from President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act. At the hearing, we heard testimony from the U.S. Department of Energy, Governor's Newsom's office, Natural Resources Defense Council, the California Green New Deal Coalition, and more. In total, there is an unprecedented \$180 billion in funding opportunities that will be invested in clean energy projects, wildfire and forest resilience, coastal protection, sustainable agriculture, zero-emission vehicles, and more.

If you'd like to watch a recording of the full hearing, [click here](#).

As a member of both the Utilities and Energy Committee and the Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials, I participated in two important hearings this month: Identifying Roadblocks to Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment across California and a One-year Update on Department of Toxic Substances Control Reform (DTSC).

During the first hearing, we heard expert testimony from the Public Utilities Commission, the Energy Commission, Greenlining Institute, UC Berkeley, and the Center for Sustainable Energy. With California setting the ambitious goal that 100 percent of new passenger vehicle sales be zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) by 2035, the state needs to build a significant amount of new charging infrastructure. The hearing covered this topic in-depth and panelists discussed pathways to meet clean energy goals, build charging infrastructure equitably throughout the state, and methods of strengthening our electrical grid.

If you'd like to watch a recording of the full hearing, [click here](#).

Lastly, the Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials held an oversight hearing to ensure proper reforms have been implemented at the DTSC after a 2020 report from the State Auditor determined that the Department had not taken sufficient action to remove lead contamination in certain areas. After major reforms, including the creation of an environmental safety oversight board and additional funding for contamination cleanup, I'm pleased to report that DTSC is on a productive path to fulfilling its mission to protect people, communities, and the environment from toxic substances.

If you'd like to watch a recording of the full hearing, [click here](#).



OUR NEW NORTH BAY SENATE LEADER!

MIKE MCGUIRE SECURES VOTES TO BECOME SENATE PRO-TEM

As a longtime friend and colleague of our State Senator Mike McGuire, I am thrilled that Senate Democrats have chosen him as the chamber's next leader - Senate President Pro-Tem.

The current leader, Pro-Tem Toni Atkins, announced the decision at a press conference on Monday, August 28 after the Senate Democratic Caucus met and unanimously agreed on McGuire's appointment. Atkins, who has lead the Senate for the past five years is set to term out next year and did not plan to remain Pro-Tem until the end of her term.



The Senate President or Pro-Tem is the highest-ranking leader and most powerful member of the California State Senate, acting as the body's chief negotiator with the Governor and the Assembly Speaker on key legislation and the State's massive budget.


Having a North Bay native like Senator McGuire, someone who understands the issues of our communities, will be vital in our work addressing issues like wildfires and climate change, as well as securing important investments for local projects.

I'm looking forward to the great work that we can accomplish with Mike leading the State Senate!


If you'd like to read local media coverage on this recent news, [click here](#).

DISTRICT UPDATES: NEW FUNDING FOR THE NORTH BAY!

No matter how busy it gets in Sacramento, my top priority is always representing our communities in the Legislature and securing investments from the State to bring back home for important projects. Over the past month, there have been some exciting announcements about new funding for local projects. I'm pleased to share some of those with you below:



State of California
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
1400 10th Street, Sacramento, California, 95814
info@opr.ca.gov | opr.ca.gov



Governor Gavin Newsom

Director Sam Assefa

SAN RAFAEL CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLANNING COLLABORATIVE

LEAD APPLICANT
SAN RAFAEL CITY

TOTAL AWARD:
\$644,200

PARTNERS
CANAL ALLIANCE, UC BERKELEY, MULTICULTURAL CENTER OF MARIN, MARIN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

CONTACT INFORMATION
Kate Hagemann, Climate Adaptation and Resilience Planner
Kate.Hagemann@cityofsanrafael.org

SUMMARY
The Canal District of the City of San Rafael has been awarded \$644,200 to co-create solutions that will increase resiliency in the area with the Canal Alliance, the University of California Berkeley, the Multicultural Center of Marin, and the Marin County Department of Public Works. This area has high vulnerability statistics (see Figure 1), hence why it is important for the Canal to gather community input in order to understand the climate hazards they are concerned about and to prioritize adaptation measures the community deems appropriate. Part of the funding for this project will be used for the capacity-building of community-based organizations and to provide Science, Engineering, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM) education for Canal District students. The Canal District is affected by sea-level rise and ethnic segregation. Providing methods of adaptation planning and the resources this project entails will allow for this community to work towards long-term resilience.

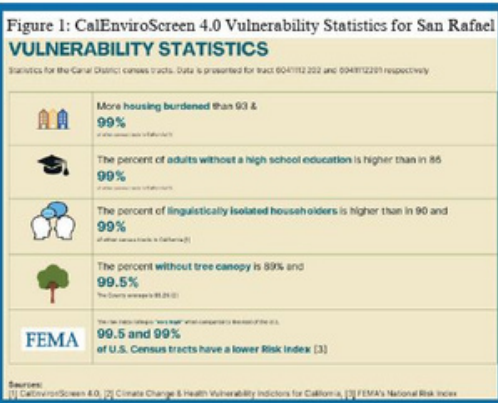



Figure 1: CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Vulnerability Statistics for San Rafael
VULNERABILITY STATISTICS
Statistics for the Canal District census tracts. Data is presented for tract 044112.202 and 044112.201 respectively.

