



# 2024 Annual Report

COUNTY ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA  
PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES



[www.ceaccounties.org](http://www.ceaccounties.org)



# CEAC's Purpose

SINCE 1914



The County Engineers Association of California (CEAC), formed in 1914, is comprised of county engineers, public works directors, county road commissioners, and professional personnel throughout California's 58 counties. Its purpose is "To advance county engineering and management by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and information aimed at improving service to the public."

Furthermore, the objective of CEAC, is "To accomplish the advancement of engineering methods and ethical practice through networking efforts of all 58 counties in the state." Through discussion, interchange, and dissemination of engineering and administrative data/ideas, the organization shall strive to affect "maximum efficiency and modernization in engineering and administrative units of local government."

Throughout CEAC's history, it has maintained a close relationship with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) to lend support in policy development and advocacy efforts, thus benefiting counties and their ability to serve their residents.

FRONT COVER PHOTOS: EAST GARDEN GROVE-WINTERSBURG CHANNEL BRIDGE, ORANGE COUNTY (TOP);  
PACKER LAKE BRIDGE, SIERRA COUNTY (BOTTOM).  
PAGE 1 PHOTOS: REFUSE SITE, BUTTE COUNTY (TOP); MANHOLE STRUCTURE, VENTURA COUNTY (BOTTOM).  
PAGE 2 PHOTO: BURROUGH VALLEY ROAD BRIDGE, FRESNO COUNTY.

# 2024 CEAC Leadership



## Board of Directors

### OFFICERS

President  
**Panos Kokkas**  
Trinity County

Vice President  
**David Leamon**  
Stanislaus County

Secretary  
**Johannes Hoevertsz**  
Sonoma County

Treasurer  
**George Johnson**  
Riverside County (Retired)

Treasurer Emeritus  
**Mehdi Sadjadi**  
Marin County (Retired)

Parliamentarian  
**Mike Penrose**  
Sacramento County (Retired)

Immediate Past President  
**Brian Balbas**  
Contra Costa County (Retired)

NACE Representative  
**Howard Dashiell**  
Mendocino County

Historian  
**David A. Gravenkamp**  
Siskiyou County (Retired)

Newsletter Editor  
**Patrick V. DeChellis**  
Los Angeles County (Retired)

### REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Northern California  
**Bob Bronkall**  
Humboldt County

Bay Area  
**Rosemarie Gaglione**  
Marin County

Sacramento Mother Lode  
**Matt Randall**  
Placer County

San Joaquin Valley  
**Nathan Bray**  
Merced County

Central Coast  
**Walter Rubalcava**  
Santa Barbara County

Southern California  
**Tom Koutroulis**  
Orange County

## Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

### POLICY COMMITTEES

#### FLOOD CONTROL & WATER RESOURCES

Chair: **Walter Rubalcava**, Santa Barbara County  
Vice Chair: **Jason Uhley**, Riverside County

#### INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT

Chair: **Matt Randall**, Placer County  
Vice Chair: **Warren Lai**, Contra Costa County  
Vice Chair: **Blossom Scott-Heim**, Tuolumne County

#### RESOURCE RECOVERY & WASTE MANAGEMENT

Chair: **Tom Koutroulis**, Orange County  
Vice Chair: **Emiko Thompson**, Los Angeles County  
Vice Chair: **Jared Carter**, Madera County

#### SURVEYOR

Chair: **Ian Wilson**, Alameda County  
Vice Chair: **Bob Bronkall**, Humboldt County  
Vice Chair: **Steve Hennessee**, Los Angeles County

#### TRANSPORTATION

Chair: **Najee Zarif**, San Joaquin County  
Vice Chair: **Steve Kowalewski**, Contra Costa County  
Vice Chair: **Steve Burger**, Los Angeles County  
Vice Chair: **Chris Sneddon**, Santa Barbara County

### OTHER COMMITTEES

#### ADMINISTRATIVE

Chair: **Joshua Pack**, Butte County  
Vice Chair: **Noel Castillo**, San Bernardino County  
Vice Chair: **San Chrun**, Stanislaus County  
Vice Chair: **Joan Araujo**, Ventura County

