

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Lori D. Wilson, Chair

AB 1132 (Schiavo) – As Amended April 10, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Department of Transportation: climate change vulnerability assessment: community resilience assessment

**SUMMARY:** Requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to include a community resilience assessment into its statewide Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires Caltrans, in consultation with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and California Department of Emergency Services (CalOES), to identify key community resilience indicators for measuring the impacts of climate-induced transportation disruptions on or before January 1, 2029.
- 2) Requires Caltrans, in consultation with CHP and CalOES, to hold at least one public workshop and include stakeholders from priority populations, including, but not limited to, representatives from local jurisdictions responsible for implementing resilience strategies.
- 3) Requires Caltrans to include a community resilience assessment in the climate change vulnerability assessment that emphasizes the identification and evaluation of high-risk locations, especially those that serve priority populations on or before January 1, 2030.
- 4) Requires Caltrans to hold at least two public stakeholder meetings in each of its 12 transportation districts and the public stakeholder meetings shall include stakeholders from priority populations.
- 5) Makes findings and declarations related to the state's Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI), Executive Order N-19-19, Executive Order N-79-20, California Transportation Plan 2050, and the Department of Transportation's Vulnerability Assessment.
- 6) Defines the following;
  - a) "Climate change vulnerability assessment" as the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Technical and Summary Reports developed by Caltrans;
  - b) "Community resilience" as the ability of a community to withstand, adapt to, or recover from climate-related disruptions to its infrastructure, critical resources, and services;
  - c) "Community resilience assessment" as an evaluation of the broader social and economic impacts on communities connected to the evaluated infrastructure risks, especially the communities that are most vulnerable to climate change risks, and requires a community resilience assessment to include, all of the following;
    - i. How disruptions to transportation infrastructure caused by climate impacts disrupt access to essential services to communities, including education, emergency services, employment centers, and health care;

- ii. Coordination with local jurisdictions and review of local evacuation plans to ensure that the state highway and passenger rail systems are facilitating alternative modes of evacuation;
  - iii. An assessment and identification of locations in communities for implementation of shelters or green infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat; and,
  - iv. A list of the highest risk locations and state highway and passenger rail system assets based on community resilience indicators.
- d) “Community resilience indicators” as specific metrics used to measure and track the resilience of communities experiencing climate-induced transportation disruptions, and requires the indicators be selected and continually evaluated with input from community stakeholders to ensure the indicators address the most pressing needs of affected populations; and,
- e) “Priority populations” as any of the following:
- i. An area identified as being among the most disadvantaged 25 percent in the state according to the most recent update to the California Communities Environmental Health Screening tool, also known as CalEnviroScreen;
  - ii. An area identified as a priority population in Caltrans’ equity index;
  - iii. An area within federally designated tribal lands; and,
  - iv. A community that meets the regional definition of “environmental justice community,” “community of concern,” or “disadvantaged community,” if that regional definition is adopted as part of the applicable regional transportation plan, including the sustainable communities strategy.

## **EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes Caltrans and provides that it has full possession and control of all state highways and property and rights in property acquired for state highway purposes, construct all state highways. (Streets and Highways Code Section (SHC) 90)
- 2) Requires the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) to update the state’s climate adaptation strategy every three years, coordinate with other state agencies, and requires the plan to including the following sectors: water, energy, transportation, public health, agriculture, emergency services, forestry, biodiversity and habitat, and ocean and coastal resources. (Public Resources Code Section (PRC) 71153)
- 3) Requires state agencies to take into account the current and future impacts of climate change when planning, designing, building, operating, maintaining and investing in state infrastructure and establishes the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group for the purpose of examining how to integrate scientific data concerning projected climate change impacts into state infrastructure engineering, including oversight, investment, design, and construction. (PRC 71155)
- 4) Establishes the Transportation Infrastructure Climate Adaptation Strategy Grant Program as a competitive grant program to be awarded and administered Caltrans to provide funding to local agencies to identify transportation-related climate vulnerabilities through the development of climate adaptation plans and to identify ways to incorporate transportation-

related climate adaptation needs into existing transportation plans. (Government Code Section (GOV) 14560)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** Caltrans manages California's state highway system, which includes over 50,000 miles of highway. To ensure the longevity and quality of the state's transportation infrastructure, Caltrans is assessing the impacts of climate change and impacts to the state highway system in terms of damage, travel disruption, and long-term maintenance needs. Additionally, in accordance with the California Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI), Executive Order (EO) N-19-19, and EO B-30-15 Caltrans must incorporate climate change impacts into state investments.

Caltrans completed a statewide Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (Assessment) for the state highway system in 2019, and most recently in 2021. This study involves using climate data to refine Caltrans' understanding of potential climate impacts to the state highway system, and coordination with various state and federal agencies and academic institutions to obtain the best available climate data for California. Each of Caltrans' 12 districts developed climate change vulnerability assessment technical and summary reports that include assessment methodologies, findings, potential challenges, and ongoing efforts. Discussions with professionals from various engineering disciplines helped identify how changing climate hazards may affect highways, including their design. This assessment allows Caltrans to begin to understand how climate change may affect state transportation infrastructure and identifies a subset of state highway system assets on which to focus future efforts. Additionally, this enables Caltrans to incorporate climate change assessments into project development and ensure staff and stakeholders are engaged.

The results from the Assessment conclude that California's transportation system is under increasing threat from climate change, with extreme weather events like wildfires, floods, and heat waves causing major disruptions. According to Caltrans 2021 Assessment, California faces over \$1 billion per year in infrastructure damages due to climate disasters.