- More housing burdened than 93 & **99%**
- The percent of adults without a high school education is higher than in 85 **99%**
- The percent of linguistically isolated householders is higher than in 90 and **99%**
- The percent without tree canopy is 89% and **99.5%**

Sources: [1] CalEnviroScreen 4.0, [2] Climate Change & Health Vulnerability Indicators for California, [3] FEMA's National Risk Index

\$645K FOR THE SAN RAFAEL CLIMATE ADAPTATION COLLABORATIVE



California Interagency Council on Homelessness

August 23, 2023

The Honorable Damon Connolly
1021 O St. Ste. 5240
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Encampment Resolution Grant Award Notification


Dear Assemblymember Connolly:

On behalf of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency and the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH), I am pleased to notify you that Sonoma County has been awarded a grant from Round 2 of the Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) Program.

- Sonoma County- \$2,763,142 to serve 40 individuals.

The [ERF program](#) is a competitive grant program available to assist local jurisdictions in ensuring the wellness and safety of people experiencing homelessness in encampments by providing services and support that address their immediate physical and mental wellness and result in meaningful paths to safe and stable housing.

Please accept my congratulations to your district for this award. If you have any questions, or would like additional information, please contact Meghan Marshall, Cal ICH Executive Officer, at Meghan.Marshall@bcsbh.ca.gov

Sincerely,

Lourdes M. Castro Ramirez, MA
Secretary

cc: Meghan Marshall, Executive Officer, Cal ICH

801 Capitol Mall, Suite 601, Sacramento, CA 95814 bcsbh.ca.gov/calich

\$2,763,142 FOR SONOMA HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT TRANSITIONS TO PERMANENT HOUSING

Caltrans District	Grant Category	Primary Applicant Organization Legal Name	Sub-Applicant(s)	Project Title	Project Location County	Project Location City	Project Description	Grant Request
4	Sustainable Communities Competitive	Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit District		SMART Quality of Life and Economic Impact Assessment	Marin, Sonoma	Cloverdale, Healdsburg, Windsor, Santa Rosa, Robert Park, Cotati, Petaluma, Larkspur, Novato, San Rafael	This project is a quality of life and economic impact assessment of the rail and pathway system, in order to quantify current and future impacts of the passenger and freight rail and parallel non-motorized pathway on land use and development, the economy, greenhouse gas emissions, mobility, health, and quality of life in Sonoma and Marin counties. The project is needed 1) to demonstrate the multiple objectives and benefits that result from past and continued investment; 2) to support community engagement and education around this new and growing passenger rail system in the North Bay; and 3) to establish a more nuanced picture of the return on multimodal investment, in order to understand what benefits have resulted from the investment to-date, what benefits are anticipated over a multi-decade planning horizon, and what benefits could be expected if capital funds are secured to complete the system and long-term operating funding to ensure robust service levels. Using current and forecasted data, vetted methodologies, and surveys, the project's main deliverable will include a quality of life and economic impact assessment that evaluates current and future impact as it relates to the grant program objectives. In alignment with the vision and network outlined in Caltrans' State Rail Plan and the state's Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure, the project will strengthen the case for multimodal transit, and help inform the next generation of multimodal transit investment in a way that further improves equity, economic, and accessibility benefits.	\$400,000
4	Sustainable Communities Competitive	Transportation Authority of Marin		Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT) Reduction and Mobility Enhancement Toolkit	Marin	Belvedere, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Larkspur, Mill Valley, Novato, Ross, San Anselmo, San Rafael, Sausalito, Tiburon, Unincorporated County of Marin	The project will produce a VMT Reduction/Mobility Enhancement Toolkit to assist local agencies in identifying and quantifying mitigations to VMT transportation impacts and improve multimodal transportation to serve Marin's residents, especially those in areas of equity focus. The toolkit would more precisely quantify VMT reductions in the local context and prioritize mitigations through local input, to maximize mode shift improve cost effectiveness for agencies, and offer affordability and convenience for users.	\$518,931

\$919K FOR TWO TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS IN MARIN & SONOMA FOCUSED ON IMPROVING MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION & ASSESSING QUALITY OF LIFE & THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE RAIL & PATHWAY SYSTEM

DISTRICT UPDATES: SNAPSHOTS

I continue to enjoy hosting meetings with local North Bay residents and attending events in both Marin and Sonoma Counties when I'm spending time back home. Here are some snapshots of some of the meetings and events my office has participated in over the past month. As always, our door is open, if you want to schedule a meeting or invite us to an event, please reach out!



SONOMA DEVELOPMENT CENTER VISIT

LAGUNA WATER TREATMENT
PLANT TOUR



US POET LAUREATE ADA LIMÓN

SANTA ROSA WILDFIRE RESOURCE FAIR

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.

With gratitude,

Damon

Damon Connolly
Assemblymember, 12th District



Capitol Office

State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0012
Tel: (916) 319-2012
Fax: (916) 319-2112

San Rafael

County of Marin Civic
Center Building
3501 Civic Center Drive,
Room 412
San Rafael, CA 94903
Tel: (415) 479-4920
Fax: (415) 479-2123

Petaluma

Petaluma City Hall
11 English Street
Petaluma, CA 94952
Tel: (707) 576-2631
Fax: (707) 576-2735

Santa Rosa

Rattigan State Building
50 D Street, Suite 301
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Tel: (707) 576-2631
Fax: (707) 576-2735