#### FELLOWSHIP

Chair: **Pattie McNamee**, Contra Costa (Retired)  
Vice Chair: **Jim Porter**, San Mateo (retired)  
Member: **Jason Jurens**, Consor  
Member: **Martin McIlroy**, MGE Engineering

#### OVERSIGHT & SPECIAL TASKS

Chair: **Panos Kokkas**, Trinity County  
Vice Chair: **Johannes Hoevertsz**, Sonoma County  
Vice Chair: **David Leamon**, Stanislaus County  
Vice Chair: **Brian M. Balbas**, Contra Costa County (Retired)

#### SCHOLARSHIP

Chair: **Alicia Winokur**, Mendocino County  
Vice Chair: **Kristi Rhea**, San Joaquin County  
Vice Chair: **Steve Hennessee**, Los Angeles County

# Message from the 2023-24 President



It has been such an honor to serve as County Engineers Association of California (CEAC) President for the past year, supporting California Counties and CEAC members.

— Panos Kokkas  
Director, Department  
of Transportation  
Trinity County  
2023-2024 President



In 2009, Steve Mellon of Quincy Engineers introduced me to CEAC and I am forever grateful. As many of us know, CEAC has served as a vehicle for sharing information and advocacy in addition to creating lifelong friendships.

In the past year it became more obvious how unique each of our counties is, and yet how similar our jobs and issues are within our counties, despite the topographical settings. In serving as president, I realized the strength of the CEAC organization is in the diversity of our members and our unity of purpose. It was clear that the CEAC membership has a level of commitment like no other, and it is an organization that we should all be proud of. It certainly has been an absolute pleasure to engage with the CEAC membership and CSAC staff, and I thank you all for your continued support over this past year.

In April, CEAC had the privilege to host the National Association of County Engineers (NACE) annual conference in Palm Springs with a record number attending from both California and around the country. I'd like to express my congratulations and heartfelt appreciation to the organizing committee chaired by our own NACE Vice President Matt Machado. The last time California hosted the annual NACE conference was in 2000.

The 39th Annual Northern California Bedroll Conference was held July 24-26, 2024 at Camp Tehama, near Mineral, within the Lassen National Forest. The Bedroll Conference was last held August 2, 2019. The 2020 conference was cancelled due to Covid, then in July 2021, the Dixie Fire burned the PG&E campground along with about 963,000 acres of the surrounding area. Thank you to Mr. Dashiell, Mr. Bronkall, and Ms. Pecha for all their efforts in coordinating the event.

Several new directors assumed new positions in 2024, with some new to their respective counties, while others were promoted to director. A sincere congratulations to all! The strength of the CEAC organization is in the diversity of our members and our unity of purpose; the dedication, energy, and incredible knowledge of the membership, the CLODS, and CSAC staff. Thank you to the CLODS for inviting me to be a part of the CEAC leadership team, and for allowing me the honor of assuming the role of President.



PAGE 3 PHOTOS (L TO R): TRINITY DAM BLVD. DAMAGE REPAIR, TRINITY COUNTY; FIRE EQUIPMENT, TRINITY COUNTY.  
PAGE 4 PHOTOS: LAGUNA CANYON CHANNEL REPLACEMENT, ORANGE COUNTY (TOP);  
EMERGENCY REPAIR WORK, YUBA COUNTY (BOTTOM).

Our partnership with CSAC is strong. We must continue to maintain that partnership by providing the legislative team with the necessary technical expertise to allow them to advocate on behalf of all 58 county public works agencies. Thank you to the various Policy Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs, to the Regional Directors, and the CEAC Board of Directors. A special thank you to the CEAC Oversight Committee; Brian Balbas, Dave Leamon, Johannes Hovertsz, and George Johnson. Thank you to the wonderful CSAC staff; Mark Neuburger, Catherine Freeman, Ada Waelder, Kristina Gallagher, and Amber Garcia Rossow. They are all incredibly talented and have been very supportive of our mission and vision. CEAC Executive Director, Merrin Gerety, continues to be our champion and strongest advocate. Lastly, we could not do what we do without the support of our sponsors and affiliates!

