

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 1423 (Stern)
As Amended August 13, 2026
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) to create a consolidated online platform to make publicly available a core set of statewide standardized spatial planning datasets for consideration by state, regional, and local governments in land use and infrastructure plans.

Major Provisions

- 1) Finds and declares the following:
 - a) Climate change is intensifying wildfire, flood, drought, and sea level rise risks across California. Sound land use planning that accounts for these risks is essential to protect the lives, property, and fiscal health of Californians.
 - b) California has invested substantially in publicly available spatial data and planning tools to support land use decision making. LCI, in coordination with state agencies, maintains datasets and mapping tools that provide critical information on hazards, environmental resources, infrastructure, and land use conditions.
 - c) Standardizing statewide spatial planning data will make planning decisions and their outcomes more consistent with the state's planning priorities, as specified, promote transparency and consistency across plans and documents, reduce costs, promote efficiencies, and support more resilient and equitable communities.
 - d) Standardized spatial planning datasets are intended as tools to inform and guide future planning decisions and to support voluntary data-informed planning across state, regional, and local agencies.
- 2) Defines the following terms:
 - a) "Consolidated online platform" means a publicly accessible online portal maintained or designated by the office that provides access to standardized spatial planning datasets as a decision support tool.
 - b) "Standardized spatial planning dataset" means geospatial data layers that have been compiled, standardized, and published by the office pursuant to this bill.
- 3) Requires, on or before July 1, 2028, LCI to compile, standardize, maintain, and make publicly available through a consolidated online platform a core set of statewide standardized spatial planning datasets.
- 4) Requires the standardized spatial planning dataset to include the following categories of information:
 - a) Hazard data, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

- i) State and local responsibility area high and very high fire hazard severity zones as determined by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
 - ii) One-hundred-year and 500-year flood plains as designated by relevant state and federal agencies.
 - iii) Coastal and inland areas subject to sea level rise inundation as identified by the Ocean Protection Council.
- b) Natural resource sensitivity data, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - i) Wetlands and riparian areas as mapped by relevant state and federal agencies.
 - ii) Biological resource areas that contain, support, or are necessary to sustain important biological or ecological resources, including species biodiversity, significant habitats and wildlife corridors as determined by the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Natural Resources Agency.
 - iii) Legally protected lands and lands under a conservation easement.
- c) Agricultural value data, including, but not limited to, both of the following:
 - i) Prime and unique farmlands and farmland of statewide and local importance as classified by the Department of Conservation.
 - ii) Lands subject to Williamson Act contracts pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 51200) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5.
- 5) Requires, on or before January 1, 2029, LCI to develop and provide guidance for agencies to inform them on how to use and integrate standardized spatial planning datasets in regional planning processes and products.
- 6) Requires LCI to update the standardized spatial planning datasets as new or revised data becomes available from the originating state or federal source agencies.
- 7) Allows state, regional, and local governments to consider use of the standardized planning datasets published by LCI in the development and production of land use and infrastructure plans, including, but not limited to:
 - a) General plans, as specified.
 - b) Regional transportation plans and sustainable communities strategies, as specified.
 - c) Regional housing need allocation processes, as specified.
 - d) Climate action plans.
- 8) Provides that nothing in the bill shall restrict agencies from using more precise or current data that are available at the regional or local level, including data developed through natural community conservation plans or other regional conservation initiatives, to inform and refine planning processes or decisions.

- 9) Provides that nothing in the bill creates new regulatory requirements, regulates land use or zoning, establishes land use designations, or preempts the local land use authority of cities and counties.
- 10) Requires LCI to provide technical assistance for use of data, pursuant to this bill, upon request.

