

PRIORITY FOCUS



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LEAGUE PUBLISHES 'FIRST CUT' LIST OF 2007 STATE LEGISLATION OF INTEREST TO CITIES

For lobbyists in Sacramento, the beginning of the legislative New Year occurred on Friday, February 23 - the last day for legislators to introduce bills. Between the Senate and the Assembly, slightly less than 3,000 bills were introduced, providing League staff with a healthy dose of reading material as they work to uncover which measures are the most important to cities. *For more, see Page 2.*

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FEDERAL UPDATE: FCC ADOPTS RULES FOR VIDEO MARKET ENTRANTS

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted a Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Monday, March 5. The order establishes rules and guidance to implement a section of the Communications Act of 1934, which prohibits franchising authorities from unreasonably refusing to award competitive franchises for the provision of cable services. *For more, see Page 2.*

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ASSEMBLYMAN PEDRO NAVA VISITS WITH CITY LOBBYISTS

Assemblyman Pedro Nava paid a visit to the League's City Caucus meeting on Tuesday, March 6. Speaking to city lobbyists on a variety of topics, Nava focused primarily on the infrastructure bonds, noting the importance of looking at the development and design of projects from a broad perspective. *For more, see Page 2.*

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As expected, there were many bills introduced on infrastructure bond implementation, land use, transportation, sex offenders, group homes, affordable housing, green building, crime, taxation, water supply and water quality, and other topics that will interest city officials.

The League's lobbying team has established a "first cut" of these bills that focuses on some of the more developed proposals that have been introduced. This list can be found at:

www.cacities.org/firstcut. Please note that the link will not be active until the late afternoon (approximately 5 p.m.) on Friday, March 9.

The list is intended to be a helpful guide to city officials trying to get a sense of the major proposals. Bill introduction, however, is just the opening move. Legislative rules require bills to be in print at least 30 days before they can be amended, and many measures change significantly after that point.

League lobbyists will be analyzing these and other bills over the coming weeks, meeting with the various authors and staff to gather information, raise questions and communicate concerns. As necessary, the League will take positions and testify on these or other bills based upon our existing policies, recommendations of our policy committees and League Board, and will provide updates and action alerts through *Priority Focus* and our regional public affairs managers.

League-Sponsored Legislation

There are a number of bills that the League is sponsoring this year. For a listing of these bills, please see the story entitled "[League-Sponsored Bill Packaged Introduced](#)" that ran in the [March 2 edition of Priority Focus](#). Cities are encouraged to review and support this legislation.

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It's important to note, however, that the order only applies to municipal level franchising, not state franchising. With the adoption of AB 2987 – which eliminated local franchising of video services – the order will not impact local government in California.

The FCC concluded that the current franchising process contained unreasonable barriers to entry, including unreasonable build-out requirements, demands with respect to public, educational and government (PEG) access, and more.

For more information, including the text of the order, visit www.fcc.gov.

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Overall, Nava was positive in regard to the infrastructure bonds, saying that they are much needed, but may not be enough to build California transportation infrastructure to the level it should be at. The assemblyman was very conscious of society's shrinking level of patience, saying that in an age of hot pockets and microwave popcorn, voters want to see shovels in the ground soon.

Although quick action may satisfy some voters, Nava advocated spending the bond funding effectively, so that when voters are asked to invest in infrastructure again, they will want to build on the success of the 2006 bonds.

In addition, Nava emphasized looking at projects to improve goods movement from a homeland security perspective. He also spoke with city lobbyists about the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) process, and encouraged stakeholders to talk with him about their perspectives on the topic.

Nava was first elected to the State Assembly in 2004, and came to the Legislature with years of experience as a medical malpractice defense attorney. He currently serves in the following capacities:

- Chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee
- Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security
- Member of Appropriations Committee
- Member of the Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials
- Member of the Water Parks and Wildlife Committee

NLC 2007 Congressional City Conference Begins Next Week

The National League of Cities (NLC) 2007 Congressional City Conference takes place next week, beginning on March 10, and running through March 14 in Washington D.C. The League of California Cities has a variety of important events scheduled during the conference, including a reception on March 12.

