



 **DAMON CONNOLLY**  
Assemblymember, District 12

# NEWSLETTER

## DEAR FRIENDS,

As we begin a new year, I want to extend my gratitude for your continued support and engagement with my office in both Marin and Sonoma County.

This December newsletter, the 12th issue, marks my official first year serving as the North Bay's State Assemblymember. This opportunity is the privilege of a lifetime and I look forward to the work we will accomplish together moving forward.

For this issue, I want to recap some of our successes during my first legislative session, as well as new district updates. I hope you enjoy and stay tuned for announcements on plans for this new legislative session!



**AD 12 UPDATES**

**2023 Recap**

**E-Bike Safety Press Conference**

**Committee Assignments: 2024**

**New Grants for the North Bay**

**District Updates**

# LOOKING BACK: 2023 RECAP

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When I was elected in November of last year, I promised North Bay residents that I would hit-the-ground running in Sacramento by passing legislation and securing state investments for projects in our community. Looking back on my first year in the Legislature, I'm truly proud of what we were able to accomplish. This includes successfully passing five bills that were signed into law by the Governor and securing nearly \$5 million in state funding for projects in Assembly District 12. A full recap with information on these accomplishments can be found below:



## **BILLS PASSED IN 2023:**

**AB 92:** Mass shootings are a growing epidemic in the United States, and shooters are increasingly using body armor to prolong their rampages. AB 92 prescribes that any person prohibited under California law from owning a firearm is also prohibited from purchasing or possessing body armor.

**AB 319:** Mobile homeowners are subject to inspections in home parks despite potential conflicts of interest. AB 319 addresses inadequacies within the conflict-of-interest code that regulates mobile home inspectors by codifying the State Auditor's recommendations for greater transparency and strengthened ethics.

**AB 935:** While the sale of most flavored tobacco products was prohibited in SB 793, these dangerous products continue to be available to teenagers in retail locations across the state. AB 935 strengthens enforcement of the flavored tobacco ban.

**AB 1109:** Sodium nitrite is a chemical compound used in teen suicide, a leading cause of death for America's youth. AB 1109 prohibits online retailers from selling sodium nitrite to minors and places quantity restrictions on adult purchases.

**AB 1132:** Permit fees for residential and commercial solar energy systems are limited, but these provisions will be repealed on the first of January 2025. AB 1132, joint authored with Assemblymember Laura Friedman, extends the repeal of these provisions to the first of January 2034.

## **FUNDING SECURED IN 2023:**

\$2,000,000 in partnership with the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (SCCDC), to build the Tierra de Rosas project, an affordable housing development in Santa Rosa.

\$1,000,000 for major upgrades to the Golden Gate Village Playground in Marin City.

\$1,000,000 for the Marin Community College District's Science Field Station, located in Bolinas.

\$530,000 to purchase critically needed emergency medical equipment at the four volunteer fire stations operating in West Marin.



## **E-BIKE SAFETY PRESS CONFERENCE**

### ***ANNOUNCING NEW LEGISLATION REGULATING USE OF E-BIKES***

On December 22, 2023 I hosted a press conference with Marin County Supervisor Mary Sackett to discuss new legislation that will address the increasing rates of unsafe electric bicycle (e-bike) usage and collisions from children riding these vehicles at high speeds. At the press conference, held at the Marin Civic Center, I announced a bill that will amend California's Vehicle Code to prohibit individuals under the age of 16 from operating a class 2 e-bike, and would ensure these vehicles are not sold if they can exceed the speeds of their class designation. At the press conference, I was honored to be joined by Supervisor Sackett, Dr. Heyman Oo, M.D., Gwen Froh, Program Director of Marin Safe Routes to Schools, and Rick Navarro, Police Chief of Mill Valley.

New data from the Marin County Health Department shows that from October 10th to November 10th, 2023, the rate of e-bike-related accidents for youth was nine times higher than similar accidents of people over 20 years old. The report also showed that 22 percent of all 911 calls in the same period were for e-bike-related accidents and 71 percent of responses for all bike accidents among 10- to 19-year-olds were e-bike-related. Current law states that any individual under the age of 16 is prohibited from operating a class 3 electric bicycle, which is a bicycle equipped with a speedometer and motor that ceases to provide assistance at the speed of 28 miles per hour. A class 2 electric bicycle, by comparison, is a bicycle equipped with a motor that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches 20 miles per hour. Class 2 electric bicycles are throttle-operated, but they go largely unregulated and remain accessible to children. To ride or drive a vehicle with a motor in California, the rider must be at least 16 years of age; the only current exceptions are in the case of electric bicycles.