COMMENTS

- 1) *Planning and Zoning Law.* State law provides additional powers and duties for cities and counties regarding land use. The Planning and Zoning Law require every county and city to adopt a general plan that sets out planned uses for all of the area covered by the plan. A general plan must include specified mandatory "elements," including a housing element that establishes the locations and densities of housing, and a land use element that describes the general categories of uses (such as multifamily residential, single family residential, retail commercial, and open space) that are allowed in specific portions of a jurisdiction. Cities and counties' major land use decisions—including zoning ordinances and other aspects of development permitting—must be consistent with their general plans. General plans also include policies, standards, and mitigation measures that developments must comply with, to protect against flood hazards, fire hazards, and climate change, and to further environmental justice, among other state goals. Local governments use their police power to enact zoning ordinances that establish the types of land uses that are allowed or authorized in an area. Zoning ordinances also contain provisions to physically shape development and impose other requirements, such as setting maximum heights and densities for housing units, minimum numbers of required parking spaces, setbacks, and lot coverage ratios. These ordinances can also include conditions on development to address aesthetics, community impacts, or other particular site-specific considerations.
- 2) *The Governor's Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation.* The California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) serves as the state's comprehensive planning agency. LCI plays a critical role in shaping long-range land use policies, administering state planning grants, developing and maintaining the General Plan Guidelines (GPG), collecting General Plan Annual Progress Reports (APRs) from local jurisdictions, and providing technical assistance to cities and counties preparing general plans.

The GPG serve as an essential "how to" resource for local governments drafting or updating their general plans. It details statutory requirements for both mandatory and optional elements, offers LCI-recommended policy language, and provides links to examples from existing general plans. Additionally, the GPG provides guidance for community engagement and outreach. The most recent edition, released in 2017, focused on four key policy themes: climate change, economics, healthy communities, and equitable opportunities. The 2017 GPG also introduced a General Plan Mapping Tool, allowing jurisdictions to integrate local, regional, and statewide data into their planning efforts at no cost. In 2020, LCI released further guidance on incorporating the Environmental Justice element into general plans [SB 1000 (Leyva), Chapter 587, Statutes of 2016].

Each year, by April 1, all jurisdictions must submit separate General Plan and Housing Element APRs to LCI and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The General Plan APR provides an overview of the jurisdiction's progress in implementing

its general plan over the previous year. LCI uses these reports to update the Directory of California Planning.

- 3) *General Plan Database Mapping Tool*. LCI, in partnership with the University of California, Davis, began collecting land use element data beginning late 2021 and finished compiling this data in late 2022.¹ LCI combined data from 532 individual jurisdictions (of California's 539 jurisdictions) to create one statewide dataset. An effort was made to contact each jurisdiction in the state and request general plan data in whatever form available. In the event that general plan maps were not available in a GIS format, those maps were converted from PDF or image maps using geo-referencing techniques and then transposing map information to parcel geometries sourced from county assessor data.

According to the Author

"Senate Bill 1423 equips California's local and regional planning agencies with standardized spatial datasets. By providing comprehensive, statewide mapping tools, this legislation ensures that planners can make informed, equitable decisions regarding climate resilience, land use, and ecosystem protection. For too long, our planning agencies have relied on outdated or fragmented geographic information. SB 1423 changes this by establishing a centralized, state-supported repository of spatial data. This ensures that every community, regardless of resources, has access to the high-quality environmental, infrastructural, and demographic mapping needed to drive smart, sustainable development."

Arguments in Support

The Planning and Conservation League, the sponsor of the bill, writes in support, "California has made significant investments in high-quality data on wildfire hazard, flood risk, sea level rise, natural resources, and agricultural lands. However, these datasets are often fragmented across agencies, difficult to access, and not easily used together in planning processes. As a result, public agencies frequently rely on inconsistent or incomplete information when making decisions about growth, infrastructure, and long-term investment.

"SB 1423 addresses this gap by directing the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation to compile, standardize, and maintain a core set of statewide datasets and make them publicly available through a consolidated, accessible platform. This approach will improve coordination across planning efforts and ensure that agencies have access to a shared, reliable foundation of information.

"Importantly, SB 1423 is not regulatory. It does not impose new mandates, alter land use authority, or require specific planning outcomes. Instead, it provides a voluntary, flexible decision-support tool, allowing state, regional, and local governments to consider and use these datasets—while preserving the ability to rely on more precise or locally developed data.

