

CARPD Communicator



President's Message

Dear CARPD Members and residents of California,

This month, I attended McFarland's 2nd Annual Grape Festival and 5K run. The event demonstrated the importance of parks within the communities we collectively serve. Blanco Park gave the city's staff a welcoming venue and was chosen to also honor Coach Jim White, whose leadership and dedication of the McFarland High School cross-country team inspired the true story portrayed in McFarland, USA. The Grape Festival showed how parks can honor a community's history, strengthen civic pride, and bring people together. "Our parks are more than just green spaces; they are canvases upon which we shape the future of our neighborhoods," said Briana DeLeon (McFarland's Community Development Director). They serve as gateways to building a true sense of community; a place to walk the dog, meet a new neighbor, and enjoy local festivals and activities.

When we invest in our parks, we invest in the social fabric that connects us all. To ensure these spaces remain sustainable and well governed, professional development remains a cornerstone of CARPD's mission. CAPRI is currently offering a free four-week webinar series designed to further educate our membership and safeguard the public funds that make these community assets possible.

Furthermore, CARPD is proud to be part of a coalition advocating for public entity tort reform within the state, helping ensure that our agencies can continue to serve the public safely and effectively.

Together, we are building more than just parks; we are building the foundation for a stronger, more connected society.

Best regards,

Jesus G. Perez,
President of California Association of Recreation and Park Districts

A resident of Lamont, CA and Chairman of Bear Mountain Recreation and Park District



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By Ethan Nagler
California Public Policy Group

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Governor's Final Legislative Actions

September 30 marked the deadline for Governor Gavin Newsom to act on all pending legislation. Of the 2,230 bills introduced in 2026, together with several hundred two-year bills carried over from 2025, 1,160 reached the Governor's desk. The Governor signed 1,040 of those bills into law and vetoed 120, reflecting a signature rate of approximately 90 percent and a veto rate of approximately 10 percent—considerably lower than his average veto rate of 13.5 percent over the course of his tenure. Notably, the Legislature has not overridden a gubernatorial veto since 1980. All chaptered bills go into effect on January 1, 2027, unless stated otherwise.

On September 30, the Governor signed the final bill of his tenure atop the Golden Gate Bridge and issued an accompanying [press release](#). The bill, [SB 895](#) (Wiener), enacts the California Science and Health Research Bond Act, which, if approved by the voters at the March 7, 2028, election, would authorize the issuance of \$7.5 billion in bonds to finance grants and loans for research into a wide range of topics, including wildfire prevention, climate, water, behavioral health, and disease prevention, among others.

Over the course of his eight years in office, the Governor acted on a total of 7,803 bills, exercising his constitutional authority to sign or veto every measure presented to him. In each instance, the bill received a formal decision; none was left without action. Of the 7,803 bills, he signed 6,752 into law, representing 86.5 percent of the total, and vetoed 1,051, representing the remaining 13.5 percent.

The Legislature remains on Final Recess and will next convene on December 7 for a single-day Organizational Session, during which newly elected members will be sworn into office, before recessing until January 4, 2027. With the business of the 2025-26 session effectively concluded, the attention of most legislators has now officially shifted to the November 3 General Election.

Press Release on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Oversight

On September 18, Governor Gavin Newsom signed an [executive order](#) directing the Government Operations Agency, in consultation with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), to deliver recommendations by November 16, 2026, on strengthening the state's AI safety laws. The recommendations are to address onsite independent verification at frontier AI laboratories, independent review of company safety frameworks and risk assessments, an emergency "kill switch" for frontier models, and expanded definitions of the critical safety incidents that companies must report. The order also accelerates implementation of two bills the Governor signed in September: [SB 813](#) (McNerney), which creates a framework for independent verification organizations to assess AI systems' compliance with state law, and [AB 1405](#) (Bauer-Kahan), which establishes a state registry of AI auditors. Both measures build upon SB 53 (Wiener, 2025), the Transparency in Frontier Artificial Intelligence Act. In the accompanying [press release](#), the Governor stated: "We're not waiting to act. We're going to speed up our work on substantial and responsible AI oversight before it's too late."



Legislative Update

By Ethan Nagler
California Public Policy Group

Bills of Interest Signed into Law (Chaptered) or Vetoed by the Governor

The Legislature closed the session by passing a seven-bill package aimed at California's fast-growing data center industry, sending all seven measures to the Governor.

