

Date of Hearing: June 10, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON UTILITIES AND ENERGY

Cottie Petrie-Norris, Chair

SB 929 (Jones) – As Introduced January 29, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 37-0

SUBJECT: State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission: chair: report to the Legislature

SUMMARY: Requires the chair of the California Energy Commission (CEC) to appear annually before appropriate policy committees of the Legislature to report on plans and activities of the CEC. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the chair to report on the topics related to CEC's responsibilities, including but not limited to:
 - a. Research, development, and demonstration.
 - b. Building and appliance efficiency standards.
 - c. Electricity and natural gas demand forecasts.
 - d. Siting of thermal power plants.
 - e. Implementation of the California Renewables Portfolio Standard Program and energy labeling.
 - f. Transportation fuels and alternative fuel vehicles.
- 2) Requires the chair to report on the activities undertaken by the CEC in the previous year and the process instituted to solicit input from Californians in diverse regions of the state.
- 3) Requires the chair to report on the successes and challenges encountered in carrying out the responsibilities, activities, and processes of the CEC.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the CEC, consisting of five members appointed by the governor, and specifies the duties of the commission. Every two years, the governor must designate a chair and vice chair from the CEC's membership. The CEC must appoint a public adviser every three years to carry out certain public engagement duties. (Public Resources Code § 25200 et. seq.)
- 2) Requires the CEC to assess trends in energy consumption and analyze the social, economic, and environmental consequences of these trends. The CEC must establish energy conservation measures, including building and appliance energy efficiency standards, and recommend additional conservation measures to the governor and the Legislature. (Public Resources Code § 25216)
- 3) Requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to prepare an annual report on its activities and performance, and requires the president of the CPUC to annually appear before the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature to present the report. (Public Utilities Code §§ 910 and 321.6)

- 4) Requires the director of the Public Advocate's Office (PAO) to be appointed by the governor and appear annually before the appropriate policy committee of the Assembly and the Senate to report on the activities of the office. (Public Utilities Code § 309.5)
- 5) Requires the chair of the board of governors and the chief executive officer of the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) to appear annually before the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature to present an annual report detailing CAISO's activities. (Public Utilities Code § 345.1)
- 6) Requires the chair of the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to appear annually before the Joint Committee on Climate Change to present an annual report on topics related to the scoping plan. (Government Code § 9147.10)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. Upon passage in this committee, this bill will be referred to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations for its review. This bill passed out of the Senate Committee on Appropriations under Senate Rule 28.8, indicating that any state costs of implementing the bill are not significant.

BACKGROUND:

What is the CEC? The CEC was established in 1974 by the Warren-Alquist Act in response to the 1970s oil embargo and the state's anticipated energy demand. As the state's primary energy policy and planning agency, the CEC is committed to reducing costs and environmental impacts of energy use, while ensuring a safe, resilient, and reliable supply of energy. Over the last 50 years, the CEC's role has expanded into many aspects of the state's energy policies and goals. The CEC also administers multiple programs that impact the duties of other agencies, including the CPUC, CARB, and CAISO. The CEC's role can broadly be categorized by the following core responsibilities:

1. Forecasting electricity and natural gas demand to ensure adequate supplies are developed [via the Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR)].
2. Promoting energy efficiency and conservation by setting the state's appliance and building efficiency standards [California Appliance Standards – Title 20 and California Green Building Standards – Title 24].
3. Investing in energy innovation that advances energy science and technology through research, development, and demonstration projects [via the Electric Program Investment Charge Program (EPIC) and natural gas research].
4. Developing renewable energy resources.
5. Advancing alternative and renewable transportation fuels, vehicles, and technologies.
6. Certifying thermal power plants greater than 50 megawatts and providing a voluntary permitting process for clean energy resources.
7. Planning for and directing state response to energy emergencies.

In addition to these core responsibilities, the CEC has some regulatory authority over the state's publicly owned utilities (POUs). For example, the CEC verifies eligible renewable energy resources procured by POUs for compliance with the Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS). The CEC also verifies the Power Content Label – an annual disclosure of an entity's power mix and emissions – for all statewide retail suppliers, POUs included.¹

The CEC is made up of five commissioners appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Commissioners serve staggered five-year terms. The Governor also designates a chair and vice chair as primary agency leads. The CEC currently has 880 employees² and an annual expenditure in 2024-2025 of approximately \$104.6 million.³

Reports to the Legislature – The CEC annually submits reports to the Legislature on a number of its activities. Every two years, the CEC submits the comprehensive IEPR, with updates to the report submitted every other year. The CEC also submits reports to the Legislature on energy research, development, and demonstration activities, electric reliability, transportation fuels, and transportation investments.