Our organization could not be as strong or as effective without these remarkable folks working with CEAC. We all know our voices are louder when we can speak as one. Thank you for an incredible 2024. Please join me in welcoming our incoming 2024-2025 President, David Leamon from Stanislaus County. Let's give him our strongest support over this upcoming year. I expect Dave to do wonderful things for the CEAC membership. ▲



## HOUSING, LAND USE, AND TRANSPORTATION (HLT) POLICY AREA

The HLT team tracked 618 pieces of legislation in 2024 and took active positions on 62 bills. CSAC has been a key stakeholder in deliberations around housing, land use and transportation legislation. There were a variety of high-level trends emerging on issues the HLT unit is responsible for, including:

**General Plans:** A variety of bills were introduced that started from the notion that the General Plan update process is the ideal means to address state goals on issues spanning from wildlife connectivity to planning for increased heatwave intensity and duration. The number of bills that seek to identify and address state concerns through the General Plan process has increased over the past few years to the point where further requirements threaten to burden already overstretched planning departments. In 2024, the HLT team partnered with a variety of local government and planning associations to make the case that past and current legislation is driving planning departments to the breaking point from a workload perspective.

**Local Land Use decisions:** The legislature has continued to take a skeptical view of the importance of local elected decisions in the land use process. These bills spanned from local involvement in housing projects to commercial properties, such as warehouse citing and approval requirements. CSAC has continued to defend the necessary and appropriate need for the appropriate involvement of local elected officials in land use decisions.

**Public Works:** A variety of bills were introduced that would have placed severe restrictions on the ability of counties to deliver public works projects in an efficient and expeditious manner. CSAC successfully engaged on a variety of these bills and was able to secure outcomes that will allow counties to continue to deliver these vital projects in a way that meets public needs.

## Housing and Land Use

CSAC's AT HOME Plan again drove the HLT advocacy efforts. CSAC took a variety of positions supporting housing efforts, advocating to simplify land use procedures, and streamlining the permit approval process to support making it easier to build affordable housing. CSAC worked to address these issues through state statutes that function as barriers to housing, as well as advocating for more local flexibility in streamlining processes to ensure that counties can quickly provide shelter for the most vulnerable populations. Finally, the HLT team advocated for county needs in a variety of bills that sought to hinder the ability for local governments to provide the public services necessary to support additional housing.

## Advanced Clean Fleets

After significant CSAC advocacy, the final state budget includes reporting language which requires Caltrans to provide information on a variety of data points related to their purchase of vehicles that comply with California Air Resources Board's Advanced Clean Fleets regulations. The information provided by Caltrans will be highly valuable for county vehicle fleet managers to analyze and consider as they continue efforts to make their fleet purchases compliant with the Advanced Clean Fleets regulations.

## Transportation

CSAC acknowledges that the state's current focus on reducing vehicle miles traveled will ultimately reduce the fuels-based funding sources that support county transportation projects, which will have long-term consequences for counties. To address this issue, CSAC is working to support efforts to diversify the funding sources that support transportation projects to reduce the volatility associated with fuels-based funding, such as road user charge or electric surcharge.

PAGE 5 PHOTO: SANTA ANA GARDENS BIKE WAY PROJECT, ORANGE COUNTY.  
PAGE 6 PHOTOS: BUENA VISTA ROAD RECONSTRUCTION, KERN COUNTY (TOP);  
FORESTHILL BRIDGE, PLACER COUNTY (BOTTOM).



The CSAC HLT team has been a part of the SB 1121 Stakeholder Working Group. The bill required the California Transportation Commission (CTC), in consultation with California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) to prepare a needs assessment of the cost to operate, maintain, and provide for the necessary future growth of the state and local transportation system for the next ten years and report it to the state legislature. The purpose of the working group is to develop a report with accurate information to make sure the revenues are relevant and correct, as well as help identify any data or gaps in funding. The working group will also help identify the impact of the transition to EVs, and how they will affect the funding streams from SB 1.