"By making existing data more accessible and interoperable, SB 1423 will:

- 1) Promote greater consistency and transparency across plans and planning processes

¹ Aniket Banginwar, Dexter Antonio, Mirthala Lopez, Lindsay Poirier, Sujoy Ghosh, Makena Dettmann, & Catherine Brinkley. (2023, January 6). General Plan Database Mapping Tool (v3.0). Zenodo.

- 2) Reduce duplicative data development and associated costs
- 3) Support more efficient and informed decision-making
- 4) Help align investments with California's climate resilience, conservation, and infrastructure goals

"At a time when California faces increasing risks from wildfire, flooding, and other climate impacts, it is essential that planning decisions are based on the best available information. SB 1423 provides the tools to do so—without adding regulatory burden."

Arguments in Opposition

The California Apartment Association and the California Building Industry Association writes in opposition,

- 1) "1) Duplication of Funded Data Infrastructure: The spatial planning datasets SB 1423 seeks to elevate are already published and maintained by their source agencies on California's centralized open data portal (gis.data.ca.gov). Directing the [LCI] to re-host and re-curate this existing data essentially recreates infrastructure the state already pays to operate.
- 2) Misplaced Technical Assistance and Staffing Burdens: The bill mandates LCI to provide technical assistance for datasets it neither created nor maintains. This builds a new, redundant support function at LCI on top of the subject-matter expertise that already resides at the originating agencies (such as CAL FIRE, DWR, and CDFW). This mandate is a predictable driver of ongoing, duplicative staffing costs.
- 3) Redundant Standardization: ... Environmental scientists, geographers, and IT professionals have already established rigorous standards for QA/QC, metadata, and analytical uses, as detailed in the California Open Data Publishing Handbook. Recreating this framework is unnecessary and fiscally inefficient.
- 4) Heightened Litigation Risk and Implementation Friction: The agencies that produce the datasets referenced in SB 1423 explicitly state in their metadata that the data is not suitable for parcel-level, site-specific regulatory planning. Enshrining these expressly disclaimed, broadstroke datasets into statute invites disputes over how they are applied. This creates foreseeable litigation risk and friction for local agencies who erroneously rely on them for the wrong purpose.
- 5) Conflating Hazard with Risk: Fundamentally, SB 1423 fails to recognize that safe development routinely occurs in mapped hazard areas through modern building codes and mitigation. The bill's mandated datasets credit none of these mitigations. For instance, the bill pushes the use of 500-year floodplains, which sweep in all of Downtown Sacramento and many neighboring areas. Excluding these already-developed, transit-rich areas from housing opportunities directly contradicts California's own planning priorities for urban infill."

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee,

"LCI estimates General Fund (GF) costs of \$282,000 annually for the first two years, including \$187,000 annually for two years for one limited-term research data specialist position to manage and organize existing and any needed datasets for implementation, and approximately \$75,000 annually for two years for contracts for data federation and data management.

"Additionally, LCI estimates ongoing GF costs of approximately \$222,000 annually, including \$20,000 annually starting in year one for software licensing, and \$202,000 annually starting in year two for one permanent research data specialist position to provide technical assistance and support to users."

VOTES**SENATE FLOOR: 29-9-2**

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Hurtado, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Padilla, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NO: Alvarado-Gil, Choi, Grove, Jones, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Seyarto, Strickland, Valladares

ABS, ABST OR NV: Dahle, Pérez

ASM LOCAL GOVERNMENT: 8-1-1

YES: Carrillo, Pacheco, Ramos, Ransom, Blanca Rubio, Stefani, Ward, Wilson

NO: Johnson

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ta

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-3-1

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache

NO: Hoover, Dixon, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Ta

UPDATED

VERSION: August 13, 2026

CONSULTANT: Linda Rios / L. GOV. / (916) 319-3958

FN: 0003469