

# Contra Costa Special Districts Association Newsletter

Contra Costa Chapter of the California Special Districts Association

January 2021 Quarterly Newsletter

## Contra Costa Special Districts Association future meetings

January 25th, 2021  
March 22, 2021  
May 19, 2021

*July (12 or 19) 2021 Annual joint meeting with Alameda  
Special Districts*

'September 20, 2021  
November 15, 2021

## California Special Districts Association events 2021

In the wake of the COVID-19 coronavirus, CSDA is working with our hotel partners to help ensure the health and safety of all attendees, staff, and speakers at CSDA events. If you are ill or have been exposed to the COVID -19 viruses, CSDA is offering no cost cancellation until further notice. CSDA Professional Development Director Megan Hemming is in contact with each of the event facilities for our upcoming conferences regarding their cleaning and sanitizing procedures and other precautions. CSDA will continue to provide updates regarding CSDA events through social media and our weekly CSDA eNews as needed.



California Special  
Districts Association  
*Districts Stronger Together*

2021 Annual Conference & Exhibitor Showcase  
8/30/2021 - 9/2/2021  
Monterey

Special District Leadership Academy Lake Tahoe  
9/27/2021

The 2021 General Manager Leadership Summit will be held Sunday, June 27 - Tuesday, June 29, 2021 at the resort at squaw creek.

## California Special Districts Association Legislative tour

As you know, each year the California Special Districts Association hold special districts tours for legislative office staff. For the Bay Area tour this year, the topic will be How Special Districts are Adapting to Climate Change. We wanted to invite your district to be one of the "tour hosts."

Given the restrictions of COVID-19, CSDA will shift the 2020 Special Districts Legislative Tour to a virtual format and use pre-recorded and/or live video footage combined with short presentations from special districts on hot-topics to attract attention and participation from state and federal officials. We used the video Mt. View Sanitary District and CSDA collaborated on together, but other videos you have may work too/instead.

Below is an outline of the agenda. The San Mateo Resource Conservation has already agreed to be one of the "tour hosts." We hope to have three districts in total as virtual hosts for the Bay Area Tour. The entire tour will only be one hour long, as we have found that is the point at which attendees start to tune out of virtual meetings. Each district host will have 3 minutes to show a pre-recorded video and then have five minutes to speak. There will also be time for questions at the end. The dates for the Bay Area Tour were December 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020.

To see the video by Mt. View Sanitary District;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C01P9LfrMo0>

## John Muir Birthday Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 17, 2021 10 am to 4 pm Family Fun all day! Don't miss it! John Muir House, Martinez.

## New tagline for ILG



Founded in 1955, the Institute for Local Government has been serving local officials' information needs for 60 years. The Institute for Local Government (ILG) promotes good government at the local level with practical, impartial and easy-to-use resources for California communities.

Municipal Management Association of Northern California (MMANC) and ILG have worked closely over the past several years, most notably in 2014 when an MMANC representative was added as a permanent post to the ILG Board of Directors. Over the years, the two organizations have collaborated on a joint education calendar and a collaborative programming. MMANC is a financial contributor to ILG, and since 2015, ILG has provided educational workshops at the MMANC Annual Conference.

### *The Institute's Mission, Vision and Value* Our Mission

ILG empowers local government leaders and delivers real-world expertise to help them navigate complex issues, increase their capacity, and build trust in their community  
Our Vision

A California where all local government leaders are trusted by the people they serve because of exceptional leadership and an endless pursuit towards thriving and resilient communities in which to live and work.

### Our Values

As champions of local government, our work is guided by our core values. We strive to infuse our values into every action we take, both internally and with the communities we serve.

### Organizational Transparency

As a 501(c) (3) organization, the Institute operates according to its corporate bylaws and such other policies adopted by the Institute's board of directors.

The Institute is proud to have been recognized by Guide Star. The Guide Star Exchange allows ILG to share a wealth of up-to-date information with Guide Star's vast on-line audience of grant makers and individual donors.