There are two reports for the first round – the interim report that was completed on January 1, 2024, that identified the funding shortfall and outlined the magnitude of the problem, and then the final report that will be due on January 1, 2025 that will identify policy solutions to address the problems. There will be a report every 5 years thereafter. CSAC has been an active participant in the stakeholder meetings including submitting comments on the draft interim needs assessment report, outlining key points that were critical to raise for counties. CSAC firmly supports a new source of revenue to mitigate the projected funding shortfall, and specifically has stated that any new sources of funding should produce enough revenue to respond significantly to transportation needs, in alignment with the CSAC platform. ▲

## AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, AND NATURAL RESOURCES (AENR) POLICY AREA

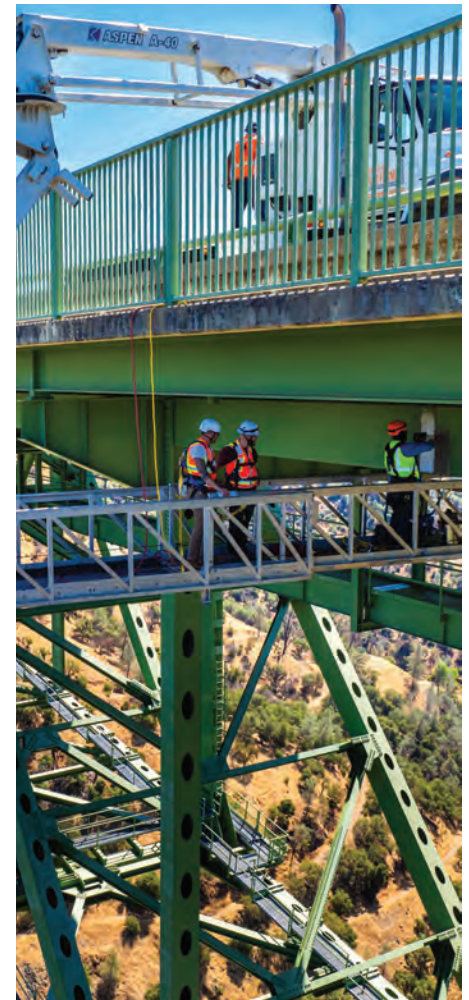
Throughout the 2024 Legislative Session, the AENR Policy Committee staff advocated on behalf of counties in these subject areas. Here are a few of 2024's achievements:

### Organic Waste

One of CSAC's top Legislative Priorities in 2024 was addressing the issues that counties face in their efforts to meet the state's SB 1383 organic waste diversion goals. CSAC engaged with state agencies and advocacy groups to collaborate on reforms aimed at easing the pressure on counties as they work toward meeting the state's goal to reduce organic waste in landfills. This included supporting measures such as: AB 2902 (Wood), which extends the existing rural exemption for counties with less than 70,000 residents until January 1, 2037; SB 972 (Min), requiring CalRecycle to develop transparent procedures for local jurisdictions to receive technical assistance; and SB 1046 (Laird), requiring CalRecycle to develop a program environmental impact report that streamlines the process to site small and medium compostable material handling facilities for processing organic waste materials.

### Water

CSAC participated in lead negotiations on different legislative proposals impacting water policy. Of note, CSAC was one of the sponsors of SB 366 (Caballero), an ongoing legislative effort, which would require annual statewide water supply targets for 2050 as part of The California Water Plan. Within the same advocacy space, CSAC protected counties from attempts to fundamentally change requirements under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), such as AB 2079 (Bennett). CSAC led conversations in opposition to the bill which would have restricted local control by prohibiting counties from issuing well permits for a well proposed to be located within a specified area. ▲



# 2024 Newly Enacted Legislation

THE FOLLOWING BILLS COVER NEWLY ENACTED LEGISLATION ON ORGANIC AND SOLID WASTE, AND WATER

## Organic and Solid Waste

### **AB 2346 (Lee) (Chapter 712, Statutes of 2024)**

**Organic waste reduction regulations:  
procurement of recovered organic waste products.**

This bill expands market development for recycled organic waste products such as compost and mulch.

### **AB 2902 (Wood) (Chapter 421, Statutes of 2024)**

SUPPORTED

**Solid waste: reduction and recycling.**

In relation to SB 1383, the organic waste reduction law, this bill extends the existing rural exemption for counties, which is set to expire in 2026. The exemption applies to 19 counties.

### **SB 1046 (Laird) (Chapter 452, Statutes of 2024)**

SUPPORTED

**Organic waste reduction:  
program environmental impact report: small and medium  
compostable material handling facilities or operations.**

This bill requires CalRecycle to develop a programmatic environmental impact report for small and medium-sized organic waste compost facilities.