Striking a balance that prioritizes the safety of our community while keeping transportation options accessible to those who need them is a top priority. This bill will prohibit any individual under the age of 16 from operating a class 2 electric bicycle, in addition to the existing law prohibiting any person under 16 from operating a class 3 electric bicycle. Riders would additionally be required to adhere to proper use of a helmet when operating a class 2 electric bicycle. The bill would also clarify that an electric vehicle can only be placed in a certain class if it ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a maximum speed regardless of the mode. Updating the requirements to access throttle-assisted electric bicycles powered by a motor will both mitigate injury risk as well as continue to prioritize the safety of the residential streets in our community.

The bill, AB 1778, was introduced on January 3rd. A link to information about the bill can be found [here](#), and a link to the press conference video can be found [here](#).

# COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS: 2024

With a new Assembly Speaker comes a shift in policy committees and the members assigned to these committees. The California State Assembly has 32 standing committees, each with different legislative jurisdictions. Each committee considers bills and issues and recommends measures for consideration by the full Assembly. Certain committees also have oversight responsibilities to monitor agencies, programs, and activities within their jurisdictions.

I am pleased to report that Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas has appointed me to the following committees for the 2024 Legislative Session:

**Select Committee on Wildfire Prevention (Chair):** Created at Assemblymember Connolly's request, this committee oversees local and statewide wildfire prevention efforts to ensure funding and programs are effective and accomplishing their goals.

**Committee on Utilities and Energy:** Oversees utility companies, electric generation, the electric grid, energy efficiency, energy conservation, energy service providers, natural gas, railroads, and utility rates;

**Committee on Judiciary:** Includes family law, product liability, tort liability, Civil Code, and Evidence Code (excluding criminal procedure);

**Committee on Agriculture:** Handles agricultural commissions, Department of Food and Agriculture, expositions/fairs, farmers markets, food access, food labeling, labeling of agricultural commodities, livestock and poultry, milk and milk products, pest management, veterinarians: agricultural issues;

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

**Committee on Budget:** Oversees and manages the California State Budget;

**Budget Subcommittee 4:** Addresses State Budget issues and allocations relating to the climate crisis, natural resources, energy, and transportation;

**Joint Legislative Committee on Climate Change Policy (Vice-Chair/Assembly Lead):** Provides oversight on the State's climate policies and provides recommendations on programs, policies, and investments related to climate change.

To see a full list of the State Assembly's committees, [click here](#).

**ASSEMBLYMEMBER CONNOLLY UPDATE:  
COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

- UTILITIES & ENERGY**
- JUDICIARY**
- ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY & TOXIC MATERIALS**
- BUDGET COMMITTEE & BUDGET SUB 4:  
CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURAL RESOURCES,  
ENERGY, & TRANSPORTATION**
- AGRICULTURE**
- JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE  
ON  
CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY**
- WILDFIRE PREVENTION**

# NEW GRANTS FOR THE NORTH BAY

## MILLIONS IN NEW FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

As the state continues to allocate funding for grant projects, we have been working hard to advocate for the North Bay in Sacramento to ensure our community gets its fair share. I'm pleased to announce some of the most recent grant allocations, which have been awarded to different projects throughout Assembly District 12.



**Funds from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, through their Healthy Refrigerating Grant, have been awarded to the Agricultural Institute of Marin, the Ritter Center, and ExtraFood.**



**\$745,348 from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, through their Alternate Manure Management Program, have been awarded to the George Bianchi Dairy Farm in Petaluma.**



**\$1,000,000 has been awarded from this year's state budget for the Casa Roseland Project, & \$2,000,000 has been awarded for the Tierra de Rosas Infrastructure Project.**

# DISTRICT UPDATES: SNAPSHOTS

During the legislative recess, we were back in the district full time, which created great opportunities to attend events, tours, and productive meetings with constituents throughout the North Bay in both Marin and Sonoma Counties. Here are some snapshots of some of the meetings and events my office participated in over the past month. As always, our door is open, if you want to schedule a meeting or send an event invite, please reach out through our website by clicking [here](#).



**DONATING TO THE CALIFORNIA  
HIGHWAY PATROL'S "CHIPS FOR KIDS"  
TOY DRIVE**



**ROUNDTABLE AT TARA FIRMA FARMS  
FOR ORGANIC FARMING BILL**



**FIRE FOUNDRY RECRUITS IN ACTION  
CLEANING LADDER FUELS IN FAIRFAX**



**RETIREMENT CEREMONY OF THE  
DIRECTOR OF MARIN COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN  
SERVICES, DR. BENITA MCLARIN**

# DISTRICT UPDATES: CONTINUED

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PRESENTING A CERTIFICATE  
HONORING THE OUTGOING MAYOR OF  
ROHNERT PARK, SAMANTHA  
RODRIGUEZ



SALESFORCE TRANSIT CENTER TOUR



HOLIDAY LUNCHES WITH LOCAL  
LABOR LEADERS, INCLUDING LIUNA



NORTH COAST FOREST  
MANAGEMENT TOUR



CATCHING UP WITH CONSTITUENTS

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



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