

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 227 (Grayson and Cabaldon)
As Amended June 30, 2025
2/3 vote. Urgency

SUMMARY

This bill has an urgency clause updating the administration of the Green Empowerment Zone (GEZ) for Contra Costa County's Northern Waterfront area.

Major Provisions

- 1) Extends Duration: Authorization of the Green Empowerment Zone is extended from January 1, 2028 to January 1, 2040.
- 2) Urgency Statute: Takes effect immediately upon enactment.
- 3) Adds four cities: El Cerrito, Pinole, Richmond, and San Pablo to the existing nine city Northern Waterfront area (plus Contra Costa County). Inclusion requires each jurisdiction to pass its own resolution.
- 4) Board Expansion: Increases stakeholder representation from seven to eight categories, specifically adding seats for seven directors who either live or work in the Zone and represent environmental or environmental-justice organizations.
- 5) GEZ must annually publish key performance metrics on its website beginning July 1, 2026

COMMENTS

The Green Empowerment Zone (GEZ) was specifically created for the Northern Waterfront of Contra Costa County and is designed to accelerate clean-energy investment and workforce development in historically industrial, underserved, and environmentally burdened communities.

The Northern Waterfront, once a thriving industrial corridor from Hercules to Brentwood, has seen a sharp decline in manufacturing, dropping from 40% of Contra Costa County's workforce in 1962 to under 6% today. To address this, the Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative (NWEDI) was launched, culminating in a Regional Strategic Action Plan in 2019 that aims to create 18,000 new jobs in advanced sectors such as clean-tech, biotech, and advanced manufacturing.

Building on this foundation, the Northern Waterfront Priority Production Areas (PPA) project is a two-year initiative focused on planning and infrastructure development. Supported by a \$500,000 MTC grant, it includes mapping industrial land, analyzing infrastructure capacity (utilities, broadband, water), and updating economic strategies to align with job growth targets. The GEZ's PPA pilot roadmap emphasizes clean-tech manufacturing, equity, and workforce training, with a collaborative governance model involving local governments, labor, education, and environmental groups.

According to the Author

According to the author, "The San Francisco Bay Area is the second-largest oil refining center on the West Coast and home to four refineries, three of which are located in Contra Costa

County. In 2020, the Marathon Martinez Refinery was indefinitely idled, resulting in the immediate loss of 700 jobs. This abrupt closure deeply affected not only the workers and their families but also served as a warning signal to the broader community about the volatility of this industry and the potential risk to thousands more refinery jobs amid our state's shift toward clean energy. In response, I authored AB 844 in 2021, which established the Green Empowerment Zone for the Northern Waterfront area of Contra Costa County (GEZ). The GEZ builds upon federal, state, and regional partnerships to attract tax incentives, grants, loan programs, and private-sector investments, all focused on fostering our region's clean and green energy economy.

Although the GEZ Board of Directors already includes a diverse array of stakeholders, there is an absence of representation from justice organizations. This leaves a critical perspective unaddressed. Additionally, while the Board has the authority to incorporate new cities, explicitly codifying the inclusion of new cities in statute will ensure sustained and proactive regional participation. SB 227 addresses these gaps by formally expanding the Green Empowerment Zone to include El Cerrito, Pinole, Richmond, and San Pablo, and by adding environmental justice representatives to the Board. In addition, this bill extends the Board's authorization date to 2040, providing long-term stability and a framework for sustained regional collaboration. By incorporating these additional voices and extending authorization, SB 227 strengthens the Board's ability to leverage regional assets, facilitates a just transition to a lower-carbon economy, and creates pathways for equitable economic growth in Contra Costa County".

Arguments in Support

None on file.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

None.

VOTES

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Reyes

ASM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GROWTH, AND HOUSEHOLD IMPACT: 7-0-1

YES: Solache, Castillo, Patel, Petrie-Norris, Soria, Stefani, Wallis

ABS, ABST OR NV: Bonta

UPDATED

VERSION: June 30, 2025

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