

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GROWTH, AND
HOUSEHOLD IMPACT

José Luis Solache, Jr., Chair

AB 2048 (Calderon) – As Introduced February 17, 2026

SUBJECT: California-Ireland Trade Commission

SUMMARY: This bill would establish the California-Ireland Trade Commission within the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, contingent on available funding, to serve as an advisory body to the Governor and Legislature. The commission would focus on strengthening trade and investment between California and Ireland, provide annual reports with findings and recommendations until February 1, 2031, and inform updates to the state's international trade and investment strategy.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the Governor to establish the California-Ireland Trade Commission within the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development as an advisory body to the Governor and the Legislature, consisting of seven appointed members, upon availability of sufficient funding resources for this purpose, as provided.
- 2) Establishes the various purposes of the commission, which would include advancing bilateral trade, initiating joint action on policy issues, promoting business and academic exchanges, and encouraging mutual investment in infrastructure between California and Ireland.
- 3) Requires the commission to report its findings, results, and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature within one year of its initial organizational meeting and by February 1 of each succeeding year until February 1, 2031, as specified.
- 4) Requires the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to consider the commission's recommendations when updating its strategy for international trade and investment. The bill would include related legislative findings.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Governor as the primary state officer representing California's interest in international affairs, to the extent that representation is not in conflict with federal law or the California Constitution.
- 2) Establishes the Lieutenant Governor as the Chair of the Commission for Economic Development to improve trade opportunities for California and develop international partnerships for foreign companies to do business in the state and for California.
- 3) Requires the Office of Planning and Research to maintain and update a list of all state agreements made with foreign governments.

- 4) Requires the Director of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to provide the Legislature with an updated strategy for international trade and investment, that includes, at a minimum, specified components, once every 5 years.

FISCAL EFFECT: Last year, the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) provided fiscal estimates to the Senate Appropriations Committee indicating that establishing the Commission would require a one-time General Fund cost of approximately \$100,000 to \$200,000. In addition, ongoing annual costs were estimated at around \$424,000 to support Commission operations, including staffing, travel expenses for at least one annual trade mission to Ireland, and participation in external stakeholder meetings and events within California.

COMMENTS: The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) serve as California's primary entity for advancing international trade and investment through its International Affairs and Business Development Unit. This unit supports foreign direct investment, export promotion, and international agreements, while the International Affairs and Trade (IAT) team advises the Governor and implements strategies to expand global partnerships, support small businesses in accessing international markets, and attract job-creating investment. GO-Biz has led multiple trade missions and international engagements in key markets, including Japan, Mexico, China, and Germany, and participates in major global forums to promote California's economic interests.

California is a major global trading economy, with \$675 billion in merchandise trade in 2024, approximately 16% of state GDP. Manufactured goods account for 87% of exports, led by high-tech and aerospace sectors, while the state also leads the nation in agricultural exports. Although California imports more than it exports, many imports are intermediate goods used in production. California also has the largest Irish American population in the nation, with approximately 2.3 million residents (5.8% of the state population), and deep regional ties, particularly in the Bay Area, where roughly 10% of residents identify as Irish American.

The trade relationship between California and Ireland reflects a longstanding cultural and economic partnership. Ireland serves as a key European hub for industries such as biotechnology, technology, med-tech, and financial services. In 2025, U.S.-Ireland two-way trade totaled approximately \$152.87 billion, including \$19.34 billion in U.S. exports and \$133.54 billion in imports. California exported \$2.47 billion in goods to Ireland, led by computer and electronic products, chemicals, and machinery, while importing \$2.04 billion in goods, including manufactured products, electronics, and chemicals. This relationship is reinforced by significant cross-investment: over 970 U.S. companies operate in Ireland, employing 210,000 people, while approximately 781 Irish companies operate in the United States, employing about 200,000 Americans. In California, Ireland ranks as the eighth largest source of foreign direct investment, with 580 Irish-owned firms supporting over 27,000 jobs and generating \$3.39 billion in wages, primarily in manufacturing, professional services, wholesale trade, finance, and information sectors. Prior related measures, including AB 2163(Gallagher) (2024) and AB 254 (Gallagher) (2025), were held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Author's Statement: According to the author, "As the 7th largest foreign investor in California's economy, Ireland has long been a strong economic partner for California. Assembly Bill 2048 seeks to further this rewarding relationship by establishing a California-Ireland Trade

Commission. This bill will create a formal entity that will promote bilateral economic investment and serve as a resource to help identify new growth opportunities”.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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