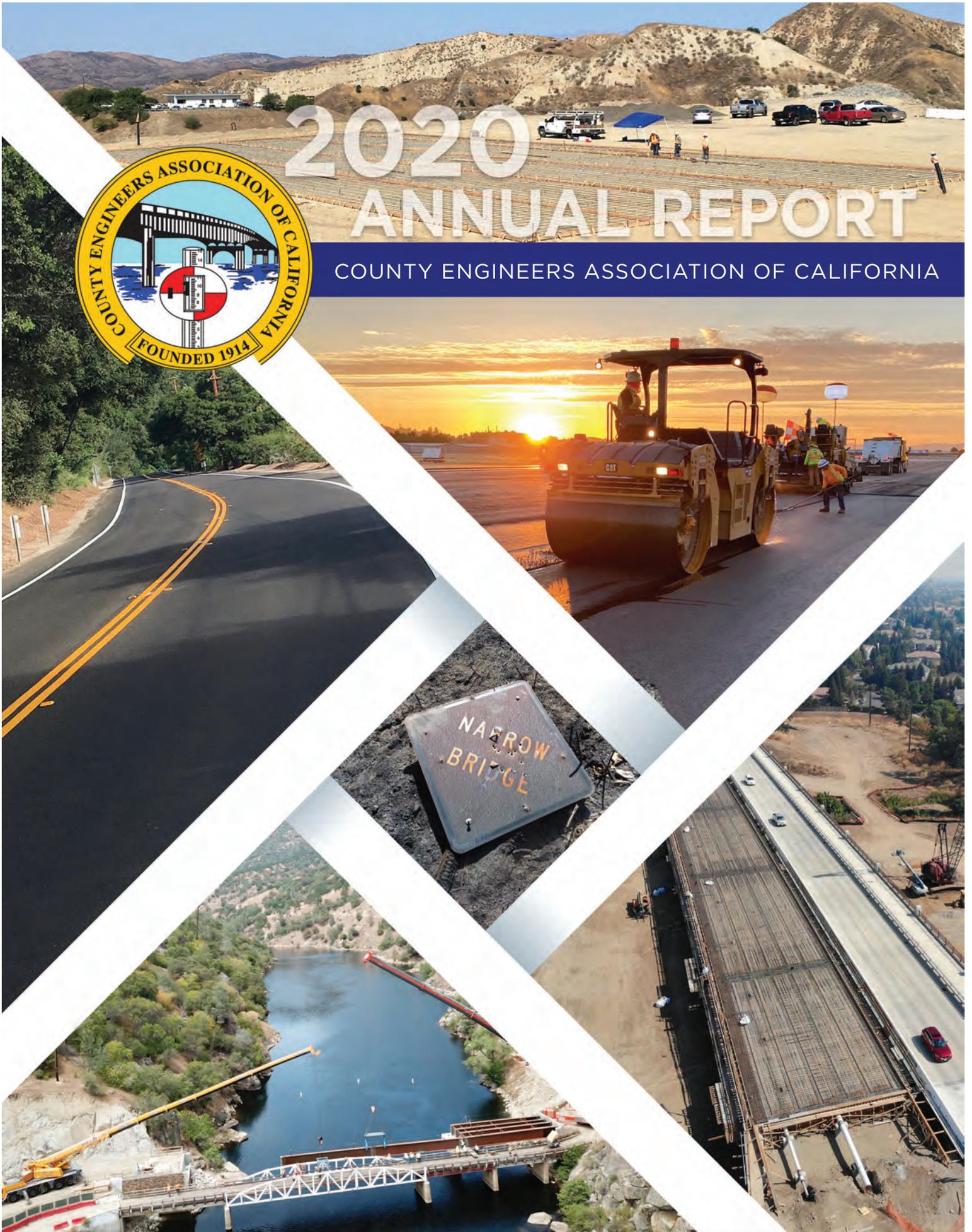


# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

COUNTY ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA



# CEAC's Purpose

The County Engineers Association of California (CEAC), formed in 1914, is comprised of county engineers, public works directors, county road commissioners, and professional personnel throughout California's 58 counties. Its purpose is "To advance county engineering and management by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and information aimed at improving service to the public."

Furthermore, the objective of CEAC, is "To accomplish the advancement of engineering methods and ethical practice through networking efforts of all 58 counties in the state." Through discussion, interchange, and dissemination of engineering and administrative data/ideas, the organization shall strive to affect "maximum efficiency and modernization in engineering and administrative units of local government."

Throughout CEAC's history, it has maintained a close relationship with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) to lend support in policy development and advocacy efforts, thus benefiting counties and their ability to serve their residents.



FRONT COVER PHOTOS:  
BADLANDS, RIVERSIDE COUNTY (TOP);  
BUCHANAN AIRPORT RUNWAY RECONSTRUCTION,  
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY;  
CASITAS VISTA ROAD, VENTURA COUNTY (RIGHT);  
AUGUST COMPLEX FIRE, TRINITY COUNTY (INSET);  
ITALIAN BAR BRIDGE, FRESNO COUNTY (LOWER LEFT);  
WALERGA ROAD BRIDGE, PLACER COUNTY (LOWER RIGHT).  
PAGE ONE PHOTOS:  
YUBA RICES CROSSING, YUBA COUNTY (TOP);  
CARBON CREEK CHANNEL, ORANGE COUNTY (BOTTOM).