*Transportation in climate emergencies.* Transportation is critical to evacuation from climate disasters such as wildfires, mudslides, and sea level rise. Reliable access to roads, a vehicle, and transit can enable safe and efficient evacuations. Lack of reliable transportation options in evacuation scenarios often disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities such as low-income households, seniors, people with disabilities, and those without access to personal vehicles. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire), households without a vehicle are considered "at-risk" due to the lack of reliable transportation needed for an evacuation.

The Palisades and Eaton wildfires of 2025 provide examples of how efficient evacuation routes are critical in a climate emergency. The city's reliance on personal vehicles, limited street connectivity, and the simultaneous evacuation attempts by many residents created widespread gridlock and delays, made it difficult for both residents and emergency responders to navigate. Additionally, residents without access to personal vehicles faced significant barriers to safety and evacuation. Vulnerable populations, including the elderly, people with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness, faced delayed evacuation alerts, lack of transportation, and difficulty accessing resources.

This bill requires socio-economic and climate resiliency factors to be incorporated in the Assessment, in consultation with CHP and CalOES. The assessment this bill adds is intended to evaluate how transportation disruptions affect vulnerable populations, identify key resilience indicators, and improve coordination with local governments on emergency planning and evacuation strategies.

*Climate resilience investments.* The state has a variety of funding opportunities and guidance related to climate adaptation and mitigation, including emergency response. The Local Transportation Climate Adaptation Program, created by the Biden Administration's Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (IIJA), funds local adaptation projects to vulnerable communities; CalOES provides evacuation planning and transportation guidance which emphasizes the importance of planning for individuals with access and functional needs; the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program (ICARP) offers resources designed to help state and local agencies develop actionable resilience plans, and Cal-Adapt provides datasets and tools for state agencies and other stakeholders to develop climate adaptation and resilience plans and foster community engagement.

This bill seeks to add to these efforts by requiring a transportation vulnerability assessment focused on those most impacted by climate change, and those least likely to have reliable evacuation options.

*Staff comments.* The author may wish to simplify the definitions in this bill by utilizing the myriad of existing guidance and tools the state provides on climate resiliency and vulnerability. While there is value in incorporating community resiliency indicators into Caltrans' vulnerability study, the intent should be to utilize existing efforts to ensure the requirements of this bill are not duplicative.

*According to the author,* "California's transportation system is increasingly vulnerable to climate change, facing disruptions from wildfires, floods, extreme heat, and sea-level rise. While the state has made efforts to assess risks to transportation infrastructure, current analyses often overlook the well-being of the communities that depend on these systems, particularly low-income and disadvantaged populations. California faces over \$1 billion per year in infrastructure damages from climate disasters, yet resilience planning largely focuses on protecting physical infrastructure with limited consideration for community needs. AB 1132 addresses this gap by incorporating a Community Resilience Assessment into Caltrans' Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment. This will help identify high-risk areas, improve evacuation planning, and assess the broader social and economic impacts on affected communities. By requiring Caltrans to consult with stakeholders, including state agencies, local governments, community-based organizations, and groups representing vulnerable populations, AB 1132 will enhance California's ability to protect its most vulnerable residents from climate-induced disruptions."

*In support,* the Greenlining Institute writes, "The vulnerability of our transportation system goes beyond the roads we travel; it hampers our ability to move economically, socially, and physically, while also undermining California's resilience in the face of growing climate threats. Together, we can build a climate-ready transportation system that prioritizes people, strengthens resilience, and serves all Californians. We strongly support AB 1132, to establish a community resilience assessment."

*Previous legislation.* SB 198 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) establishes three programs that are intended to fund activities necessary to help the state and local governments identify and fund projects to adapt transportation infrastructure to climate change.

AB 2438 (Friedman) of 2022 would have required various state transportation programs to incorporate strategies from the CAPTI into program guidelines. Also would have required various state agencies to establish new transparency and accountability guidelines for certain transportation funding programs. *This bill was vetoed by Governor Newsom.*

SB 1 (Beall), Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017 increases several taxes and fees to raise the equivalent of roughly \$52.4 billion over ten years in new transportation revenues and makes adjustments for inflation every year; directed the funding to be used towards deferred maintenance on the state highways and local streets and roads, and to improve the state's trade corridors, transit, and active transportation facilities.

AB 1482 (Gordon) Chapter 603, Statutes of 2015 requires the California Natural Resources Agency (NRA) to update its climate adaptation strategy, the Safeguarding California Plan (Plan), by July 1, 2017, and every three years thereafter by coordinating adaption activities among lead state agencies in each sector, and requires relevant state agencies to maximize specified objectives across sectors to address vulnerabilities identified in the Plan and requires the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to identify and review activities and funding programs of state agencies that may be coordinated to meet the goals of the strategies and priorities in the Plan.

AB 2800 (Quirk) Chapter 580, Statutes of 2016 establishes a Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group (Working Group) to examine how to integrate scientific data concerning projected climate change impacts into state infrastructure engineering.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

Greenlining (co-sponsor)  
NextGen California (co-sponsor)  
350 Sacramento  
AARP  
Active San Gabriel Valley  
American Lung Association of California  
Calbike  
California Walks  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Environmental Health  
Clean Earth 4 Kids  
Climate Action California  
Climate Resolve  
Planning and Conservation League  
Safe Routes Partnership  
Streets are for Everyone  
Streets for All  
Transbay Coalition  
Transform

One Individual

**Opposition**

None on file

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