COMMENTS:

- 1) *Author's statement.* According to the author, “The authority and responsibility of the California Energy Commission have expanded significantly, yet its oversight by the Legislature has not appropriately kept up with that growth. The Commission has adopted and is considering policies with substantial cost implications for Californians along with its implementation of impactful policies enacted by the Legislature. These actions have direct impacts on housing affordability, energy costs, and the overall cost of living in California. Unlike the California Public Utilities Commission, the Chair of the Energy Commission is not required to appear annually before relevant legislative policy committees to provide a formal oversight report. Given its growth in size and purview, it is now unique among similar state agencies in its lack of an ‘appear and report’ requirement. SB 929 would require the Chair to provide an annual report to the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature on the commission's activities to include reporting on the commission's efforts and plans to carry out its varied duties and responsibilities, including research and development, building and appliance standards, electricity and natural gas demand forecasts, renewable energy development, low and zero-emission vehicle fueling and charging infrastructure planning, development and deployment, and relevant financial data to aide the legislature in crafting sound public policy and ensuring proper implementation thereof.”
- 2) *Purpose of the bill.* This bill requires the CEC's chair to annually report to the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature on a list of specified topics. A statutory requirement is not needed to compel the CEC's chair to appear before a legislative committee. Indeed, both the chair and vice chair of the CEC have already appeared before this committee during this session to report on the IEPR and fuel uncertainty.

¹ <https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/power-source-disclosure-program/power-content-label/annual-power-5>

² More accurately noted as “filled positions” which is not equivalent to a headcount, but is approximate.

³ Pg. 31 of Department of Finance table for Natural Resources; https://dof.ca.gov/media/docs/budget/historical-budget-information/historical-budget-publications/2026-27/2026-27-salaries-and-wages/Natural_Resource.pdf

Previous legislative attempts to create a similar statutory requirement have often failed for such reason.

In 2010, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed a bill (SB 1467, Padilla) that would have required the chair of the CEC to annually appear before the relevant policy committees of the Legislature, stating that “If the legislature would like to invite the chair[person] to appear before their committees, they simply need to call.” However, and as noted above, the CEC’s role in the state’s energy policy landscape has grown considerably since 2010, and having a mandated requirement will yield predictable appearances from the CEC chair. Moreover, it provides parity with similar energy-focused entities such as the CPUC, CARB, CAISO, and PAO, whose leads (chair, CEO, director) also have a statutory obligation to appear annually before the Legislature.

- 3) *Practical appearance.* As currently written, this bill requires the CEC chair to appear before the Legislature to discuss specified topics related to the CEC’s core responsibilities. This type of prescriptive appearance would be an anomaly and potentially unproductive for the Legislature. Similar statutory requirements of other energy principals, such as the CPUC or CARB, are associated with reports that detail activities of the entity but do not require the lead individual to detail every aspect of the entity's work in the appearance before the Legislature. Additionally, most legislative hearings are focused on a central topic and are often an opportunity to hear from a number of individuals. As currently written, this bill would require the opposite. To meet the bill’s requirements, the CEC chair would have to make a standalone appearance before the legislature to cover each topic outlined in the bill. Therefore, to better align with the realities of these appearances, *the committee recommends that the language clarify that the listed topics in the bill are activities the CEC chair may speak to during an annual appearance before the Legislature, but are not a mandatory or exhaustive list for a standalone appearance.*

- 4) *Prior Legislation.*

SB 491 (Laird, 2025) was substantially similar to this bill. Status: Held in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

SB 610 (Laird, 2024) was substantially similar to this bill. The bill was subsequently amended into a different subject matter. Status: Held in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

SB 733 (Hueso, 2022) was substantially similar to this bill. The bill was subsequently amended into a different subject matter. Status: Held in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

SB 497 (Bradford, 2019) was substantially similar to this bill. Status: Held in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

SB 376 (Bradford, 2017) was substantially similar to this bill. Status: Held in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

SB 1467 (Padilla, 2010) made various technical changes to Public Utilities Code and required the chair of the CEC to annually appear before the relevant policy committees of the Legislature. Status: Vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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