

Date of Hearing: June 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Lori D. Wilson, Chair

SB 1293 (Alvarado-Gil) – As Amended April 6, 2026

SENATE VOTE: 33-0

SUBJECT: State highways: projects: notice.

SUMMARY: Requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to provide written notice of planned highway closures and traffic detours to affected residents or businesses located within five miles of a closure and in a county with a population of 60,000 or fewer for rural state highway construction or maintenance projects at least 14 days before the project begins. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Defines “affected resident” to mean a person who resides in, or a business that is located within five miles of the project limits, as determined by Caltrans.
- 2) Defines “rural project” to mean any construction or maintenance project that meets both of the following:
 - a) Is planned to be performed within the right-of-way of a state highway in a county with a population of 60,000 people or less; and,
 - b) Is scheduled to include a lane closure or a road closure for either seven days or more if no alternate route is available or 14 days or more if an alternate route is available.
- 3) Requires Caltrans to provide written notice of a rural project to an affected resident at least 14 days before the construction or maintenance of a rural project begins and post the notice on its internet website.
- 4) Requires the notice to describe the rural project, including, but not limited to, any planned closures, traffic detours, and appropriate contact information for Caltrans or a contractor.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Vests Caltrans with possession and control of all state highways and the responsibility for the planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operation of the state highway system (Streets and Highway (SHC) Code §90).
- 2) Requires Caltrans to prepare a state highway operation and protection program (SHOPP) for the expenditure of transportation funds for major capital improvements that are necessary to preserve and protect the state highway system. Limits projects to improvements relative to the maintenance, safety, operation, and rehabilitation of state highways and bridges that do not add a new traffic lane to the system (Government Code §14526.5).
- 3) Requires Caltrans to develop a five-year maintenance plan that addresses the maintenance needs of the state highway system. Requires the maintenance plan to include only maintenance activities that, if the activities are not performed, could result in increased SHOPP costs in the future. Requires the maintenance plan to identify any existing backlog in

those maintenance activities and recommend a strategy, specific activities, and an associated funding level to reduce or prevent any backlog during the plan five-year period (Streets and Highway Code §164.6).

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, Caltrans estimates annual ongoing administrative costs would likely be in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars for staff time and postage to produce, prepare, print, and mail written notices of rural projects. Actual costs would depend on the number of qualifying rural projects in a given year, and the parameters of those projects.

COMMENTS: *According to the author, “SB 1293 addresses a persistent communication gap between Caltrans and rural communities when transportation projects significantly disrupt local travel and commerce. While existing Caltrans guidelines outline public engagement practices, recent experiences in small counties demonstrate that residents and businesses are often unaware of major road closures or delays until after impacts occur, resulting in lost revenue, limited access to essential services, and extended detours. This bill establishes a notification requirement by directing Caltrans to provide advance written notice to residents and businesses within a five-mile radius of certain projects in counties with populations of 60,000 or less when traffic will be obstructed for a sustained period. By ensuring timely and direct communication in areas where internet access may be inconsistent and alternative routes are limited, SB 1293 promotes transparency, supports local economies, and helps rural communities better prepare for and respond to transportation disruptions.”*

Caltrans public engagement processes and tools. There does not appear to be any existing formal policy or practice directing Caltrans to provide the type of notice prescribed by this bill. However, the Caltrans Construction Manual includes guidance on relations with the public, stating that “public outreach and stakeholder engagement addresses Caltrans’ mandated responsibility to make sure that projects do not adversely affect communities...Construction operations, including temporary closures of streets and driveways, and construction noise (especially at night) may have an adverse effect on residents and businesses adjacent to the project. *Informing people living and working near the project about the reason for, and the duration of the activity, will go a long way towards a higher degree of acceptance and tolerance. Timely notice is important.* Also consider rescheduling construction activity around major businesses or public events [emphasis added].”

Additionally, the Caltrans Maintenance Manual states, “...the Maintenance Program will practice proper scheduling and planning of routine maintenance procedures to keep delays at a minimum. Reasonable efforts should be made to correct conditions that interfere with the orderly flow of traffic.”

Caltrans also publishes web and app-based tools that disclose planned and real-time construction or maintenance activity in each of the 12 Caltrans districts. For example, one can search planned lane closures 7 days in advance on the websites of Caltrans Districts 3 and 10 (which cover the author’s district). QuickMap is a Caltrans-developed web and app tool that provides real-time traffic information, including road closures, conditions and schedule re-openings on the State highway system.

A new approach? In order to increase public engagement throughout the planning and project delivery process, Caltrans is reportedly developing a suite of new tools, including a new “Director’s Policy” on external engagement, a community engagement statewide playbook, and a web-based Caltrans Engagement Portal all designed to make public engagement more consistent and engaging through the planning, design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases. The online portal, which was initially launched in 2023, provides detailed information on projects and planning documents, solicits public comments, and hosts public surveys and virtual meetings. The public can subscribe to receive project updates. Finally, each district will have a new community engagement coordinator whose responsibilities will include development of public engagement plans, advising project teams, maintaining the portal, and drafting the district playbooks.

In the meantime, this bill appears to be a reasonable approach to notify affected residents particularly in rural communities where a state highway functions as “main street” and no other alternatives or reasonable alternatives exist. In these communities, full road closures can have a major impact on businesses and residents. According to the author, a recent closure of State Route 120 in Groveland in Tuolumne County cut off traffic to downtown businesses and forced restaurants to temporarily close. Local business owners reported that they were not aware of the project and the planned closure ahead of time.

Writing in support, Calaveras County Supervisor Martin Huberty states “recent experiences within my district have demonstrated that communities are often not provided with sufficient advance notice of major road closures or prolonged construction impacts. These communication gaps have resulted in significant consequences, including lost revenue for businesses, lack of emergency access and extended detours with limited alternatives. SB 1293 provides a practical and targeted solution by requiring Caltrans to provide advance written notice to residents and businesses within a five-mile radius of certain projects in counties with populations of 60,000 or less when traffic will be obstructed for a sustained period.”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Martin Huberty, Calaveras County District 3 Supervisor
Daniel Anaiyah Kirk, County of Tuolumne District 3 Supervisor
Stephen A. Griefer, County of Tuolumne District 4 Supervisor

Opposition

None received

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