Visit the ILG website for great information and training https webinars and training. A good resource for elected local officials can be found on their website;  
<https://www.ca-ilg.org>

## Pleasant Hill Recreation and Park District



Friday, September 18th was the official groundbreaking for the new library building in the City of Pleasant Hill. Per Public Health order, we maintained physical distance and utilized face coverings as we celebrated this great achievement. This project is a result of collaboration between the City, the County, the Pleasant Hill Recreation and Park District and the Mt. Diablo Unified School District we all look forward to seeing the public at the ribbon cutting when the City completes construction in spring 2022! |

## Mt. View Sanitary District pollution prevention billboard



Each year Mt. View Sanitary District displays a pollution prevention billboard in September and May during American Wetlands Month. This is the pollution prevention that was up in September 2020.



## Brown Act Change new law

AB 992, signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, is the first amendment to the Brown Act to address public officials' use of social media. The Brown Act generally requires that a legislative body's meetings be open and public, including advance notice, posting of the agenda and accessibility by the public.

## State Board of Education Approves New Civic Seal for Students

*By Kristin Wl throw*



California's State Board of Education approved criteria for a new State Seal of Civic Engagement for California's schools. The adopted seal criteria was developed to assist schools in supporting all students to develop civic competencies and identities while learning about civic responsibilities by providing high-quality opportunities for student voice, civic engagement, and participation in civic life in their schools, communities, and all levels of government.

CSDA actively participated in a coalition, Promoting Authentic College, Career, and Civic Readiness Assessment Systems (PACCCRAS), to support the enactment of the new educational recognition which will create pathways for students in elementary and secondary schools to become civically engaged in democratic governmental institutions at the local, state, and national levels

Assembly Bill 24 of 2017 added sections 51470-51474 to the California Education Code, which directed the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop, and the State Board of Education to adopt, a set of criteria for schools choosing to award the seal. The statute permits schools to award the State Seal of Civic Engagement to students who have demonstrated excellence in civic education and participation, and have demonstrated an understanding of the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government.

Even the youngest students can engage in and demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Civic learning opportunities may begin as early as pre-kindergarten, elementary, and middle school. School districts may consider collaborating with their feeder elementary and middle schools and English language development specialists as they develop local criteria, interim award opportunities, and applicable on-ramps for the new seal.

Schools that enable early and ongoing opportunities for all students to gain civic knowledge, practice and apply civic skills, develop digital citizenship skills, realize civic responsibilities, and cultivate relationships with their communities will help to prepare civically aware, skilled, and engaged citizens. Throughout the process, students are encouraged to consider interdisciplinary projects and issues that extend over time, using all the knowledge and skills they have gained across the curriculum to engage with their communities.

As part of CSDA's 2020-2022 Strategic Plan, the CSDA Board of Directors directed the association to "further efforts to build awareness and understanding of special districts among students and promote civic engagement, career pathways, and opportunities that exist to serve on special districts." In conjunction with this plan, CSDA is working with education consultant Dr. Hueling Lee to support special district engagement, outreach, and partnership with schools.

Resources to Support Civic Engagement

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/hs/civcengprojects.asp>

## CCSDA is always looking for your news to share with our readers



Send us your news so we can include it in our next newsletter.

Send your news to Stan Caldwell the newsletter editor.

## Rodeo Sanitary District has updated and upgraded their website!

Visit: <https://rodeosan.org/>

## Ironhouse Sanitary District s has updated their website!

Visit: <https://www.ironhousesanitarydistrict.com/>

## Dublin San Ramon Services District

We have updated our website!  
<https://www.drsrd.com/home>

## 2020 California Association of Public Information Officials (CAPIO) EPIC Award Winner East Bay Regional Parks District

Celebrating Excellence in Public Information and Communications



The awards have begun arriving at offices around the state for the 2020 CAPIO Excellence in Public Information and Communications (EPIC) Awards.