# 2020 Board of Directors

# Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

## Officers

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**Rick Tippett**  
Trinity County

Vice President  
**Panos Kokkas**  
Yolo County

Secretary  
**Howard Dashiell**  
Mendocino County

Treasurer  
**Mike Crump**  
Butte County (Retired)

Treasurer Emeritus  
**Mehdi Madjd-Sadjadi**  
Marin County (Retired)

Parliamentarian  
**Mike Penrose**  
Sacramento County (Retired)

Immediate Past President  
**Jim Porter**  
San Mateo County

NACE Representative  
**Matt Machado**  
Santa Cruz County

Historian  
**David A. Gravenkamp**  
Siskiyou County (Retired)

Newsletter Editor  
**Patrick V. DeChellis**  
Los Angeles County (Retired)

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Northern California  
**Bob Bronkall**  
Humboldt County

Bay Area  
**Steve Lederer**  
Napa County

Sacramento Mother Lode  
**Joshua Pack**  
Calaveras County

San Joaquin Valley  
**Steve White**  
Fresno County

Central Coast  
**Kent Edler**  
Santa Cruz County

Southern California  
**Nardy Khan**  
Orange County

### Flood Control and Water Resources

*Chair:* **Mark Strudley**, Santa Cruz County  
*Vice Chair:* **David Leamon**, Stanislaus County  
*Vice Chair:* **Allison Knapp**, Contra Costa County

### Infrastructure & Development (formerly Land Use)

*Chair:* **Trisha Tillotson**, Nevada County  
*Vice Chair:* **Rebecca Taber**, Placer County  
*Vice Chair:* **Warren Lai**, Contra Costa County

### Resource Recovery & Waste Management

*Chair:* **Tim Goncharoff**, Santa Cruz County  
*Vice Chair:* **John Gay**, Imperial County  
*Vice Chair:* **Coby Skye**, Los Angeles County

### Surveyor

*Chair:* **Aleks Jevremovic**, Santa Barbara County  
*Vice Chair:* **Ron Garton**, Humboldt County  
*Vice Chair:* **Pat Minturn**, Shasta County

### Transportation

*Chair:* **Patty Romo**, Riverside County  
*Vice Chair:* **Steve Kowalewski**, Contra Costa County  
*Vice Chair:* **David Fleisch**, Ventura County  
*Vice Chair:* **Najee Zarif**, San Joaquin County

### Administrative

*Chair (Urban):* **Brian Balbas**, Contra Costa County  
*Vice Chair (Urban):* **Mark Pestrella**, Los Angeles County  
*Vice Chair (Urban Alternate):* **Phil Doudar**, Los Angeles County  
*Vice Chair (Rural):* **Tom Mattson**, Humboldt County

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*Chair:* **Pattie McNamee**, Contra Costa County (retired)  
*Vice Chair:* **Steve Mellon**, Quincy Engineering  
*Vice Chair:* **Martin McIlroy**, MGE Engineering  
*Vice Chair:* **Tracy Bartlett**, NCE

### Oversight & Special Tasks

*Chair:* **Rick Tippett**, Trinity County  
*Vice Chair:* **Howard Dashiell**, Mendocino County  
*Vice Chair:* **Jim Porter**, San Mateo County

### Program

*Chair:* **Howard Dashiell**, Mendocino County

### Scholarship

*Chair:* **Scott DeLeon**, Lake County  
*Vice Chair:* **Glenn Shephard**, Ventura County  
*Vice Chair:* **Alicia Meier**, Mendocino County

# Message from the 2019-2020 President

of the County Engineers Association of California



PAGE 3 PHOTOS:  
RICK TIPPETT, TRINITY COUNTY,  
2019-2020 CEAC PRESIDENT  
(TOP); GILLESPIE FIELD AT CAJON  
AIR CENTER, SAN DIEGO COUNTY  
(BOTTOM).

The word of the year for 2020 is “adaptable.” A lot of “that would never happen,” came true this year. To be successful as CEAC and in our counties, we had to adapt as we plowed through an incredibly challenging year. COVID and fires dominated 2020 and called on us to find new, innovative ways to serve the public.

Last December, I set out to continue work by Past Presidents *Jeff Pratt* and *Jim Porter* to ensure that CEAC stays relevant among engineering organizations. This focus is critical to CEAC’s future and means we must broaden our outreach and develop new leaders, or else interest in CEAC will fade. I took the following actions to achieve this goal:

- Select members new to CEAC for Vice-Chair and regional positions.
- Reach out to less-active counties to recharge their interest.
- Highlight the value of mentorship and peer exchange at CEAC for newer members.
- Look for ways to make events relevant.
- Stay consistent with CEAC’s core purposes.

Fortunately, the year started with a successful trip to Washington DC, where CEAC spent two days meeting with federal partners and the California Congressional delegation. The success of the trip was evident later, when the House released a transportation bill including many CEAC priorities.

Soon after, the coronavirus took hold and in-person sessions at the CEAC Spring Conference and the NACE Conference in Orange Beach Alabama moved online. Our very own *Scott McGolpin*, Santa Barbara County, took over as NACE President in a virtual meeting, with the now-famous handing of the gavel from former NACE President *Tim Hens*. We continued the year with a virtual Policy Conference and Annual Meeting, which allowed broader participation by county deputy directors and senior engineers.

CEAC also worked hard to make its virtual events relevant and engaging. Many sessions at the Annual Meeting focused on disaster recovery and resilience, and we overhauled the Land Use Committee to focus on Infrastructure and Development issues under its new moniker. The new Administrative Committee continued to focus on pressing items outside of existing policy committee areas.

California will have a chance to highlight our good work in April 2021, when we host the NACE Annual Conference in Palm Springs or through an alternate format if COVID-19 precludes in-person events. NACE President *Scott McGolpin* will preside over the conference, so the timing is fortuitous. Hosting this event is a major undertaking, and I want to thank all of who have agreed to help in the conference planning.

I told my kids in March that after the pandemic, things will never be the same. One of the great things about America is that we know how to overcome adversity and deal with unpleasant or unwelcome issues. We are adaptable by incorporating solutions that work. With changes in communications over the last year, CEAC has profoundly changed in accessibility, and using these changes we will be better equipped to carry out the purpose of the group:

“Through discussion, interchange, and dissemination of engineering and administrative data/ideas, the organization shall strive to affect “maximum efficiency and modernization in engineering and administrative units of local government.”

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, this year will make for a better CEAC. ●

One of the great things about America is that we know how to overcome adversity and deal with unpleasant or unwelcome issues.





Despite the challenges of the pandemic, this year will make for a better CEAC.



PAGE 4 PHOTOS:  
HEADINGTON WASH RACK,  
EL DORADO COUNTY (TOP LEFT);  
SHORING PROJECT, VENTURA  
COUNTY, (TOP RIGHT);  
ASPHALT OVERLAY, SAN DIEGO  
COUNTY (BOTTOM).

