

THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 1457
Author: Bryan (D)
Amended: 6/4/26 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 7-0, 7/16/25
AYES: Limón, Seyarto, Allen, Grove, Hurtado, Laird, Stern

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

SENATE FLOOR: 37-0, 8/29/25 (Consent)
AYES: Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener
NO VOTE RECORDED: Allen, Jones, Reyes

SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE: 5-2, 7/1/26
AYES: Durazo, Arreguín, Ashby, Cervantes, Laird
NOES: Choi, Seyarto

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 6/3/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: General plan: environmental justice element: disadvantaged communities

SOURCE: Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment,
State of California Attorney General Rob Bonta

DIGEST: This bill requires cities and counties to adopt an environmental justice element on or before June 30, 2028, and requires certain community engagement procedures.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Requires every county and city to adopt a general plan with seven mandatory elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety.
- 2) Requires the general plan to either include an eighth element on environmental justice, or related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, if the city or county has a disadvantaged community within its jurisdiction (SB 1000, Leyva, Chapter 587, Statutes of 2016).
- 3) Requires the environmental justice element or related goals must identify disadvantaged communities and identify objectives and policies to:
 - a) Reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by means that include, but are not limited to, the reduction of pollution exposure, including the improvement of air quality, and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity;
 - b) Promote civil engagement in the public decisionmaking process; and
 - c) Prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.
- 4) Requires cities and counties to comply with these requirements upon adopting or revising two or more elements of the general plan concurrently.

This bill:

- 1) Requires a city or county with a disadvantaged community to adopt an environmental justice element, or environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives in other elements, by the earliest of either the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018; or June 30, 2028.

- 2) Requires those cities and counties to meaningfully involve disadvantaged communities in the development, adoption, and implementation of the environmental justice element, or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, using methods that are designed to effectively involve disadvantaged communities based on local conditions and circumstances.
- 3) Requires cities and counties to:
 - a) Conduct outreach to disadvantaged communities to encourage and receive input by holding at least two public workshops to receive and consider public input. Workshops must be held at times and locations that are readily accessible to residents of disadvantaged communities and that include both in-person and online virtual options. A city or county may choose to hold additional workshops.
 - b) Provide notice of any public workshop, hearing, or other opportunity to provide input in the three most commonly spoken languages in disadvantaged communities in the jurisdiction, based on United States Census Bureau data.
 - c) Implement at least two other methods to meaningfully involve disadvantaged communities, and two methods of notifying disadvantaged communities of opportunities to provide input. The bill lists examples of options for meaningful involvement and notice that cities and counties may, but are not required to, use.
 - d) Maintain a website where it posts:
 - i) Drafts of the environmental justice element or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements;
 - ii) The adopted environmental justice element or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements;
 - iii) Other relevant materials; and
 - iv) Information about public workshops, hearings, and other opportunities to provide input, translated into the three most commonly spoken languages in disadvantaged communities in the city, county, or city and county, based on United States Census Bureau data.

- 4) Spells out procedures cities and counties must follow to receive input on the environmental justice element or policies, goals, and objectives in other elements. These procedures include to:
 - a) Release an initial draft of the environmental justice element, or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, for public review at least 90 days prior to adoption;
 - b) Make the initial draft of the environmental justice element, or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, available for public input and comment for at least 45 days; and
 - c) Consider and incorporate public comments received and releasing a new draft for public review, input, and comment at least 15 days prior to adoption.
- 5) Requires cities and counties to meaningfully consider and incorporate the input and recommendations of disadvantaged communities, and:
 - a) Compile and summarize public input;
 - b) Provide the summary and any written public comments received to each member of the legislative body of the city, county, or city and county before adoption; and
 - c) Include the summary in the environmental justice element or the related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements.

Background

SB 1000 guidance. Following the enactment of SB 1000, the Office of Planning and Research released updated general plan guidelines in 2020 that included information and recommendations to local governments on implementing SB 1000. Subsequently, the Attorney General published guidance on SB 1000 implementation in 2023. Both documents emphasized the need for meaningful engagement with disadvantaged communities as a part of developing an environmental justice element. The Attorney General’s guidance states, “Environmental injustices often result from excluding communities from land use planning processes...[C]ommunity engagement is especially important for

developing environmental justice policies because local governments will not be able to develop compliant policies without involving the community.” The guidance goes on to identify best practices, including to

- Establish an environmental justice advisory committee;
- Partner with local community organizations and trusted community leaders;
- Consult with Native American Tribes;
- Select meeting times and locations that are convenient for the community, and offer opportunities for childcare, along with virtual options;
- Ensure language access by translating written materials and ensure interpretation is available at meetings; and
- Establish metrics to assess the effectiveness of their community engagement.