### National Special Districts Coalition (NSDC) Discussing Next Steps



While discussions have stalled some in DC related to COVID-19 relief funding, we are still continuing work to push for approval of our two bills that were introduced to assist special districts. Additionally, I have been talking with the other NSDC partners about next steps and they are interested in furthering and formalizing our DC advocacy efforts moving forward given what we have learned this year. We will meet again to develop proposed next steps for each of our respective Board's consideration. Kyle and Neil Mc Cormick will be bringing more information to the CSDA Board.

### Central San

Contra Costa Central Sanitary District (CCCSD) is transitioning from an at-large election system to an area-based election system. Under the current at-large election system, all five members of the Board of Directors are chosen by constituents from the District's entire service area. Under area-based elections, the District will be divided into five separate election areas—called "divisions"—and voters residing in each area will select one representative to serve on the Board.

## Sustainable Contra Costa



Sustainable Contra Costa inspires sustainable living and regenerative, connected communities. We are citizens, educators, innovators, and organizations working together for ecologically sustainable, economically vibrant, and socially just communities for all.

Each year Contra Costa Central Sanitary sponsors pollution prevention awards and has partnered with Sustainable Contra Costa to provide Pollution Prevention awards to local businesses in our service area during their annual gala. That event was held on September 17th.

### Donations Accepted

The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) provides all types of California Special Districts with the opportunity for their board members and staff to receive the education needed to become well-trained, knowledgeable decision-makers that engage the public through a transparent process.

SDLF programs also promote and recognize excellence in the governance and management of special districts. Your donation helps support SDLF's programs and scholarships. <https://www.sdlf.org/donate>

### Congratulations to Mike McGill

Mike McGill was re-elected to the CALAFCO Board of Directors.

Mike was elected to the CALAFCO Board in 2012 and served as Treasurer, Secretary, Vice Chair and in 3020 as Chair.

At the October s CALAFCO Board meeting, the Board and the CALAFCO Executive Director thanked Mike for his service as Chair in 2020. CALAFCO Board members acknowledged Mike's dedication, professionalism, courageousness, graciousness, and unwavering leadership during these challenging and unpreceden times.

Please join us in congratulating Commissioner McGill on his re-election to the CALAFCO Board and service as the 2020 CALAFCO Chair.

## Huge progress in replacing power cables for trains in downtown San Francisco advances rebuilding project to new phase



BART's plan to replace traction power equipment in downtown San Francisco has received a major boost in recent months thanks to efforts to accelerate critical rebuilding work during this time of reduced service hours because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the aging electrical components are nearly 50 years old and have outlived their design lives. Replacing this outdated infrastructure is essential to ensure BART trains have a reliable power source as they carry riders through the heart of the system.

Much of the recent focus has been on replacing the 34.5kV (kilovolt) electrical cables that provide power to BART trains. delay riders by running single-track service through the work area.

BART crews have put the riders first as they go about their work. One example is with the installation of rail disconnect switches near the Montgomery Street station. The third rail disconnects switches cut the third rail into two parts. On one section of track the electricity is turned off enabling crews to work safely. On the opposite side, third-rail power remains on to supply electricity to the trains at the station. The switches allow BART to run more Dublin/Pleasanton Blue Line trains from the East Bay to downtown San Francisco to increase system capacity despite the ongoing work.

## Midway through pilot, tests of new filters and UV light on BART show promise



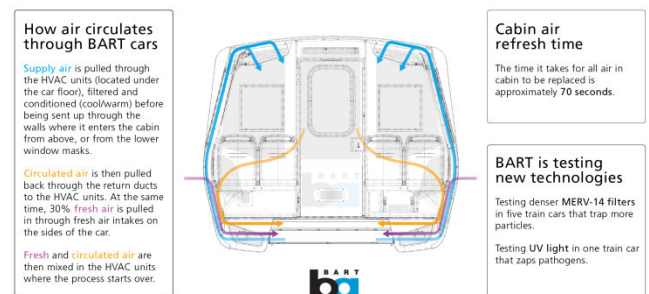
BART is about midway through a pilot that is testing new, denser air filters and UV light to create even safer ventilation on trains, as the region rebounds from the pandemic and ridership ticks up.