## Reflecting on 2020

2020 started out with great energy from county public works directors, as CEAC and CSAC representatives traveled to Washington DC in February to highlight county priorities for federal transportation reauthorization. CEAC had productive discussions with both Congressional leaders and Trump Administration agencies, but returned to California just as the COVID-19 pandemic began to reach the state. It soon became clear that the pandemic would upend business as usual for county public works officials and every other facet of government in 2020.

In Sacramento, the Legislature quickly passed a multibillion dollar emergency funding authorization at the beginning of March, providing Governor Newsom with significant funding and authority to direct a crisis response to COVID-19. Both houses of the Legislature adjourned early for spring recess as Californians statewide began to “shelter in place.” Initial hopes for a short legislative recess faded as COVID-19 cases continued to rise. Californians worked to bend the curve while the Legislature delayed their return and created new processes to allow hearings to proceed in a virtual format with remote participation by witnesses and members of the public.

The truncated legislative session led to a significant reduction in bills. In 2019, the Legislature considered over 3,000 bills during the months of March and April; during the same time period in 2020, they took up just fewer than 300 bills. Despite the delayed start to policy committee hearings and the significant reduction in legislative proposals considered, there was still significant policy work affecting all areas of county public works. Bills related to local government impact fees were quickly shelved, but others affecting transportation funding and subdivision requirements advanced. Regulatory work in the areas of water and resource recovery and waste management continued, and significant legislative proposals to address plastics waste were hotly debated. With California continuing to experience unprecedented fires, CSAC engaged closely on numerous disaster and emergency response bills and budget proposals and advocated for county priorities in proposed resiliency bond measures.

It soon became clear that the pandemic would upend business as usual for county public works officials and every other facet of government in 2020.

PAGE 5 PHOTO:  
MARIN CIVIC CENTER, MARIN  
COUNTY.  
PAGE 6 PHOTOS:  
CASITAS VISTAS ROAD, VENTURA  
COUNTY (TOP LEFT);  
SWANTON ROAD, SANTA CRUZ  
COUNTY (TOP RIGHT);  
DICKENSON FERRY ROAD BRIDGE,  
MERCED COUNTY (BOTTOM).





At the federal level, CSAC's advocacy partners, Paragon Government Relations, continued to ensure that the voices of California's counties were heard by the Trump Administration and Congress. We made significant progress on several fronts, including House passage of a long-awaited comprehensive infrastructure investment bill, the centerpiece of which was a \$500 billion multi-year reauthorization of the FAST Act. Congress also put the finishing touches on a major land conservation bill (PL 116-152) and, at the time of this writing, was expected to finalize a reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

CSAC was also involved in other issues important to counties throughout the legislative session. County advocacy was successful in securing a \$750 million state backfill for local health, human services, and public safety programs. CSAC supported the federal

CARES Act, which provided aid to bolster the county response to COVID-19. Despite these significant wins, CSAC continues to advocate for additional federal aid and stimulus measures to boost economic recovery. Key county priorities for any such stimulus measure include direct relief funding to compensate for lost local tax revenues, investments in public health and human assistance programs, and targeted investments in local infrastructure.

The following policy sections highlight the important policy advocacy that CSAC undertook on behalf of counties during this tumultuous year. As always, this work was supported by the ongoing commitment and expertise provided by our longstanding partnership with CEAC and its dedicated public works leaders around the state. ●

# Transportation

## Transportation Funding

The COVID-19 pandemic presented several challenges for counties in 2020 and created uncertainty about projected gas tax revenues due to anticipated reductions in driving, especially during the first months immediately following the Governor’s “stay-at-home” order, Executive Order N-33-20. Counties experienced various changes to their operations as a result of the pandemic and have also been leading the local response to the public health emergency.

CSAC quickly engaged with the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to advocate for county flexibility in submitting the required local streets and roads program project lists in order to maintain eligibility for SB 1 road maintenance and rehabilitation funding. In light of the operational issues counties were experiencing in responding to the public health emergency and concerns with counties’ ability to have their lists approved by the deadline, the CTC ultimately provided an extension until July 15.



CSAC was also active and successful in securing amendments to protect county revenue from the provisions of SB 1351 (Beall), which would have allowed the State of California to bond against its share of transportation improvement fee revenue from SB 1.

PAGE 7 PHOTOS:  
CONCRETE POURING,  
VENTURA COUNTY (TOP);  
SANTIAGO CANYON ROAD,  
ORANGE COUNTY (BOTTOM).  
PAGE 8 PHOTO:  
KIRKER PASS ROAD TRUCK  
CLIMING LANE, CONTA COSTA  
COUNTY.



In addition to working to ensure counties were granted flexibility in meeting their project list deadlines for road maintenance and rehabilitation funding eligibility, CSAC has also been engaged in ongoing discussions regarding the maintenance of effort (MOE) counties are required to meet. As a result of the uncertainty of the long-term effects COVID-19 may have on county revenues, CSAC has advocated for the State to explore options to determine a method for a proportional reduction for MOE relief for those jurisdictions whose revenues were hardest hit by the pandemic.

## Transportation Legislation

CSAC worked to protect local county transportation funding in response to legislative efforts that would have imposed additional requirements on counties utilizing state transportation revenues, or allowed the state to bond against local transportation improvement fee revenue from SB 1.

AB 2738 (Quirk-Silva) would have required counties to use road funding equitably throughout each county and would have also required the board of supervisors to consult with local cities to identify opportunities for collaborative transportation projects to improve city streets and roads, among other requirements. CSAC expressed concerns with this measure to the author's office and committee staff before the author ultimately opted to hold the bill during the 2019-2020 legislative session.

CSAC was also active and successful in securing amendments to protect county revenue from the provisions of SB 1351 (Beall), which would have allowed the State of California to bond against its share of transportation improvement fee revenue from SB 1. CSAC worked closely with the author to ensure that this proposed use of transportation improvement fee revenue would not affect local allocations of SB 1 Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account Revenues. SB 1351 was approved by both houses of the Legislature, but was vetoed by the Governor.