- AB 1383 (McKinnor) Public employees' retirement benefits.
 - This bill makes prospective changes to the Public Employees Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) of 2013. Specifically, the bill:
 - Increases the pensionable compensation cap for all PEPRA employees;
 - Reduces the retirement age for public safety (fire and police) from 57 to 55;
 - Adds a 4th safety tier that is 3% @ 55, subject to bargaining;
 - Allows local agencies to adjust their local formula.
 - Status: Vetoed
- AB 2346 (Wilson) Vehicles: electric bicycles and speed limits.
 - This bill sets speed limits for e-bikes and bicycle paths, requires certain disclosures when selling an e-bike, and requires some e-bikes to have a speedometer and lights.
 - Status: Chaptered
- AB 1821 (Pacheco) California Public Records Act: agency response time.
 - This bill extends the deadlines for public agencies to provide an initial response to a California Public Records Act request by converting the current "calendar day" deadlines to a "business day" standard.
 - Status: Chaptered
- SB 1117 (Cervantes) Accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units.
 - This bill requires impact fees for ADUs to be calculated only on the portion of the unit exceeding 750 square feet, rather than on its total square footage, for up to two ADUs on a single lot.
 - Status: Chaptered
- SB 1014 (Grayson) Development projects: preliminary estimate of required improvements: onsite and offsite improvements.
 - This bill allows development proponents to request and receive additional information on offsite and onsite improvements at the preliminary application phase, and when processing post-entitlement permits.
 - Status: Chaptered

LOOKING FORWARD

- December 7, 2026: Legislature convenes for Organizational Session.
- January 1, 2027: All bills signed into law in 2026, unless otherwise stated, go into effect.
- January 4, 2027: Legislature convenes for the first year of the 2027-28 legislative session.



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District Spotlight

Grand Opening of emPOWERment Park



What happens when a community comes together around a shared vision?

That vision has become a reality with the opening of EmPOWERment Park which resides within the **Mission Oaks Recreation & Park District**, a unique new community destination that is already making an impact just weeks after opening.

From the beginning, the project was built on partnership. The Sacramento Parks Foundation played an important role in helping facilitate the development and construction of the park. The Sacramento Parks Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 and is comprised of four of our very own CARPD members, Arcade Creek, Arden Manor, Fulton-El Camino, and Mission Oaks Recreation and Park Districts. These districts work together to provide recreational services for the unincorporated portion of Sacramento County.

The Foundation helped open doors to grant opportunities and other resources that may not otherwise have been available. Its nonprofit status was instrumental in helping secure funding and moving the project from an idea toward reality.

The Foundation's involvement extended beyond funding. It also played an important role in the park's design and the development of the overall concept, helping transform the initial vision into a thoughtfully designed space for the community.

A Park Powered by Partnership

Another critical piece of the project came from Sacramento Municipal Utilities District (“SMUD”), whose donation of the land was essential to making the park possible. The partnership provided an opportunity to transform the site into a vibrant public space while incorporating a unique connection to the property's history and surroundings.

Even the park's name, EmPOWERment, carries a double meaning—reflecting both the accessibility and empowering nature of the space while also serving as a nod to SMUD and the power lines that run overhead.

That theme is carried throughout the park. In an area designed for children ages 2 to 5, colorful faux houses are named after units of electricity—volts, ohms, watts, and amps. Interactive features include faux solar panels and buttons that activate sound effects and small lights. Nearby, a control panel introduces children to different energy sources, including nuclear, solar, coal, and hydroelectric power. The result is a space where play and learning come together in an imaginative and engaging way.

The Community Shows Up

Since opening nearly a month ago, the response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive. Weekend crowds have been particularly strong, with the park receiving significantly more use than initially anticipated. That level of activity has brought some unexpected challenges, particularly when it comes to maintenance and keeping up with the sheer volume of visitors.

Perhaps the most rewarding part has been seeing how quickly the community has embraced the new space. Families and residents are incorporating the park into their daily routines and weekend activities, creating exactly the kind of community connection the project was intended to foster. The strong turnout also reinforces the importance of investing in quality public spaces, places where people can gather, children can play, families can spend time together, and communities can connect.