### **SB 707 (Newman) (Chapter 864, Statutes of 2024)**

**Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024.**

This bill establishes the Responsible Textile Recovery Act of 2024, which creates an extended producer responsibility program for stewardship of waste textiles under the oversight of CalRecycle. As part of the bill's requirements, in consultation with CalRecycle and local jurisdictions, by March 1, 2027, the producer responsibility organization will need to submit an initial statewide needs assessment to determine steps and investment needed to meet the requirements of this bill.

### **SB 1143 (Allen) (Chapter 989, Statutes of 2024)**

SUPPORTED

**Paint products: stewardship program.**

This bill establishes an Extended Producer Responsibility for Household Hazardous Waste.

### **SB 1280 (Laird) (Chapter 466, Statutes of 2024)**

SUPPORTED

**Waste management: propane cylinders: reusable or refillable.**

Beginning January 1, 2028, the bill requires 1lb propane cylinders sold in the state to be reusable or refillable.



PAGE 7 PHOTO: COMPOST MANAGEMENT, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY.  
PAGE 8 PHOTOS: EAST GARDEN GROVE-WINTERSBURG CHANNEL FINAL INSPECTION (TOP LEFT), ORANGE COUNTY; DOGWOOD BRIDGE, IMPERIAL COUNTY (TOP RIGHT); SEWER PIPE REPAIR, PLACER COUNTY (BOTTOM).





## Water

### **AB 460 (Bauer Kahan) (Chapter 342, Statutes of 2024)**

#### **State Water Resources Control Board: water rights and usage: civil penalties.**

This bill increases civil penalties, and adjusts for inflation, for violation of specified orders issued by the State Water Resources Control Board such as curtailment and cease and desist orders.

### **AB 805 (Arambula) (Chapter 505, Statutes of 2024)**

#### **Sewer service: disadvantaged communities.**

Until January 2029, the bill allows the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to require a designated sewer system to contract with an administrator if inadequate sewer services by a local agency that provides sanitary sewer service has been demonstrated.

### **AB 1581 (Kalra) (Chapter 681, Statutes of 2024)**

#### **Conservation: Restoration Management Permit Act and California State Safe Harbor Agreement Program Act.**

This bill enacts the Restoration Management Permit Act, which allows state departments to develop streamlined permit applications for restoration management permits with the goal of encouraging projects that restore habitats.

### **AB 2501 (Alvarez) (Chapter 833, Statutes of 2024)**

SUPPORTED

#### **Water quality control plans: donations and grants.**

This bill authorizes the State Water Board to accept funding from public agencies in the jurisdiction of the State Water Board and on behalf of a Regional Water Quality Control Board. Specifically, AB 2501 authorizes the State Water Board, on behalf of itself or a Regional Water Quality Control Board to accept moneys from donations, grants, or contributions, or through contractual agreements, from public agencies.

### **AB 3090 (Maienschein) (Chapter 68, Statutes of 2024)**

#### **Drinking water standards: emergency notification plan.**

This bill authorizes a public water system, when updating an emergency notification plan, to provide notification to water users, by means of other communications technology such as text messages, email, or social media.

### **SB 1156 (Hurtado) (Chapter 458, Statutes of 2024)**

#### **Groundwater sustainability agencies: conflicts of interest: financial interest disclosures.**

This bill requires members of the board of directors and the executive of a groundwater sustainability agency to file statements of economic interests. ▲



# 2024 Program Update

## Conferences

CEAC's 2024 conference season started with hosting the National Association of County Engineers' Annual Conference in Palm Springs, California, April 15-19. Over 600 County Engineers and Public Works staff from around the entire country attended the event. The Bedroll Conference made a comeback July 24-26, 2024, at Camp Tehama, within the Lassen National Forest. The last Bedroll conference was on August 2, 2019; the 2020 conference was cancelled due to Covid, then in July 2021, the Dixie Fire burned the PG&E campground. The 2024 Policy Conference, which is now in its 19th year, offered a space for critical policy discussions, and then wrapped up with a fun County Engineers night and cornhole tournament. The 130th CSAC Annual Meeting held in Los Angeles County saw record attendance, with close to 900 attendees and exhibitors. Hosted by CEAC President, **Panos Kokkas**, Trinity County, CEAC was honored to have the current NACE President, **Stephen McCall** and his wife **Jen**, from Champaign County, Ohio in attendance. CEAC had over 130 attendees and 15 Platinum Sponsors.