In addition to ensuring that local county transportation revenues were not affected by proposed legislation, CSAC relied heavily on technical feedback from public works directors to engage in discussions on SB 1227 (Skinner). This bill would have required jurisdictions to apply standard specifications that allow for the use of recycled materials at or above the level allowed in the most recently published standard specifications from the California Department of Transportation in order to receive SB 1 Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account Funding. While the author opted not to move forward with the bill during the 2019-2020 legislative session, CSAC expects to see this proposal return in 2021.

Finally, county representatives worked with Caltrans and other interested parties to finalize the implementation guidelines for SB 137 (Dodd), which CSAC sponsored in 2019. SB 137 will help streamline qualifying county road safety and bridge projects by authorizing additional exchanges of federal and state transportation funding of up to \$100 million annually. ●



# Infrastructure and Development



## Development Impact Fees

The year started with several legislators introducing a package of six bills related to impact fees on residential development. CSAC and other local government representatives requested that the Legislature delay any consideration of changes to local government impact fee authority until the next session. Local agencies were preoccupied with emergency response to the pandemic and the likely economic recession would be an inopportune time for agencies to spend resources overhauling fee studies and programs. Due to that request and a broader attempt to reduce the bill load because of the shortened legislative session, these bills did not advance.

Legislators and other development stakeholders continue to express interest in overhauling aspects of the Mitigation Fee Act and related laws authorizing impact fees on new development. CSAC and our local government partners have continued discussions on the topic with legislative staff and expect this issue to return in 2021. CSAC continues to advocate to protect counties' ability to charge development impact fees and promote CSAC's policy principles on this issue, which include opposing caps on fees or levels of service, encouraging "affordability by design," encouraging options for fee deferral, and encouraging transparency without overly burdensome reporting requirements.

## Subdivision Map Act

The Legislature also introduced a series of bills related to the Subdivision Map Act. CSAC worked with authors' offices, legislative staff, and local government partners to highlight problematic aspects of AB 3155 (R. Rivas), AB 2666 (Boerner Horvath), and AB 3234 (Gloria). CSAC took a formal position expressing concerns with AB 3155, which would have applied SB 35 streamlining provisions to qualifying subdivision projects, and would have created a ministerial process for approval of subdivisions of up to ten lots in the Subdivision Map Act.

Similarly, based on feedback from CEAC members and county planning directors alike, CSAC shared technical concerns with AB 2666, which would have facilitated the development of small lot subdivisions by allowing sites zoned for multi-family housing to be subdivided into single-family lots. AB 3234 would have authorized jurisdictions to adopt small lot ordinances to create small lot subdivisions on infill sites less than five acres that meet certain requirements and would have aligned the Subdivision Map Act approval of tentative and parcel maps for housing projects with the Housing Accountability Act. Each of these bills ultimately did not move forward, largely due to disputes with interest groups that wanted to add provisions advancing their interests in exchange for limiting local review of development projects. CSAC expects that additional limitations on local government authority in the review and approval of subdivisions will be proposed by legislators in 2021.



PAGE 9 PHOTOS:  
TRAIL PROJECT, EL DORADO COUNTY (TOP);  
RICE ROAD BIKE LANES, VENTURA COUNTY (BOTTOM).  
PAGE 10 PHOTO:  
TUOLUMNE RIVER BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, STANISLAUS COUNTY.



CSAC was successful in working on measures to extend permits and entitlements. CSAC, along with other local government partners, supported SB 281, which would have extended by 18-months, the period for expiration, effectuation, or utilization of specified housing permits and entitlements that were issued before, and were in effect on, March 4, 2020. CSAC worked closely on this measure closely with the author and relevant legislative committees to finalize the types of permits and entitlements ultimately included in the measure and to clarify the interaction with local extensions already granted. While that bill was held in committee, its provisions providing entitlement extensions were later amended into AB 1561 (C. Garcia), which was ultimately approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

#### **Rule 20 Utility Undergrounding Tariff Program**

CSAC has been actively engaged in the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) R.17-05-010 proceeding to consider changes to the Electric Tariff Rule 20, which provides utility ratepayer funding to relocate overhead electrical lines underground. CSAC retained outside counsel to assist with the proceeding and filed and served comments in response to the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) staff proposal for revisions to the Rule 20 program. Based on feedback from public works experts around the state,

CSAC expressed support for refining and expanding the public interest criteria for Rule 20A projects and maintaining the core components of the program, while opposing elimination of Rule 20A.

The CPUC Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) issued a subsequent ruling asking parties to comment on several issues related to the staff proposal in light of recent developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic. CSAC expressed continued support the Rule 20A program with some modifications to address the policy concerns raised in the staff proposal. CSAC has continued to express strong opposition to the recommendation to sunset the Rule 20A program and replace it with a modified Rule 20B program. Similar to the current Rule 20B program, the modified proposal would include tiered ratepayer contributions that would require significant increases in local matching funds from counties in order to complete utility undergrounding projects.

While the CPUC has to yet to take up the proceeding at the Commission level at the time of this writing, CSAC recently worked with leadership of the CEAC Infrastructure and Development Committee and other interested county leaders to meet with advisors to four of the five commissioners and advocate for maintaining the Rule 20A program with modifications. ●

Based on feedback from public works experts around the state, CSAC expressed support for refining and expanding the public interest criteria for Rule 20A projects and maintaining the core components of the program, while opposing elimination of Rule 20A.