California City officials that are attending the NLC conference should mark their calendars for the following activities:

- **Monday, March 12 – League of California Cities Reception.** This event will take place from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Lincoln East, Washington Hilton – Concourse Level.
- **Tuesday, March 13 – Capitol Hill Reception for California Delegation and Membership.** A reception for California city officials and the California Congressional Delegation will be held at the Longworth Cafeteria from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- **Meeting with Sen. Barbara Boxer.** The time is yet to be determined and the location will be announced during the League's reception on March 12.
- **Wednesday, March 14 – Roundtable Discussion with California Congressional Delegation – Issue: Homeland Security.** This hour-long discussion will begin at 10 a.m. in Room HC-5 at the Capitol.

If you have any questions, please contact Genevieve Morelos at gmorelos@cacities.org or (916) 658-8254.

The League Grassroots Network: How Is It Working?

Last week, randomly selected mayors, council members and city managers received in the mail a request from the League to participate in a survey to evaluate the League's Grassroots Network.

If you were selected for the survey, you are one of a limited number of city officials asked to participate. Your response is very important.

Veteran city officials will remember that in 2001, the League membership overwhelmingly approved an amendment to the League bylaws to create the Grassroots Network, including adding 16 regional representatives to the staff. The membership concurrently approved a dues

increase to finance the program. These actions also stipulated that before the end of 2007, the membership would vote again on whether the Grassroots Network should be continued. The voting will occur during the annual conference in Sacramento, on Sept. 5-8.

The League has engaged APCO Insight, an independent research firm, to conduct a confidential opinion survey to help the League understand members' expectations and attitudes towards the League's legislative and ballot measure advocacy, especially grassroots activities. This is the third in a series of surveys conducted to evaluate the Grassroots Network.

A baseline was established in 2001 and a survey to measure progress was conducted in 2004. This year's survey will assess how members view the contributions of the Grassroots Network before a decision is made concerning the future of the program.

If you received a questionnaire, please complete it promptly. The questionnaire may be completed in hard copy and mailed to the research firm in a postage-paid envelope, or it may be completed online through the Web site address provided in the questionnaire. A thoughtful response will take approximately 15 minutes and would be greatly appreciated as we evaluate the program.

Editor's Note: If you have questions about this project (or if you were not selected but would like to participate) please contact either Dan Harrison at the League at (916) 658-8267 or dharrison@cacities.org, or Chrystine Zacherau with APCO Insight at (202) 778-1000 or czacherau@apcoinsight.com.

All-Mail Ballot Bill is Introduced – AB 1654 (Huffman)

Assemblyman Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael) recently introduced Assembly Bill (AB) 1654, a measure that if passed, would permit an all-mail ballot election as an option in a general law city.

All-mail ballots are not a new topic within the State Legislature. Previous measures dealing with this issue have not met with a great deal of success. Given the costs that cities must endure with precinct elections (training of poll workers, equipment rental, hiring field supervisors, etc.), local governments continue to support all-mail ballot efforts.

The League of California Cities will work with Assemblyman Huffman to flesh out the merits of all-mail ballots. Vote by mail through absentee ballots is quickly becoming the preferred choice among California voters. The percentages have reached beyond the 40 percentile of those casting votes in statewide elections with some communities exceeding the 50 percent mark.

Discussions have commenced between the League, the City Clerks Association of California (CCAC), labor and members of the Legislature regarding this topic. At the present time, the prospect of an all-mail ballot reaching the Governor's desk is still unknown.

The League is committed to supporting an all-mail ballot measure, and is interested in all feedback on the issue - whether in support or in opposition. Letters of support for AB 1654 can be sent to Mr. Huffman's office with a copy to P. Anthony Thomas at the League office. Letters of support should be sent to the members of the Assembly Elections Committee. Those members are:

- Curren D. Price (chair)
- Anthony Adams (vice chair)
- Mark Leno
- Lloyd E. Levine
- Roger Niello
- Lori Saldaña

Copies of those letters should also be sent to Assemblyman Huffman's office at the following address:

The Honorable Jared Huffman
State Capitol Building, Room 4139
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1654 (Huffman) SUPPORT

The first eligible date that AB 1654 can be heard is March 27. If it isn't heard on that day, the bill will likely be heard on April 17 in the Assembly Elections Committee.

Institute for Local Government Receives Grant to Study Youth Commissions

The Institute for Local Government (ILG), the League of California Cities and California State Association of Counties' nonprofit research arm, has received a \$50,000 grant from the Surdna Foundation in New York to support the effective development of youth commissions in California.