Progress on adoption of environmental justice elements. When the Legislature added a requirement for an environmental justice element, or consideration of environmental justice throughout other elements, the goal was to ensure that all land use decisions took environmental justice into account. However, in the 10 years since, many cities and counties have not enacted an environmental justice element or otherwise addressed environmental justice throughout their general plans. Although definitive counts are difficult to develop, a 2023 policy brief from the University of California, Irvine, and the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, found that of the 238 cities and 29 counties with census tracts that are overburdened by environmental health issues, only 33 jurisdictions had general plans that included environmental justice provisions.¹

Attorney General Rob Bonta and the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment wants the Legislature to ensure that cities and counties with disadvantaged communities adopt environmental justice elements or goals, policies, and objectives, as envisioned by SB 1000.

Comments

¹ Michelle E. Zuñiga, Assistant Professor, Geography & Earth Sciences, UNC Charlotte, and Michael Méndez, Assistant Professor, Urban Planning & Public Policy, UC Irvine. “The Emergence of Environmental Justice in General Plans: Lessons from California’s Senate Bill 1000.”

Purpose of the bill. According to the author, “Ten years ago, SB 1000 was signed into law, requiring local jurisdictions to include environmental justice in their general plans when updating 2 or more elements, yet gaps in transparency and compliance remain. Every Californian should have the opportunity to live in a community that is healthy and safe. AB 1457 promotes community engagement in environmental justice element development, ensuring that community voices are central to local planning decisions and that no neighborhood is left behind. This bill prioritizes transparency and sets a compliance deadline for existing requirements.”

Time’s up. While definitive counts are not available, it appears that many cities and counties with disadvantaged communities have not yet implemented SB 1000. This doesn’t necessarily mean they are in violation of the law: SB 1000 allowed cities and counties to wait to comply with the bill until they update two or more elements of their general plan simultaneously to ease implementation for cities and counties. Additionally, because SB 1000 allowed cities and counties to incorporate environmental justice policies throughout their general plans, instead of centralizing them in a standalone element, some cities and counties may have complied with SB 1000’s requirements in a manner that is not readily apparent to outside observers. Nonetheless, progress has been slower than many have hoped on incorporating environmental justice into planning efforts. AB 1457 requires local governments to comply with SB 1000’s requirements by a certain date. For those that haven’t complied, this timeframe could be aggressive, considering other planning-related duties that the Legislature imposes on them, such as changes to their permitting procedures required by housing streamlining legislation, requirements to adopt truck routes to reduce impacts from logistics uses, open space planning requirements, and others. Do local governments have the capacity to simultaneously fulfill the Legislature’s varied goals?

Gut and amend. As introduced, AB 1457 repealed the sunset provision from the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s “qualified entities” program, and required the program’s curriculum to conform to the Department’s “Home Ignition Zone/Defensible Space Inspector” course plan. The June 4th amendments struck the contents of the bill and inserted the current provisions regarding environmental justice elements.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/4/26)

Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment (co-source)
State of California Attorney General (co-source)
350 Bay Area Action
350 Humboldt
Asian Pacific Environmental Network Action
California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) Action
California Environmental Justice Coalition
California Environmental Voters
California Nurses for Environmental Health and Justice
Catholic Charities of Stockton
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ)
Center for Environmental Health
Central California Asthma Collaborative
Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN)
Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy
Clean Water Action
Cleaneearth4kids.org
Climate First: Replacing Oil & Gas (CFROG)
Climate Resilient Communities
Coalition for Clean Air
Committees for Land, Air, Water and Species
Communities for a Better Environment
Dayenu: a Jewish Call to Climate Action
East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
Endangered Habitats League
Environmental Defense Center
Food & Water Watch
LA Waterkeeper
Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability
Mercury Press
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles
Planning and Conservation League
Poder Sf
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP)
Sacramento Environmental Justice Coalition
San Diego 350
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility
Sf Baykeeper
Sierra Club California

Sunflower Alliance
The Climate Center

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/4/26)

California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
League of California Cities
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)
Urban Counties of California (UCC)

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 6/3/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Fariás, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

Prepared by: Anton Favorini-Csorba / L. GOV. / (916) 651-4119
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