## Surveying

This year, several representatives of the CEAC Surveying Policy Committee met with the County Recorders Association of California to discuss potential legislation to update and modernize the law related to map fillings and the relationship between County Recorders and the County Surveyors. The discussion with the Recorders Association was very productive and both parties agreed to work collaboratively on updates to the code. Despite these productive conversations, the

COVID-19 pandemic lead to a significant decrease in the number of bills considered in the Legislature during 2020, including the consideration of this potential legislation. The Committee intends to renew conversations with the Recorders Association to pursue this legislation in the upcoming session. In addition, the Surveyors finalized the CEAC Guide to Preparation of Records of Survey and Corner Records which was adopted at the Fall conference. ●



PAGE 11 PHOTOS:  
MONTECITO SURVEY  
MONUMENT, SANTA BARBARA  
COUNTY (TOP INSET);  
SURVEYOR, CONTRA COSTA  
COUNTY (BACKGROUND).  
PAGE 12 PHOTO:  
STOCK IMAGE

# Flood Control and Water Resources Management

## Water Resources & Regulatory Issues

CSAC continued our advocacy efforts to support counties as they navigate implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). In September, CSAC hosted a virtual conversation with the Department of Water Resources to open dialogues between stakeholders about land use planning responsibilities and the state, focusing on implementation of SGMA at the county level. This multi-year effort will continue to help counties navigate as SGMA implementation ramps up and choices at the local level are made about land use and production. CSAC also advocated for continued funding for local flood control projects and ongoing state matching funds for these critical infrastructure projects. In October, CSAC also offered a seminar on the ongoing state efforts to develop a new conveyance project through the Delta, giving county representatives a small-setting environment to discuss concerns with the project directly with the agencies promoting the project.

Influencing major changes to California's state water law was a major focus of the CEAC Flood Control and Water Resources Committee in 2020. In addition, finding solutions to issues related to storm water funding infrastructure remains a critical issue to county flood control and water resources leaders across the state.

## Implementation of Stream Gage Bill

Last year, the Governor signed a CSAC-supported measure, Senate Bill 19 by Senator Dodd. This new law requires the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board to collaborate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Conservation, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, and others, to develop a plan to deploy a network of stream gages in California's streams in order to provide better data about California's water and vital ecosystems. The data collected from this network of stream gages will help address gaps in information that could improve management and conservation of California's water resources. CSAC has a seat at the table as the collaborative works on the stream gage network deployment. Of particular concern is focusing on post-disaster flooding and debris flows, and impacts from atmospheric rivers.



## Wastewater and Drinking Water

CSAC continues to follow the implementation of SB 200, the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Act. Through this legislation, five percent of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds (GGRF) are required to be spent on funding gaps and failing and at-risk drinking water systems. The funds are intended to complement capital funding through the Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund. The program approved a \$130 million expenditure plan for 2020-21 and continues to engage with other state agencies (including the California Public Utilities Commission) on addressing challenges for communities.

Funding to improve the condition of California's small drinking water systems by providing more state resources to help local government run Local Primacy Agencies (LPAs) was the focus of AB 2296 (Quirk). These LPAs are tasked with oversight, administration and enforcement duties by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). Specifically, this bill would allow for LPAs, which are run by county health officials, to participate in a funding stabilization program, administered by the SWRCB, to help with LPA program administration costs. CSAC had a support position on a similar bill during the first year of the 2019-2020 legislative session. The bill was vetoed by the Governor, who cited the necessity of raising fees and the potential for excessive participation in the program as his reasons for rejecting the bill.

CSAC supported a bill to change labeling for pre-moistened nonwoven disposable wipes (AB 1672, Bloom). This bill would have established labeling requirements for wet wipes so that Californians will know whether that product can be discarded safely through their private residential plumbing and municipal sewer systems. CSAC supported this effort throughout session to alleviate the issue of wet wipes clogging local sewer and wastewater systems. The measure was held in Senate Appropriations and CSAC anticipates it will be re-introduced in January. ●

CSAC also advocated for continued funding for local flood control projects and ongoing state matching funds for these critical infrastructure projects.

## Disaster Recovery and Resiliency

California faced yet another challenging fire year, including a rare lightning event that caused long-lasting and damaging fires, some in areas that have not seen major wildfire in decades.

In the aftermath of the devastating fires, CSAC worked closely with the Governor's Office and his Administration to facilitate both direct relief to counties through budget allocations, as well as ongoing baseline funding for wildfire preparedness and response. Though the COVID-19 emergency and economic impacts reduced funding for many programs at the state, the continued importance of wildfire and disaster preparedness and response prompted support of both baseline funding and one-time, targeted General Funds to support local and state efforts. The 2020-21 Budget includes \$85.6 million General Fund for a 172 firefighter relief staffing and surge capacity. CalFIRE also moved forward with a \$4.4 million predictive wildfire simulation program to better understand future wildfires. The California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA), home hardening and other emergency services were included in a \$127 million allocation to the state Office of Emergency Service. This included a one-time \$38.2 million General Fund increase to CDAA to help repair, restore, or replace public property damaged or destroyed in a disaster, or to reimburse local governments for emergency activities under a state emergency declaration.

California faced yet another challenging fire year, including a rare lightning event that caused long-lasting and damaging fires, some in areas that have not seen major wildfire in decades. Coupled with the hottest August and September temperatures on record, the State faced unprecedented risk going into fire season. CSAC continued to work with utility providers to lessen the impact of public safety power-shutoffs, and to engage local leaders and the Legislature in support of fire victims. Coupled with the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, fire events, evacuations, and power shutoffs took on new and heightened challenges. CSAC staff focused efforts on post-disaster cost-recovery from both state and federal partners, expedited cleanup efforts, and post-fire flood risks. In addition, CSAC engaged outside counsel to help represent county governments in front of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to ensure that our local community leaders are adequately notified and engaged in the event of the Public Safety Power Shut-off, and compensated for losses. CSAC will continue to focus on these issues as they will be a focus of legislative oversight next year. ●

PAGE 13 PHOTO:  
SAN ANTONIO FIRE,  
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY.  
PAGE 14 PHOTOS:  
PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES,  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
(TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT);  
OUTREACH DURING COVID,  
ZONE 7 WATER AGENCY,  
ALAMEDA COUNTY,  
(BOTTOM RIGHT).