ILG's Collaborative Governance Initiative will draw on the experiences of local city and county youth commissions to produce a *Local Officials Guide to Developing Effective Youth Commissions*. A statewide roster of these commissions will be prepared as a resource for local agencies. In addition, case studies of commission activities will be compiled and added to the ILG's Web site. Web dialogues for local youth commissioners around the state will also be organized to allow communication and learning among these civically-engaged young people.

If you are developing a new youth commission, please contact Chantal Kurpiewski at ckurpiewski@cacities.org to add it to the growing list of such efforts that will appear on the ILG Web site. A session on developing effective youth commissions will be presented in July at the upcoming Mayors and Council Members Executive Forum in Monterey.

AB 1234 Reminder – Newly-Elected and Appointed Officials Must Be Trained!

If your city has newly-elected and appointed officials, they need to receive AB 1234 ethics training within one year of taking office. A great opportunity to satisfy this requirement exists at two of the League of California Cities' upcoming events.

The League is offering a session at the Planners Institute in San Diego next week and will do the same in July at the Mayors and Council Members Executive Forum in Monterey. In addition, there are self-study and online options available. For more information about compliance options, including ILG's "Frequently Asked Questions" (F.A.Q.) on AB 1234's requirements, please visit www.ca-ilg.org/ab1234compliance.

Information on League events is available at www.cacities.org/events.

Institute for Local Government 2007 Ethics Program Benefactors

ILG is very grateful to the following firms for supporting its work to develop and disseminate resources on public service ethics in 2007, including the update of ILG's popular *Ethics Law Reference* (www.ca-ilg.org/elr) publication.

- Best Best & Krieger LLP
- Hanson Bridgett Marcus Vlahos & Rudy, LLP
- Kronick, Moskovitz, Tiedemann & Girard
- Liebert Cassidy Whitmore
- Meyers Nave

- Richards, Watson and Gershon

For more information on ILG's ethics-related resources, please visit www.ca-ilg.org/trust.

Keeping Up: Kyra Ross Joins the League's Lobbying Staff

The League of California Cities is pleased to announce that Kyra Ross has joined its staff as a Legislative Representative. Ross will be taking over for Yvonne Hunter, working on environmental quality, community services and other issues.

Coming to work at the League is a familiar road for Ross. From 1995 to 1997, she worked as a paid intern with the Institute for Local Government (the League and California State Association of Counties' nonprofit research arm) running their Smoke Free Cities grant project and a project on CalFed and Water engaging cities on water supply issues. Over the past decade, however, Ross has been employed in the State Legislature, most recently serving as chief consultant with the Assembly Natural Resources Committee.

During her time with the Committee, Ross focused primarily on air quality, waste and energy issues. Some of the key pieces of legislation she has been involved in the drafting and passage include greenhouse gas emissions, electronic waste, solid waste diversion, beverage container recycling, and renewable energy. Prior to her work in the Natural Resources Committee, Ms. Ross worked for former Assembly Speaker Cruz Bustamante and former Assemblywoman, now Senator, Carole Migden.

"Kyra brings a wealth of technical knowledge to the League's environmental quality policy area and has great contacts in the Legislature, said Dan Carrigg, legislative director of the League. "We're excited to have her aboard and look forward to a productive year."

Ms. Ross is a graduate of the University of California, Davis, and lives in Sacramento with her husband and two children.

Kyra can be reached at (916) 658-8252, or kross@cacities.org.

Have a Housing Success Story? Tell Us About It!

Focus on Housing, the League of California Cities' electronic monthly housing newsletter, is seeking new housing success stories to profile for its upcoming issues.

Has your city redeveloped a blighted or underused site with new affordable housing in the past two years? If so, we want to know about it. Typical housing success stories published in *Focus on Housing* range between 250-400 words, and include "before and after" photos to illustrate the property's change.

For an example of one of the newsletter's success stories, visit www.imakenews.com/focusonhousing and read "[Las Brisas Helps Revitalize South Los Angeles](#)."

Questions and submissions should be sent to League Communications Specialist Brian Heaton at bheaton@cacities.org.

Find a Bill, Legislators, Leg Committee – or Ask League Leg Staff

Visit (and bookmark!) the League's [Legislative Resources](http://www.cacities.org/legresources) Web page (www.cacities.org/legresources). You'll find a roster and contact information for the League's legislative staff; the online Bill Search program, background materials on lobbying your legislators, and more.