"Based on everything we've seen so far, it's looking very promising," said Ben Holland, BART Manager of Vehicle Systems Engineering.

Crews removed some of the new filters and spot-checked them for clogging. Denser filters trap more particles, up to a point; if they're too dense, they can become clogged and overload the train's operating systems. Now, Holland said, the filters are being sent out for a more scientific analysis of the amount of air pressure drop they allow.

Because coronavirus spreads through the air, such as when a person coughs or sneezes, air filtration has an important role in preventing transmission, along with vigilant mask-wearing. BART cars already have air that is very well filtered; an entire train car's air is replaced about every 70 seconds.

Filters are rated by their ability to block different-sized particles, a rating known as their minimum efficiency reporting value, or MERV, on a scale from 1 to 20. BART cars currently use MERV-8 filters, which can trap particles between 3 and 10 microns in size.



"The pilot uses MERV-14s, which can capture particles between .3 and 1 microns, which is obviously a huge improvement," Holland said. The filters weren't notably more clogged, however, and on-board tests showed good airflow.

More good news came from testing of ultraviolet (UV-C) light rods that can zap particles. The concern was that the train's motion could jostle around the rods, which are housed in the HVAC unit under the cars. So far, there's no sign of that.

"We put it over a pit, looked at the inside, and it was working just perfectly," he said. "The UV light comes on when it's supposed to. The safety features that are in place are working well."

## New CSDA Tools

The California Special Districts Association (CSDA) has released two tools aimed at a wide array of audiences to help raise awareness and understanding of what is dubbed the most local and specialized form of local government—special districts. They include a free downloadable 16-page educational brochure about special districts and a three-minute video entitled “Special Districts 101.”

These tools bring alive the essential services provided by special districts. They address how the public forms a special district, how it is funded and governed, and most importantly, the profound impact special districts make on the daily lives of every Californian.

The new special districts brochure and video are concise, straight-forward resources aimed at anyone who wishes to better understand special districts. These are also useful tools for advocates, leadership in local government, and special districts that need help explaining these highly-specialized but often under-recognized agencies in public forums or advocacy efforts.

“California’s 2,000 special districts are local service specialists,” said CSDA Chief Executive Officer, Neil McCormick. “Special districts are community formed and community owned to provide constituents with essential services on a daily basis. We developed these informational tools in an effort to promote transparency as well as educate and equip the public who ultimately oversee and govern the special districts serving their families and businesses.”

Additional videos will follow focusing in on various aspects of special districts. School administrators, curriculum planners, and counselors may be particularly interested in a coming video that explores the wide range of satisfying public service professions that students can pursue in the special districts world: scientists, engineers, health care providers, technology experts, librarians, biologists, hydrologists and physical education specialists are just a short list of the experts sought by special districts that offer stable, satisfying careers.

These resource materials and more can be found at [csda.net/learn-about](https://www.csda.net/learn-about)



## Pleasant Hill Recreation and Park District

Pleasant Hill Recreation and Park District (PHPRD) looks forward to celebrating their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. This year, PHPRD will celebrate our 70th anniversary. Established in January 1951, Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District was formed by the citizen who valued parks and recreational opportunities for all people in their community.

PHPRD became a special district, a unique government entity, separate from the City of Pleasant Hill and other organizations, and has grown to become a cornerstone of what makes Pleasant Hill such a great place to live. Today, Rec & Park provides and manages extensive District-owned parks, community facilities, open space, and recreation programs and events throughout the community.

## California Special Districts Association Membership

To find out more about how to become a member of CSDA please contact Cassandra Strawn Member Services Director at (916) 442-7887 or toll free (877) 924-2733. Visit [CSDA.net](https://www.csda.net) for more information

## Pay-What-You-Can campaign launch on November 1st, 2020

Pay-What-You-Can (PWYC) is a limited time offer available to small non-member independent special districts. Eligible districts can join California Special Districts Association (CSDA) for up to two years for the price they can afford. The details of the offer are available in the October committee packet go to the website:

<https://www.csda.net/pwyc>

CSDA has launched a PWYC website (only available by URL <https://www.csda.net/pwyc> and not part of the site navigation). The website includes PWYC offer details, eligibility requirements, and the ability to join.