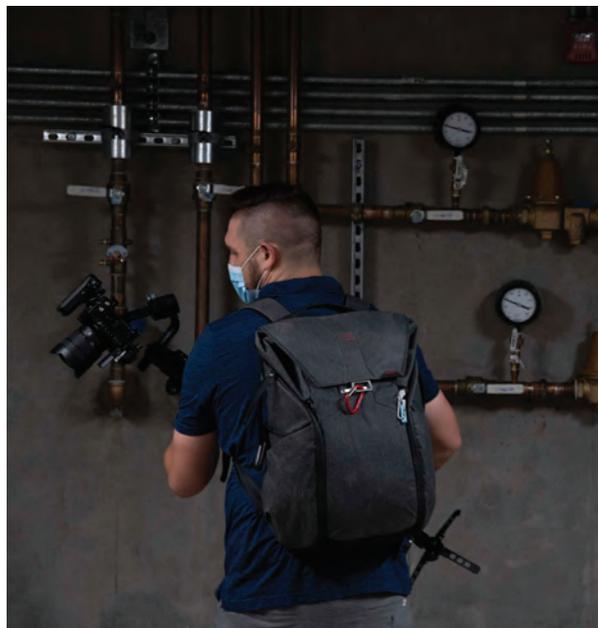


## Resource Recovery and Waste Management



CSAC joined a coalition of local governments to support SB 54 (Allen) and AB 1080 (Gonzalez), two tandem measures that would create a statewide goal of a 75 percent reduction of waste generated by single-use packaging and priority single-use plastic products. CSAC advocated on these measures through the end of the two-year session, but the bills ultimately failed votes on the floor during the final days of the session. The focus of these measures is an important step, of many, needed to deal with our plastic pollution crisis and the limited availability of domestic markets to process and recycle products.

On the regulatory front, CSAC and public works directors continue to be actively engaged in the development of regulations to implement SB 1383 (Lara, 2016), which mandates organics recycling. CSAC commented on numerous draft regulations and worked with a coalition of stakeholders to ensure that the regulations are as reasonable and implementable as possible. Much of the waste stream changed during the COVID-19 economic shutdown, leaving great uncertainty about the ability of counties and partners to implement this comprehensive law. CSAC continues to work with the Administration, focusing on implementation of SB 1383 and necessary changes to the timeline and state support for the program. CSAC will engage on this critical issue as local governments lack the resources and infrastructure necessary to manage the organics portion of the waste stream. ●





## Federal Affairs

**CSAC's federal policy advocates, Paragon Government Relations, describe below the status of a number of federal issues of importance to CEAC.**

With much of this year's focus on Capitol Hill centering on coronavirus response and recovery, CSAC worked closely with our federal advocates and CEAC members to promote core county priorities, including the need for robust federal support for key programs and services impacted by the pandemic. These collective efforts resulted in the approval of coronavirus response and relief funding for counties through FEMA's Public Assistance program, as well as funding for counties to ensure the continuation of other essential services affected by COVID-19, including housing and surface transportation programs. Additionally, CSAC worked with the California congressional delegation on a number of other important pieces of legislation, including the fiscal year 2021 budget, which provides funding for a broad range of federal discretionary spending programs.

### **FAST Act Reauthorization**

This year, the House approved a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure investment package (HR 2) that included, among other things, a five-year, \$500 billion surface transportation reauthorization measure. All told, the legislation would provide \$319 billion for highways, \$105 billion for transit, \$60 billion for rail, \$5 billion for highway safety, and \$5 billion for motor carrier safety. Of the aforementioned spending, \$411 billion would come directly from the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), or a roughly 46 percent increase when compared to spending authorized by the FAST Act.

HR 2 also includes a number of provisions championed by CSAC and CEAC members, including language that would provide local transportation agencies with a six-year statutory window to advance FHWA Emergency Relief (ER) projects to the construction obligation stage. The impetus for the statutory change is a recent effort by FHWA to claw back federal funding for a large number of local ER projects in the state California.

The House bill also includes provisions that would require increased investment for local bridges, including language that would require states to spend

20 percent of their National Highway Performance Program and Surface Transportation Program dollars on bridge repair and rehabilitation projects. In addition, the legislation would increase the amount of dedicated funding for locally owned off-system bridges to over \$1 billion annually, up from \$775 million under current law.

With regard to environmental streamlining, HR 2 directs the U.S. Department of Transportation to finalize regulations implementing the FAST Act's federal-state environmental reciprocity pilot program. Finalizing the regulations would pave the way for California to apply for participation in the pilot program, which would allow Caltrans to use documents completed under the California Environmental Quality Act to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act for State transportation projects, as well as for a specified number of local projects.

Finally, HR 2 includes funding for a number of other program areas, including \$100 billion for affordable housing infrastructure, \$100 billion for broadband investments, \$25 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and related programs, and \$40 billion for new wastewater infrastructure.

Looking ahead to next year, many of the provisions of HR 2 are expected to be retained as part of a new infrastructure investment/FAST Act reauthorization package in the House.

### **Disaster Assistance**

In the wake of the most devastating fire season in state history, California's counties worked closely with key members of the state's congressional delegation on legislation that would provide enhanced federal funding to communities impacted by natural disasters. For starters, counties worked with Representatives Mike Thompson (D-CA) and Doug LaMalfa (R-CA) to develop and promote legislation (HR 8112) that would increase the federal cost share from 75 percent to 90 percent for a number of FEMA's disaster assistance programs. The increased federal support from FEMA would provide counties with additional flexibility to address the dual challenge of combatting the spread of COVID-19 while also undertaking wildfire recovery efforts.

PAGE 16 PHOTOS:  
CLEAR CREEK ROAD BRIDGES,  
EL DORADO COUNTY (LEFT);  
WOHLER ROAD AT  
MARK WEST CREEK BRIDGE,  
SONOMA COUNTY (RIGHT).



Similarly, counties worked with Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA) on the FEMA Disaster Preparedness Improvement Act (HR 6071), which would help local governments prepare for and better respond to natural disasters. Specifically, HR 6071 would permanently increase the federal cost share for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program to 85 percent, up from 75 percent and 50 percent, respectively. HMGP provides funding for local projects following a Presidential disaster declaration, while the EMPG program provides federal assistance for emergency preparedness. The bill also would provide extra flexibility for local governments to complete environmental reviews.

