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CARPD Legislative Update
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After a prolonged State Budget process, the California State Legislature has adjourned for its annual Summer Recess. Legislators will return to Sacramento on August 16th to work on the bills that remain active during the first half of the two-year session, which will conclude on September 10th.

Governor Newsom and the Legislature reached final agreement on the 2021-22 State Budget with the signing of [Senate Bill 129 \(Skinner\)](#) on July 12th. The measure was a follow-up to [Assembly Bill 128 \(Ting\)](#), the bill the Legislature passed in mid-June to comply with the constitutional deadline. The protracted process was complicated by the rare circumstance of a General Fund surplus rather than the typical dearth of money. Additionally, the Federal Government provided a COVID-19 relief fund package for California. As we discussed at the CARPD Annual Meeting in Monterey, the Governor did not allocate any relief funds for many special districts in his May Revise of the proposed State Budget. After a concerted Urgent Call to Action went out soliciting letters from the membership, the Legislature responded by adding a \$100 million appropriation for COVID-19 relief for independent special districts and, after extensive negotiations with the Newsom Administration, the budget change provision was accepted by the Governor and signed into law as a part of SB 129. The leadership of CARPD's principals, Executive Director Matthew Duarte, and the whole organization quickly reaching out to members of the Legislature was a crucial ingredient in securing the relief funds for recreation and park districts.

The Department of Finance, with input from special districts is currently engaged in developing the plan, which is due by September 1, 2021, to distribute the funds for relief to independent special districts that have encountered unanticipated costs or loss of revenue due to the COVID-19 public health emergency that have not received from other forms of fiscal relief from the state or federal government. The application process should be unveiled to the public very soon.

The recently enacted budget bill also includes funding for various park, recreation and resource projects secured at the request of individual legislators. These items were directly related to the budget surplus and, although welcome, may not reoccur in the future. Additionally, the budget process will continue as many issues, including wildfire preparedness and homelessness appropriations still need to be substantively fleshed out in trailer bills before the Legislature adjourns on September 10th.

I am very pleased to report that Senate Concurrent Resolution 52, authored by Senator Mike McGuire and sponsored by the CARPD, passed the Senate on a unanimous vote and is now pending on the Assembly Floor. The Resolution celebrates the accomplishments and resilience of recreation and park professionals for providing extraordinary services and activities to their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the provisions highlighted in the Resolution illustrate the new reality of recreation and park districts and have been noticed and recognized by key policymakers and their staff. The Resolution calls out park and recreation professionals for promoting:

- 1) Physical and mental health for all Californians.
- 2) Community heritage, cultural diversity, and state history.
- 3) Protection of sensitive habitats and open space.
- 4) Safeguarded health and safety of public during COVID-19 conditions.
- 5) Helped in vaccination sites.
- 6) Provided outdoor outlets for sheltering in place public.
- 7) Launched programs to help families obtain safe facilities and equipment for students unable to attend school.
- 8) Provided cooling centers.
- 9) Provided wildfire relief with management staging shelters and emergency shelters.

The other significant recent political development worth noting is the certification of the Gubernatorial Recall and setting of the election date to be September 24, 2021. The timing of the Recall Election had been expedited by special funding being inserted in the State Budget. Forty-two candidates have qualified for the Ballot running to secure the highest number of votes if the electorate chooses to recall Governor Newsom. Former San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and reality television celebrity and former Olympian, Kaitlyn Jenner, have received most of the attention by the media to date. Larry Elder, a conservative radio talk show host successfully sued to have his name added to the list after election officials had determined that he had not met the qualifications on a timely basis. The list of candidates does not seem to match the public visibility of Arnold Schwarzenegger's candidacy in the Recall Election of Gray Davis in 2003, but Governor Newsom and the Democratic Party are taking the Recall very seriously. We expect the campaign will be expensive and aggressive and it will set a vivid backdrop for the last month of the Legislative Session.