## County Administrator David Twa is retiring

At the December 15th Board of Supervisors meeting, David Twa was thanked for his dedicated service to Contra Costa County. David was hired in 2008, moving to the Bay Area from Minnesota.

David will stay with the County for a period of time to aid in the transition of the new County Administrator, Monica Nino. Ms. Nino takes over on January 4, 2021.

## Covid 19

Many local governments have reacted quickly to address the economic and fiscal consequences of the crisis, and countries are spending significantly more than in the past. So many countries, cities, and special districts have, adopted measures in support of the Covid 19 guidelines in place and have been able to adapt to the myriad of changes, we can only anticipate easing guidelines and requirements that will allow us to return to “normal”.

Contra Costa recommends that workers in jobs that bring them in frequent contact with the public, including all essential workers, consider a COVID-19 test every 30 days. Anyone who has symptoms such as fever, cough or difficulty breathing should also consider a test.

To schedule a fast, free COVID-19 test in Contra Costa, call 1-844-421-0804 or schedule online at <https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/>

## Signs of the Times

As the COVID-19 pandemic increased, so did the need for signage in and around PH Rec & Park district facilities and parks to help keep program participants and park visitors (and their pets) safe while visiting these community locations. Instead of standard signage, staff created “Musky”, a whimsical and wacky safety mascot character created to draw attention to COVID-19 safety information.

Not even a world pandemic in 2020 could keep Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park

District from doing what they do best in the local community: Make Life Better! When the severity of the novel coronavirus hit in early March Pleasant Hill Rec & Park staff didn't hesitate to quickly pivot and adapt under the strict and every-changing public health orders. They persevered in spite of the challenges and came up with new and creative ways to reach out to the community, bring people together, maintain our community parks and facilities, continue to provide recreation opportunities and offer important services like child-care and nutrition programs for those in need. To celebrate the District's accomplishments and resilience during one of the hardest years in Pleasant Hill history, we would like to share a few of their tremendous success stories:

**A New Year, a New Playground**

Before the pandemic hit our community, PH Rec & Park was thrilled to open the first all-abilities playground in Pleasant Hill where people of all skill levels can actively play in the great outdoors! This \$350,000 colorful playground represents the last piece of the comprehensive renovation to Pleasant Oaks Park funded by Measure E passed in 2011.

Online Community Outreach & Virtual Recreation Center - Effective March 13, 2020, all Pleasant Hill Rec & Park programming was shut down in accordance to strict shelter-in-place orders by the Contra Costa County public health agency. PH Rec & Park staff immediately developed a social media community outreach campaign called “Stay in & Play” to keep engaged with the community. Part of this outreach effort was to establish a Virtual Recreation Center, a one-stop online resources on District website to inspire people to stay active, stay connected and to keep learning and playing while they shelter-in-place.

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SUMMER CARES Programs - COVID-19 extensively shut down all planned summer programming but the Rec & Park Youth Services staff met the challenge to re-imagine summer programs under very limiting public health orders. PH Rec & Park Staff introduced PHRec Cares, child-care based summer programs offered for preschool, youth and teens that were run exclusively by trained Rec & Park staff.

These programs consisted of 2-3 week sessions with stable groups of 12 children and included lots of arts & crafts, games, and outdoor fun. Programs followed all Contra Costa County health orders and safety guidelines at that time.

## Congratulations to the East Bay Regional Park District's Newly Elected Board Members



Congratulations to the three Park District Board Members who will remain on the Board following the recent election. Acting Board Director Elizabeth Echols (Ward 1) won the seat she had held since last year when she was appointed to replace retiring Board Director Whitney Dotson. Directors Dee Rosario (Ward 2) and Ellen Corbett (Ward 4) ran unopposed. Congratulations to all!

## Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline Virtual Dedication Event was held on October 31st

The EBRP District conducted a live-streamed virtual dedication event for the Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline on October 31. This park is named after East Bay civic and environmental leader and former Park District Board member John Sutter

It is located at the eastern touchdown of the Bay Bridge and provides spectacular views of the entire bay and new eastern Bay Bridge span. The new park includes the historic and newly-renovated 24,000-square foot Bridge Yard building available for future public events, a walking trail to the recently constructed 600-foot observation pier with views of the bay, and improved parking and bike and pedestrian access to the Alex Zuckermann Bay Bridge Trail from the eastern touchdown of the bridge to Treasure Island.

The event was hosted by EBRP District General Manager Robert E. Doyle. Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf and other local dignitaries also attended.



## CONTRA COSTA CANAL CELEBRATES 80 YEARS OF SERVICE

80 years ago on August 18, 1940, Contra Costa Water District delivered its first drops of water to the City of Pittsburg via the still-in-progress Contra Costa Canal.

The availability of fresh, reliable water was so meaningful to the community that the occasion was marked by a three-day celebration featuring music, parades, and dances.

The Contra Costa Canal's eventual completion in 1948 paved the way for the region's people and businesses to thrive. Even today, it is the primary water delivery system for the more than 500,000 people and the countless businesses located in central and eastern Contra Costa County.

Though this critical piece of infrastructure continues to serve our communities, it is aging and will soon need modernizing. We are now evaluating options for the next 100 years of the Contra Costa Canal; you can read about that work at [ccwater.com/G88](http://ccwater.com/G88).

## Two new Central Contra Costa Sanitary District Board Members

MARIAH LAURITZEN Chemical Engineer

From the very start of my career, I understood the importance of clean water in our communities. As President of Engineers without Borders in college I implemented a design for a water sanitation project in two Tsimane communities in Bolivia. One third of the population was suffering from disease caused by contaminated water at any given time. They needed a design that was both effective and could be maintained by the local community after installation.

Here at home I have worked in a Waste Water Treatment Plant that discharged to Suisun Bay. I believe in stewardship: both to help people and take care of our environment. I bring seven years of experience as an engineer. I bring my values that clean water should be a human right. Access to clean water has unfortunately fallen short in parts of the United States. I intend to defend access to clean water in my own community.

BARBARA HOCKETT Public Health Nurse

I seek to rejoin the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's Board to again offer its ratepayers the benefit of my diverse background and expertise in the field of public health. Serving on the Board between 1992 and 2012, I understand that a well-run Sanitary District should emphasize public health, in addition to excellent operations, maintenance and engineering.

My commitment to public health is evident through my work teaching Community Health Nursing at a local university introducing nursing students to sanitation and clean water programs in Contra Costa County. This commitment is also demonstrated through my collaboration with local law enforcement and community leaders, which resulted in a Pharmaceutical Disposal program located in police departments and other sites throughout Central County. This program protects public health and the environment by removing unused pharmaceuticals from homes and disposing of them properly. I advocated for the permanent Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility that keeps pollutants out of our landfills and waterways. I supported increased distribution of the District's high-quality recycled water for irrigation to conserve drinking water. My expertise in public health, strong professional ethics, and utmost respect for District personnel who provide quality services will always guide my decisions.

## MVSD Board Reorganization

At the December 10<sup>th</sup> Mt. View Sanitary District board meeting Al Schall was elected to President and David Maggi was elected to vice president.



## SB 1383 Regulations on Organic Waste are finalized

The Senate Bill 1383 regulations to divert organic waste from landfills are final and will take effect on Jan. 1, 2022. The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery received a Notice of Approval of Regulatory Action from the Office of Administrative Law earlier this month confirming the effective date. Cal Recycle resubmitted the SB 1383 regulations to The California Department of Resources on Oct. 7 to address OAL comments and comply with Administrative Procedures Act requirements. While the proposed regulations will not take effect until Jan. 1, 2022, the delayed implementation is intended to provide cities, counties and special districts with time to adopt enforceable mechanisms (ordinances and/or franchise agreements, permits or contracts with waste haulers) and administrative civil penalties to require organic waste generators, waste haulers and other entities to comply with the SB 1383 regulations.