### **Secure Rural Schools Act/Federal Land Management Reform**

Earlier this year, the U.S. Forest Service released FY 2019 Secure Rural Schools (SRS) payments. In all, 29 California counties received more than \$21.9 million in SRS formula payments, while 10 counties are collecting over \$4.2 million in 25 percent payments (based on a rolling seven-year average of receipts generated on national forest system land) for a total of nearly \$26.2 million. An additional \$2.2 million is available for federal land projects, or Title II projects, that are identified by local resource advisory committees.

The SRS program, which was extended for two years as part of the FY 2020 omnibus spending law, provides vital funding to communities facing declining revenue from timber sales on federal lands. The extension covers payments made both this year and next year.

Counties also worked with Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) on federal land management reform legislation that would, among other things, increase wildfire preparedness and post-fire response. The bill, entitled the Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act (S 4431), would provide the Forest Service with new tools to reduce hazardous fuels, including establishing a new landscape-level program for management activities designed to improve forest conditions and reduce wildfire risk. Specifically, the legislation would allow the Forest Service to select up to three collaborative wildfire risk reduction projects to move forward under a streamlined environmental review process. Projects, which would need to be proposed by a governor and done in consultation with the Interior Secretary, could not exceed 75,000 acres. The bill also would raise the legal threshold to challenge or delay these projects.

Additionally, S 4431 would create a new categorical exclusion to accelerate forestry projects near existing roads, trails, and transmission lines. The measure also would allow for the export of unprocessed timber from dead and dying trees on federal lands in California, if there is no demand domestically. Furthermore, the legislation seeks to accelerate post-fire restoration and reforestation work on Forest Service land by authorizing certain emergency actions on up to 10,000 acres, including the reconstruction of existing utility lines and the replacement of underground cables. Finally, S 4431 would authorize several new grant programs, including a program that would facilitate the removal of biomass from National Forest areas that are at high risk of wildfire. ●

# CEAC Program Update

While we were dealing with a pandemic in 2020, we still had multiple changes within county public works leadership.

2020 was a very unusual and unexpected year for everyone, including CEAC. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19 and the numerous California wildfires, CEAC's 2019-2020 President, *Rick Tippett*, Trinity County, continued to keep the membership engaged with regular COVID and oversight committee calls and moved our in-person conferences to successful virtual formats.

## Conferences

In early March, we were faced with the decision to cancel the in-person CEAC Spring Conference. In lieu of the meeting normally held with the League of California Cities Public Works Officers Institute, CEAC held virtual meetings for many of the policy committees. Beginning with the Policy Conference and continuing for the Annual Meeting, CEAC moved to a virtual meeting format for the remainder of 2020. While we were unable to meet in person, our valued affiliates continued to support the association. We'd like to recognize our Annual Platinum Sponsors: *Dokken Engineering*, *Ghirardelli Associates*, *Dewberry Drake Haglan*, *NCE*, *MGE Engineering*, *Quincy Engineering*, *Willdan Engineering* and *Wood Rodgers*. We'd also like to recognize our additional Platinum Spring Conference sponsors: *Cal Engineering & Geology*, *NV5* and *Transtech*; Gold Spring Conference sponsor: *CSG*; additional Policy Conference sponsor: *BSK Associates*; and additional Annual Meeting Platinum sponsor: *Transtech*.

## Awards

The 2020 Buffalo Bull award recipient is still a surprise! The Association opted to award Engineer of the Year awards to two very deserving candidates; *Mark Pestrella*, Public Works Director, Los Angeles County, and *Patty Romo*, Transportation Department Director, Riverside County. The Surveyor of the Year was awarded to *Russ Marks*, County Surveyor, Mariposa County, and the CHICS (California's Honorable Intrepid Sisters) Golden Egg Award was given to *Rick Tippett*, Transportation Department Director, Trinity County.

We celebrated our sixth year of recognizing California's cities and counties with the Outstanding Local Streets and Roads Project Awards. County award winners included Santa Barbara County as the Overall Winner for their Ortega Ridge Mechanically Stabilized Tire Aggregate Wall, and Yuba County in the Efficient and Sustainable Road Maintenance, Construction and Reconstruction Projects category for their "Tomorrow's Paving Today" program.

## Membership

While we were dealing with a pandemic in 2020, we still had multiple changes within county public works leadership. The new appointments included: *Steve Hartwig*, Deputy County Executive, Public Works & Infrastructure, Sacramento County; *Alaric Degrafinried*, Interim Public Works Director, City and County of San Francisco; *Jeff Moneda*, Public Works Director, San Diego County; *Jim Treadaway*, Director, OC Public Works (Orange County); *Richard Vela*, Public Works Director, Amador County; *Jim Simon*, Public Works Director, Tehama County; and *Nick Burton*, Public Works Director, Yolo County.

In addition to these new directors, some notable retirements included *George Johnson*, Riverside County CEO, who previously served as CEAC President and Riverside County Transportation and Land Management Agency Director; *Brian Peters*, Public Works Director, Alpine County; and *Patty Romo*, Transportation Department Director, Riverside County. We wish them all well! ●



## On the Horizon in 2021

The California Legislature and Congress will return in 2021 to begin new sessions. At the time of this writing, Democrats appear to have grown or maintained their majorities in the state legislature, while the final partisan composition of the incoming Congress hinges on January Senate runoffs in Georgia. No matter the outcome, California and the incoming Biden Administration will face ongoing challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as pressing issues on disaster recovery and resiliency, climate change, resource recovery, water resources, and the expiring federal transportation bill.

CSAC and other California leaders will continue to advocate for additional federal aid and stimulus during the lame duck session of Congress, but compromise currently seems unlikely. California's revenues are currently ahead of projections adopted during the summer height of the pandemic, although the State projects deficits in the near future. At the same time, impacts to local government revenues have been more mixed and COVID-19 caseloads are trending in the wrong direction, which could reverse the economic recovery.

At a more practical level, COVID-19 social distancing requirements and remote legislative hearings are likely to remain in place in California for at least the initial months of the year. Unlike 2020, however, CSAC has heard that state legislative leaders do not plan to significantly reduce bill loads in 2021—and there is no shortage of policy ideas affecting county public works.

