



Special Legislative Update ■ August 17, 2020

Governor Newsom Proclaims Emergency to Free Up Additional Energy During Historic Heatwave

This morning, Governor Gavin Newsom's office announced his signature on [proclamation](#) declaring a state of emergency due to the state's recent heatwave. The proclamation temporarily allows some energy users and utilities to use backup energy sources to relieve pressure on the grid during peak times during the energy emergency. Further, the Governor shared that he convened a meeting with the California Independent System Operator (CAISO), the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), the California Energy Commission (CEC), the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), and senior administration officials, including the Governor's Chief of Staff, Ann O'Leary, and Cabinet Secretary Ana Matosantos, to discuss the impending heat wave and efforts to mitigate the need for rolling blackouts. After that meeting, the Governor sent a [letter](#) to leaders at CAISO, CPUC, and CEC, expressing his concerns about recent rolling blackouts "without prior warning or enough time for preparation" and seeking an investigation into the service disruptions that occurred and energy agencies' failure to predict and mitigate them.

This morning, the head of CAISO said it's "near certain" that rolling blackouts will occur Monday and Tuesday, and criticized state regulators for not requiring utilities to have more backup electricity supply. Recall that CAISO manages 80 percent of California's electricity grid, including the infrastructure of the state's three investor-owned utilities. California does not regulate CAISO, but the grid operator does work with state agencies to execute energy policy and ensure reliable supply.

See associated Executive Order [N-74-20](#) issued yesterday. Expect to hear more on this issue in the coming days.

Governor Announces County Monitoring List "Unfrozen"

At the Governor's noon press availability today, he talked extensively about the heat wave expected to persist for most of the next 10 days and the associated energy capacity issues discussed in the item immediately above. Additionally, he addressed the state's now-completed efforts to review and clear nearly 300,000 unprocessed COVID-19 case records, which included many duplicate records. A few key takeaways from today's presentation:

- The number of positive cases identified from the backlog of reports totaled 14,861.

- Test positivity rates, COVID-19 related hospitalizations, and ICU usage all are showing declines. Notably, virus-related hospitalizations are down 21 percent over the last 14 days and ICU usage is down 16 percent over that same time period.
- Given that the state has now cleared the reporting backlog and addressed the underlying glitches, the county monitoring list is being reactivated after having been frozen in early August. There are 42 counties now on the watch list; five jurisdictions have been added (Amador, Calaveras, Inyo, Mendocino, and Sierra), and one (Santa Cruz) has been removed from the list. It was also reported that San Diego County is expected to come off the monitoring list tomorrow.

Senate Budget Committee Hears Presentations on DJJ Realignment

As reported previously, the full Senate budget committee held an informational hearing to explore, among other topics, the proposed closure of the state's Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and the prospective transfer of responsibility for the care, custody, and treatment of the youth population to county governments. Committee members seemed exceptionally focused on the action taken in last year's budget that moved DJJ out from under the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to a new, standalone agency within the Health and Human Services (HHS) agency. In keeping with the Newsom Administration's focus on impacts of childhood trauma and the imperative to focus on healing, the rationale for last year's decision to move DJJ to the HHS agency stemmed from a belief that the state's juvenile justice function and associated rehabilitative and therapeutic focus were better suited to an HHS organizational construct versus a correctional construct. The transition process had been underway for many months, but has since been halted in light of the proposal to close DJJ and transfer this responsibility to counties. The committee members in discussing options for DJJ closure emphasized the need for this sustained focus on healing and rehabilitation.

The agenda packet ([pages 6-9](#)) for the full committee's hearing contains a side-by-side comparison of the Governor's proposal and a legislative alternative that has emerged in the last few weeks. Given that the Saturday hearing was informational, no specific action was taken. Key differences that need to be resolved in the weeks ahead include oversight and accountability as well as the approach to funding activities associated with the realignment. More to come in the days ahead...

Webinar on Housing Element Public Engagement During a Pandemic

The California Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) is hosting a webinar on Tuesday, September 1st from 1:30 to 3:00 pm that will focus on public participation for housing element development during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Please [register here](#) for the interactive event that is slated to cover topics such as virtual meeting challenges, digital tools, virtual meeting design tips, and choosing the "right" approach all with real life examples. HCD has other [housing element related resources on their website](#) that urban counties might find helpful.

California Healthcare Foundation Launches New Series on Homelessness and COVID-19

Check out the new [series](#) from the California Health Care Foundation, focused on homelessness and COVID-19. The series promises to offer new resources, including best practices for service delivery, partnerships, and other ways to address the health care needs of homeless individuals. The series starts with a look at Project Roomkey and alcohol management program pilots in Alameda County and the City and County of San Francisco.