A local agency's failure to adopt, by Jan. 1, 2022, any ordinance or enforceable mechanism for organic waste disposal reduction or include a provision in an agreement that requires a hauler to comply with Cal Recycle regulations, among other things, is a major violation punishable by a penalty of \$7,500 - \$10,000 per violation, per day.

## New Year's Resolution: Be recognized as a Leader in Special Districts!

The beginning of the year is a great time to do an evaluation of what Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) certificates your district, General Manager and board members have earned, and which ones are still on your to-do list.

In 1999, the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF), a 501(c)(3) organization, was formed to provide recognition and certification opportunities to special district officials and employees to enhance service to the public. It is dedicated to excellence in local government.

To date, SDLF has designed and implemented the following programs: Certified Special District Manager (CSDM); Certificate in Special District Governance; District of Distinction Accreditation; and District Transparency Certificate of Excellence.

The Certified Special District Manager (CSDM) is for general managers and other management staff of the district, the Certificate in Special District Governance is for directors or trustees, District of Distinction Accreditation and the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence are programs for the district as a whole.

For more information about any of these certificates, please go to [www.sdlf.org](http://www.sdlf.org). To check if your district is due for a renewal, or if you have questions about applying for a certificate, please email [info@sdlf.org](mailto:info@sdlf.org).

## Join CSDA's Emergency Preparedness Summit 2021

Led by USC Sol Price School of Public Policy - Executive Education Forum in partnership with Southern California Edison Company and California Special Districts Association

This February, join renowned industry experts and USC Price faculty to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and real-life experience, the key topics covered during the program will include the following:

- Security
- Management of an Emergency
- Critical Contacts in an Emergency
- Infrastructure Readiness
- Managing Assets Pre and Post Emergency

The Emergency Preparedness Summit will be held VIRTUALLY over 2 half days:

Friday, February 19, 2021, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Friday, February 26, 2021, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Free to CSDA Members  
\$340 / Non-member

Not a CSDA Member? [Click here to join](#) or go to [CSDA.Net/](http://CSDA.Net/)

This is a TWO PART Registration. After registering with CSDA, attendees will be emailed a link to finalize their registration on the USC platform.

## District Elections

By Derek Cole, partner of Cole Huber LLP

The California Voting Rights Act ("CVRA") is a well-known statute. Many special districts have responded in recent years to demands by potential CVRA litigants to convert to district elections. The legislature did not make any changes to the CVRA in the recently concluded legislative session. But this year, there was a significant court decision interpreting the act. There was also an important development involving the 2020 Census that may affect how special districts respond to potential CVRA lawsuits. The Santa Monica Decision - On its Way to the Supreme Court

In July, the Second District Court of Appeal issued a long-awaited decision regarding the City of Santa Monica's at-large elections. In 2018, a superior court had found the city's method of electing city council members violated the

CVRA. In a favorable decision for special districts, the Court of Appeal reversed, finding the plaintiffs had not

proven their case. Santa Monica is the first appellate court to address the CVRA's substantive requirements. The author of this article authored an amicus ("friend of the court") brief on behalf of CSDA and the League of California Cities (League) in support of Santa Monica.

Shortly thereafter, the plaintiffs petitioned the State Supreme Court to review the Court of Appeal's decision. Several influential parties sent "friend of the court," or "amicus," letters supporting the petition for review—including the former legislators who authored the CVRA and the current Secretary of State. CSDA and League filed a letter opposing Supreme Court review in an effort to preserve this helpful precedent for local governments.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court granted review, leaving the Court of Appeal decision no longer binding as authority. This case now proceeds to the highest court in the state to determine the substantive requirements that must be met by a plaintiff to prevail in a CVRA case. The Supreme Court has asked the parties to brief the following issue: What must a plaintiff prove in order to establish vote dilution under the California Voting Rights Act?

