

Spread the word »

 [The Planning and Conservation League](#)

PCL INSIDER: News from the Capitol

CLEAN AIR, SAFE WATER AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES NOW A BARGAINING CHIP FOR "MIDDLE-CLASS SCHOLARSHIPS" TAX HIKE

Environmental Community Bands Together to Fight for CEQA

As we reported in last week's Insider, the games around efforts to weaken CEQA are just getting underway. As was highlighted in Tuesday's [Sacramento Bee](#) and [Los Angeles Times](#), Assembly Speaker Pérez has been rumored to be offering up significant CEQA amendments in order to entice Republican votes for his \$1 billion tax hike on out-of-state corporations to go to scholarships for middle-class college students (AB 1500). Draft language that would, as some environmental advocates have put it "effectively be the end of CEQA as we know it", is already circulating.

The proposal, which the Speaker has since [disavowed](#) at a press conference held yesterday, is one of several efforts to make amendments – large and small – to CEQA. Bills ranging from the relatively innocuous (CEQA exemptions for painting bike lanes) to more impactful (exemptions for Los Angeles-area broadband mobile data system consisting of antennas, microwave dishes and arrays, and antenna support structures) have already been introduced, or are in the process of finding their vehicle. Meanwhile, rumors continue to swirl about additional major CEQA exemptions, some which could be even worse than the proposals currently circulating. As a long-serving Senator noted in a meeting with PCL last week, talk around weakening CEQA is "at an all-time fever pitch" in the Capitol.

We had hoped the Legislature had learned their lesson after the absurdity of last-year's 11th-hour CEQA legislation, and the [heat](#) the anti-democratic 'gut and amend' process took in the media and among environmental and good government advocates. Clearly, they haven't.

In our last Insider, PCL echoed the sentiments of the [Sacramento Bee](#) (since [affirmed](#) in an editorial in today's paper), which has urged the Legislature to make sure any amendments to CEQA are publicly and thoroughly vetted. In fact, we are going a step further to convene experts with diverse interests and backgrounds after the end of legislative session to see if areas of agreement can be reached on ways we can improve CEQA. Our goal is to have this open and thoughtful discussion outside the 'fever-pitch' of legislative session in hopes of developing meaningful recommendations before the Legislature reconvenes in January.

In the meantime, environmental and community advocates from around the state are standing together to tell the Legislature, "**Don't Mess With CEQA**". And we are asking you to join us!

Please contact your [state representatives](#) immediately, and tell them:

Ø Don't Mess with CEQA!

- Ø Clean air, safe water and community health are NOT bargaining chips
- Ø No behind-closed-doors negotiations to weaken environmental protection

OCEAN DESALINATION NO LONGER A FRESH IDEA FOR CALIFORNIA

Despite being energy intensive, environmentally destructive and extremely costly, interest in the production of desalinated ocean water remains high. The allure of an "endless supply" of water, just off our coast, remains greatly seductive. That's why the findings from the Pacific Institute's update to their report 2006 report [Desalination, With a Grain of Salt](#) are quite interesting. In the [update](#), released last week, the Pacific Institute reports that out of the 21 proposed desalination facilities identified in their 2006 report, only one – a small plant in Sand City - was permitted and built. One other project, the controversial Carlsbad Seawater Desalination Project, has garnered all of the required permits but cannot break ground due to the projected exorbitant cost of the water and contract details in the pending purchase agreements.

The Pacific Institute reports, "The potential benefits of ocean desalination are great, but the economic, cultural, and environmental costs of wide commercialization remain high." In California, water managers are turning to cost-effective and less environmentally harmful regional solutions, such as: conservation, improved water use efficiency, recycled water, and watershed based solutions like storm water capture and reuse. These solutions offer similar water supply benefits as ocean desalination, but at a fraction of the economic and environmental cost.

This session, Planning and Conservation League worked with over a dozen groups to impede the progress of [Assembly Bill 2595](#) (Hall). This bill would have convened a task force to identify ways to streamline the ocean desalination permitting process at a cost of a quarter of a million dollars of taxpayer money. At the same time, PCL was a strong supporter of [Assembly Bill 1750](#) (Solorio), also known as the Rainwater Capture Act of 2012. This bill would improve regional self-sufficiency by allowing homeowners, commercial property owners and governmental building to install, maintain and operate rain barrels (aka cisterns) and/or rainwater capture systems. This bill is one step away from reaching the Governor's desk for his final approval.

JOIN PCL AT SAN FRANCISCO FUNDRAISER

Assemblymember Jared Huffman to Provide Keynote Address

Please join PCL and longtime environmental champion [Assemblymember Jared Huffman](#) on October 4th from 5:30 -7:30pm at an intimate fundraiser at [Mark Wolfe Contemporary Art](#) in San Francisco. In addition to Huffman's keynote address, PCL Executive Director Bruce Reznik will be on hand to discuss the 'state of the environment' in the Capitol, and PCL's "One Vision, One Voice" campaign aimed at mobilizing communities around a shared vision for our future. Local beer, wine and light appetizers will be served, and local activists will be recognized by PCL. Participants will be able to bid on amazing art, with some proceeds going to PCL. Host tickets are \$250, with general admission at \$100. Sponsorship opportunities also available. Tickets will be available through PCL's [website](#). Please contact [Lauren Sucher](#), PCL Events Coordinator, for more information or to discuss sponsorship opportunities.





1107 9th Street, Suite 901, Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone (916) 822-5631 • Fax (916) 822-5650

pclmail@pcl.org • www.PCL.org • www.PCLFoundation.org

Please add pclmail@pcl.org to your address book to ensure delivery to your inbox.

You are receiving this email because the email address was subscribed to our email list.

Having trouble reading this email? View it on our [website](#).

Copyright, 2008 The Planning and Conservation League. All rights reserved.

[Privacy and Contribution Policies](#) [Click here to unsubscribe](#)