(**Without Reference to File**)

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS
AB 1923 (Soria)
As Amended August 3, 2026
2/3 vote. Urgency

SUMMARY

Requires any Fresno County initiative measure determined to have enough valid signatures to qualify for the ballot on or before July 8, 2026, to be submitted to the voters at the November 3, 2026, statewide general election.

Senate Amendments
Delete the Assembly-approved version of the bill, and instead:

1) Require any Fresno County initiative petition that has been certified as sufficient by the Fresno County Registrar of Voters on or before July 8, 2026, to be submitted, without alteration, to the voters at the November 3, 2026, statewide general election. Require the Fresno County Registrar of Voters and the Fresno County Board of Supervisors to perform all acts that they would otherwise perform to place a qualified initiative measure on the ballot.

2) Make findings and declarations that a special statute is necessary because of the unique fiscal circumstances facing the County of Fresno arising from the expiration of its local transportation tax.

3) Add an urgency clause, allowing this bill to take effect immediately upon enactment.

COMMENTS

As approved by the Assembly, this bill would have made any hospital, regardless of ownership type or system affiliation, eligible for state assistance under the Distressed Hospital Loan Program. Subsequent to the Assembly's approval, this bill was amended in the Senate to delete the Assembly-approved provisions and to add the current provisions. The provisions added in the Senate were the subject of an informational hearing held in the Assembly Elections Committee on August 5, 2026.

Under existing law, when a county or city initiative qualifies for the ballot, the applicable governing body (either the board of supervisors or the city council) has three options: 1) adopt the initiative outright, 2) submit it to the voters, or 3) direct one or more local agencies to prepare a report on the initiative. Ordering a report can extend the amount of time the governing body has before it must decide whether to adopt the initiative or submit it to the voters.

The option to order a report on a local initiative measure was established by AB 2202 (Chacon), Chapter 767, Statutes of 1987. According to the Assembly Floor Analysis of that bill, the purpose of this provision was to provide information about the effects of a proposed initiative "while the city or county still has the option to enact the initiative by local legislation."

In some cases, however, the governing body lacks legal authority to adopt an initiative, including measures that impose or extend a tax or amend certain voter-approved initiatives. In those circumstances, the governing body's only option is to submit the measure to the voters. While a report may still provide useful information to voters, delaying ballot placement to await the report does not affect the governing body's decision because it has no discretion to adopt the measure.

This issue arose in Fresno County in 2026 after voters qualified a county initiative to impose a 0.5% transportation transactions and use tax. The Registrar of Voters certified the petition on July 8, 2026, and the Board of Supervisors received the certification on July 14. Because the measure imposes a tax, the board could not adopt it outright and instead was required to submit it to the voters. Rather than placing the measure on the November 2026 ballot, the board voted to order a report before placing it on the ballot. That report is due August 13, after the August 7 deadline for qualifying local measures for this November's election. As a result, absent a special election, the measure would not appear before voters until 2028.

This bill instead requires the initiative to appear on the November 2026 statewide general election ballot. It does not prevent Fresno County from completing or releasing the report, which remains due by August 13 and would still be available well before the election for voters to consider.

Please see the policy committee analysis for a full discussion of this bill.

According to the Author
"In 1986, Fresno County voters approved Measure C, a half-cent sales tax to fund transportation projects. Measure C has invested more than $2.1 billion into improvements to local roads, making local highways safer and more efficient, transportation services for rural communities and seniors, and more. However, after 40 years of supporting Fresno County Transportation infrastructure and services, authorization for Measure C will end unless it is renewed by a new voter approved initiative.

"To continue the benefits provided by Measure C, over 32,000 Fresno County residents signed petitions to qualify the Fresno County Transportation Improvement Act (FCTIA) initiative for the November 2026 ballot. Despite meeting the signature threshold, three county supervisors voted to delay the measure until March 2028 by ordering a 30-day study of the initiative instead of submitting it to voters for consideration. This procedural delay will likely cause the measure to miss the November ballot deadline by just one business day. AB 1923 will prevent this misuse of the County's authority from withholding this important initiative from the ballot."

Arguments in Support
In support of this bill, Streets for All writes, "Fresno County's current local transportation sales tax, Measure C, expires in 2027. Without voter approval of a successor measure, the county risks losing a significant source of funding for transportation investments. Although the Better Roads Safe Streets initiative qualified for the ballot through the citizen initiative process, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors instead ordered a report on the measure that could delay consideration until after the deadline to place it on the November 2026 ballot. AB 1923 ensures that a duly qualified initiative is submitted to the voters at the earliest statewide general election.

"The Better Roads Safe Streets initiative would provide dedicated funding for transportation improvements throughout Fresno County, including road maintenance, multimodal street improvements, Safe Routes to School, and public transportation. These investments advance the goals of creating safer, more connected, and more sustainable transportation networks for all Californians."

Arguments in Opposition
In opposition to this bill, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors writes, "This measure is anti-process and sets a terrible precedent to circumvent local authority for the purpose of placing a specific item, which failed a random sample initial signature review, on the November 2026 ballot. AB 1923 also eliminates the request of a study called for by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors to review a tax that will generate over $7 billion of taxpayer dollars over the next 30 years.

"The current process, followed by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, ensures fair and open elections. Local decisions are best left to local elected officials, who answer to the constituents they represent. AB 1923 circumvents local authority, handing that power to the State of California."

FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

VOTES:

ASM HEALTH: Vote Not Relevant
YES:

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: Vote Not Relevant
YES:

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: Vote Not Relevant
YES:
ABS, ABST OR NV:

UPDATED

VERSION: August 3, 2026

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