We would like to recognize our 13 Annual Platinum Sponsors; those affiliate companies that committed to sponsoring all 3 CEAC conferences at the platinum level in 2024. The affiliate companies are **AECOM**, **Conсор**, **Dewberry**, **Dokken Engineering**, **Ghirardelli Associates, Inc.**, **Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.**, **MGE Engineering, Inc.**, **NCE**, **Transtech Engineers, Inc.**, **TRC Engineers**, **Unico Engineering, Inc.**, **Willdan Engineering**, **Wood Rodgers, Inc.**, and **GHD**. We appreciate their continued affiliate support of CEAC!



## Awards

**Panos Kokkas**, Trinity County received the Engineer of the Year award, and **Bob Bronkall**, Humboldt County, received the Surveyor of the Year award. The Buddy Award was given to **Deanna Leamon**, spouse of **Dave Leamon**, Stanislaus County.

CEAC awarded three scholarships in 2024. Recipients included **Geraldine Lynch** of Rohnert Park, California State University, Chico; **Alex Zasso** of Antelope, University of Maine, and previously earned his bachelor's degree from California State University, Sacramento; and **Matthew Muir** of Shasta, California State University, Chico. We celebrated our tenth year recognizing California's cities and counties with the Outstanding Local Streets and Roads Project Awards. The "Safety or Intelligent Transportation System Projects" category was awarded to **Fresno County** for the American Avenue and Golden State Boulevard Intersection Realignment Project. The "Complete Streets Projects" category was awarded to the **City and County of San Francisco** for the Upper Market Corridor Safety Improvements Project. Congratulations to both counties for their outstanding projects.

## Membership

County public works agencies once again experienced a lot of leadership changes in 2024. New Public Works Directors include **Nathan Bray**, Merced; **Troy Bartolomei**, Shasta; **James Bezek**, Solano County; **Warren Lai**, Contra Costa; **Chris Sneddon**, Santa Barbara; Blossom **Scott-Heim**, Tuolumne, **Gregg Strakaluse**, Ventura, **David Garcia, Jr.**, Nevada; **Glen March**, Lake County; **Dennis Acuna**, Riverside; and **Rob Thorman**, Plumas. Some notable retirements included **Brian Balbas**, CEAC President 2022-23, who retired after 35 years with Contra Costa County; **Scott McGolpin**, CEAC President 2013-14 and NACE President 2020, retired after 36 years with Santa Barbara County; and **Jeff Pratt**, CEAC President 2017-18, retired after 24 years with Ventura County; and **Scott DeLeon** also retired after 25 years with Lake County. ▲

## In Memoriam

**Tracy Bartlett**, a CEAC affiliate member since 2005, member of the CEAC fellowship committee, as well as a recipient of the CHICs award that recognizes individuals that invest in the association passed away on June 28, 2024. We also lost **Louis Tom (L.T.) Mlcoch**, an Honorary CLOD on January 21, 2024, and **James A. Noyes**, CEAC Life Member on May 8, 2024.

# On The Horizon in 2025

The California State Association of Counties is pleased to present to the County Engineers Association of California the 2024 CEAC Annual Report.

This report marks a transition and will be the final version that is primarily produced by members of CSAC's Legislative Services unit with a legislation centric focus. CSAC believes that the 2025 Annual Report could focus on CEAC member accomplishments and include segments focused on a variety of member topics of interest, such as:

- **Sharing best practices and other pertinent information for the full span of county public works,**
- **Highlighting CEAC's comprehensive regional meeting opportunities,**
- **A deeper dive into the projects that won the 2025 Local Streets and Roads Awards; and,**
- **A potential segment for CEAC affiliates to provide content.**

The CSAC Legislative Services unit will still be available to provide legislative updates, but we believe this should be one small section of a report with a wider span of topics.

On behalf of CSAC, we thank you for your participation in CEAC and the leadership and technical expertise you provide. We look forward to continued partnership in 2024 as the Program Manager transition to their new role. CSAC will continue to diligently work to represent counties and fight for the needs of your members in California and at the federal level. ▲





SANTA MARIA RIVER BED, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY.

“

*Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.*

— Thomas Edison



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