Housing affordability will continue to be at the top of the state legislative agenda in 2021, with members closely scrutinizing local requirements that impact the cost of building homes. CSAC will work closely with the CEAC Infrastructure and Development Committee to respond to proposals limiting the ability of local governments to recover infrastructure costs through fees, while supporting increased transparency and predictability.

The Legislature will continue its focus on statewide and local resiliency to disasters and adapting to the impacts of climate change. At least one bond measure will likely be re-introduced and CSAC will continue to advocate for funding of local pre-hazard mitigation and resiliency.



CSAC will also focus on funding opportunities within the state's cap and trade program for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and adaptation work to help prepare counties to guard against and prepare for our changing climate, including funding for natural and working lands, sea-level rise, organic waste diversion and other important topics.

In the transportation area, CSAC will work with CEAC, the League of Cities, and regional transportation planning agencies to release an updated Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment in early 2021. The upcoming report includes an enhanced analysis of bridge funding needs, which will help inform ongoing advocacy by counties for a new federal transportation bill consistent with county priorities, including dedicated funding for local bridge projects. At the state level, CSAC will continue to protect county SB 1 funding, while working with CEAC members and county supervisors alike to prepare to engage on the future of transportation funding as the fleet transitions from gas-powered vehicles.

While the next steps for the plastics bills that failed to pass in 2020 are uncertain, CSAC will continue to support measures to reduce plastic waste and increase domestic markets for recyclable materials. In addition, funding for waste and recycling infrastructure will continue to be a key local government priority. Finally, CSAC will work to provide counties with reasonable timelines, funding and state support for the implementation of California's organics recycling law under, SB 1383 (Lara, 2016).

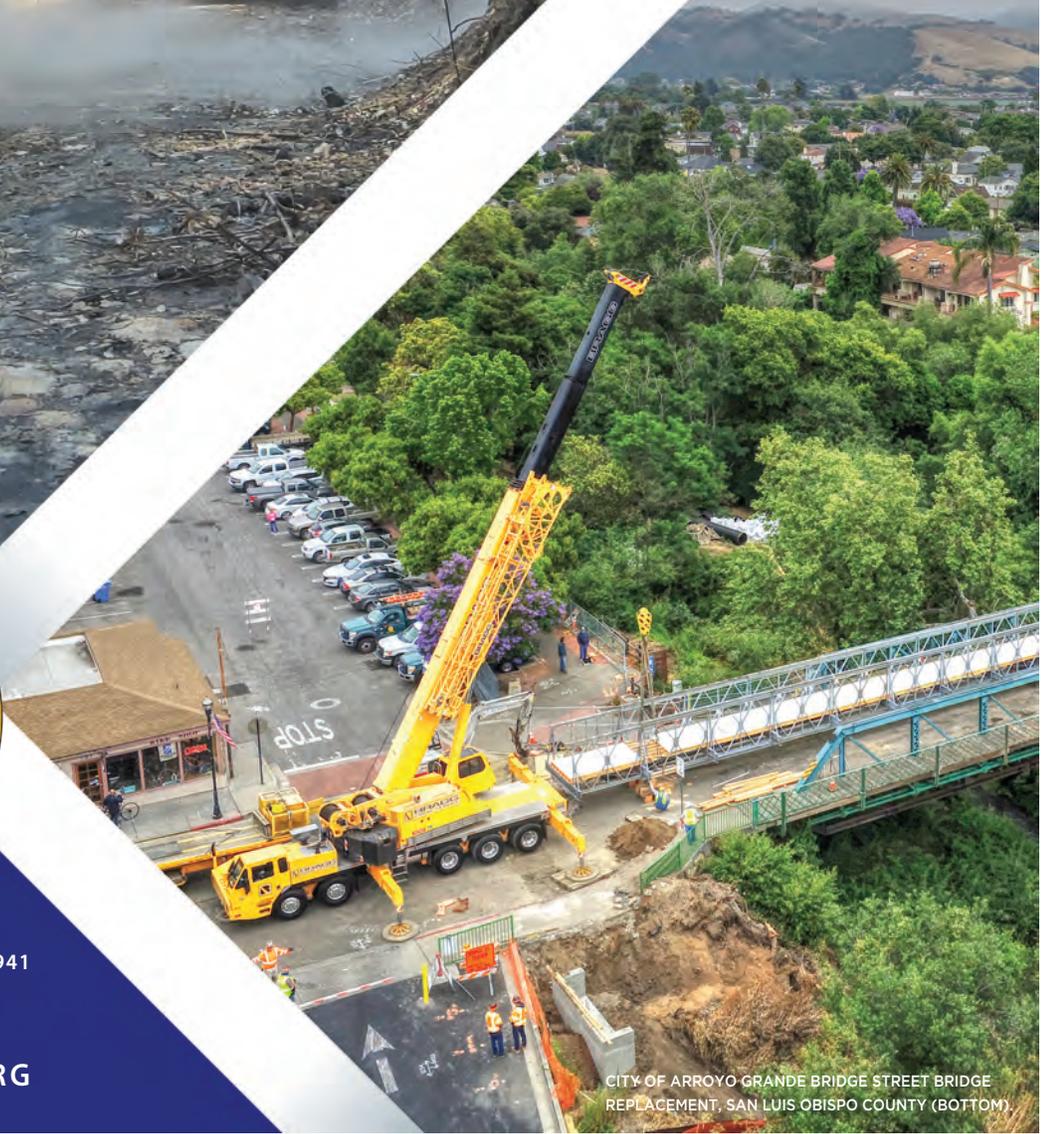
CSAC will continue to engage on a variety of important legislative and regulatory topics related to water resources, including ongoing implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and ongoing discussions about water quality, storm water funding and conservation issues. As water and flood management merge with the impacts of wildfire and possible debris flows, CSAC plans to engage county expertise on the state's plan to deploy an improved stream gage network. ●

California's revenues are currently ahead of projections adopted during the summer height of the pandemic, although the state projects deficits in the near future.

STORM DAMAGE ROAD REPAIR,  
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY (TOP)



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CITY OF ARROYO GRANDE BRIDGE STREET BRIDGE  
REPLACEMENT, SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY (BOTTOM)