From an Idea to a Place for Everyone

The story of EmPOWERment Park is ultimately a story about collaboration. SMUD's donation of the land, the Sacramento Parks Foundation's support with funding opportunities and design, the contributions of community partners, and the community's enthusiastic response each played a part in bringing the project to life.

EmPOWERment Park is more than a new park. It is an example of what can happen when organizations and community partners come together with a shared vision and a commitment to creating something lasting for the community.



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BRIAN WILSON

General Manager
Feather River Recreation and Park District

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CARPD Resolution of Recognition

**Would you like to recognize your outgoing Board Members
for their outstanding contributions to your community?**

We are collecting Resolutions of Recognition. Each Resolution highlights the unique accomplishments and achievements of the honored Board Member. We print each as a certificate, signed by the CARPD Board President, and then mail the Resolution to your District for presentation at a time of your own choosing.

Resolution requests/nominations are now being accepted through December 4th. Please fill out this [form](#) to be processed. If you have questions, please reach out to our Executive Director, Matthew Duarte.



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BOARD MEMBER TRAINING

Save the Date!

Monday, January 25, 2027
5pm - 6:30pm
via Zoom

Leading with Impact:
A Guide to Effective
Board Service

Presented By:
Matthew Duarte, Esq.
CARPD & CAPRI
Executive Director

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Angelo
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Attorneys at Law



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California Association for Park and Recreation Indemnity (CAPRI) Honored with Prestigious PRISM Eagle Award for Innovation in Pool Management

Statewide self-insurance pool recognized for its comprehensive 40th Anniversary educational campaign and historic Founder's Dinner event.



At its annual conference last month, the Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, and Management (PRISM) announced California Association for Park and Recreation Indemnity ("CAPRI") as the winner of its distinguished **EAGLE Award for Innovation in Pool Management**. The prestigious award recognizes CAPRI's outstanding achievements in member engagement, educational outreach, and organizational excellence surrounding its milestone 40th Anniversary initiative.

Over the past four decades, CAPRI has served as a dedicated partner to public entities across California, providing tailored risk management, coverage solutions, and loss control services specifically designed for park and recreation agencies. The PRISM Eagle Award highlights CAPRI's dual-pronged 40th Anniversary program, which combined a 8 week-long educational series with a historical celebration of the pool's governance and leadership:

Educational Engagement – "Top 40 Services": CAPRI launched an interactive campaign spotlighting forty key services, resources, and risk reduction tools available to member districts. The program raised awareness of critical risk management strategies and encouraged greater utilization of pool resources to keep local parks and recreational facilities safe.

Member Outreach – The "Founder's Dinner": Bringing together current member agency leaders, former Board Members, and staff spanning four decades of service, the Founder's Dinner honored the visionary founders who established CAPRI in 1986 while strengthening relationships across generations of park and recreation professionals.

"Receiving the PRISM Eagle Award is a tremendous honor and a testament to the dedication of our Board, staff, and member districts," said Executive Director Matthew Duarte. "Our 40th Anniversary was not just about reflecting on four decades of strength and stability, it was about re-engaging our members, highlighting the full breadth of risk management solutions we offer, and honoring the legacy of those who built this pool from the ground up. As we look ahead to the next forty years, CAPRI remains steadfast in its commitment to innovation, collaborative risk management, and serving as an unwavering partner to California's park and recreation districts."

For more information about CAPRI and its risk management services, please visit capri-jpa.gov.



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MEET THE CARPD BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The CARPD Board of Directors consists of eleven elected representatives of the CARPD Membership. In these volunteer positions, the Board provides policy direction for the organization in order to fulfill its mission to advocate, educate, and support California's recreation and park districts. Thank you to all, past and present, that have served our organization!

Jesus Perez, President

Bear Mountain Recreation and Park District

Doug Nickles, Secretary

Conejo Recreation and Park District

Jan Bissell, Director

Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District

Peter Rosen, Director

Hayward Area Recreation and Park District

Michelle Lacy, Administrator Member

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Al McGreehan, CFO

Paradise Recreation and Park District

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Cordova Recreation and Park District

Michael Seaman, Director

Fulton-El Camino Recreation and Park District

Mathew Fuzie, Administrator Member

Livermore Area Recreation and Park District

Matthew Duarte

Executive Director