The Court of Appeal in Santa Monica confirmed that CVRA plaintiffs must prove vote dilution in addition to racially polarized voting. The latter element—bloc voting that occurs when a protected class prefers candidates other voters do not—is a well-known requirement of the CVRA. But whether plaintiffs are also required to demonstrate vote dilution has been disputed. Vote dilution occurs when an election method impairs the ability of a protected class to elect candidates of its choice or its ability to influence the outcome of an election, as a result of the dilution or abridgement of the rights of voters who belong to a protected class.

In concluding proof of dilution was required, the Court of Appeal focused on the language of several CVRA sections. It observed that the legislature had referred to vote dilution and racially polarized voting together throughout the act. In multiple sections, the legislature used phrases that referred to both elements combined with the conjunctive, "and." Because of the use of these phrases, the appellate court believed the language of the CVRA is clear in requiring proof of vote dilution and racially polarized voting.

Also of importance, the Court of Appeal held that the plaintiffs' evidence did not offer sufficient proof of vote dilution. The court observed the protected class in the case would only make up 30% of one city-council district if the city switched to district elections. Compared to the 14% population of the protected class citywide, the court found this increase too small to meaningfully change the results of city elections. Overall, Santa Monica is significant because it remains to be seen whether the California Supreme Court will confirm that vote dilution is a required element of proof in CVRA cases and that plaintiffs must show the change to district elections

would meaningfully enhance protected-class voting power.

#### The Delay of 2020 Census Data

Another development affecting the CVRA is the likely delay in the release of the 2020 Census data. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to protect the health of census workers, the United Census Bureau has been slowed in completing this year's census activities. As a result, the release of the census data that will be used to establish electoral districts for the next decade will be delayed. Whereas census data has usually been available to local governments in February or March following previous census years, such data may not be available next year until the summer.

The deadline for implementing district-based, or by-division, elections for the 2020 election cycle has passed. Special districts that have not yet converted to district-based elections, but that receive a written demand to do so, would implement district-based elections beginning with the 2022 election cycle. However, because of the delay in receiving 2020 Census data, the question arises as to what happens if a demand for district-based elections is received sometime before next summer, when the new census data is released by law, electoral districts must be drawn based on the data from the last decennial census. For this reason, special districts that receive demands to convert to district-based elections before the release of the 2020 Census data may—under a literal reading of Elections Code section 10010—have to complete the conversion process using 2010 Census Data. But if they do this, they would have to shortly undergo the redistricting process required by state law. Under Elections Code section 22000, every special district that has established district-based elections must redistrict to adjust district boundaries following the most recent census.

Because candidates could not start running in newly established district-based elections until 2022, it makes little practical sense to convert to district-based elections in the next several months, when only 2010 Census data would be available. Although the redistricting process is not as extensive as the initial districting process—only one public hearing is required to redistrict, while five hearings are required for initial creation of electoral districts—it still is wasteful for agencies to undergo the initial process using population data from a decade ago.

The most logical response to this dilemma is to suspend Election Code section 10010 timelines until the 2020 Census data are published. But unfortunately, the State Legislature has not yet seen fit to make such a change.

Since March, special districts have at least been able to rely on two of the Governor's executive orders suspending Elections Code section 10010 deadlines in light of the COVID-19 public-health emergency. These

orders remain in effect as of this writing. But once they expire or are rescinded, special districts may face the prospect of having to wastefully create electoral districts using 2010 Census Data before or during the first half of 2021.

This article was written by Derek Cole, Partner of Cole Huber LLP, as part of Voting Rights Act. This article is provided for general information only and is not offered or intended as legal advice. Readers should seek the advice of an attorney when confronted with legal issues, and attorneys should perform an independent evaluation of the issues raised in these materials.

## East Bay park district's General Manager Doyle retiring after 47 years



After a distinguished career of 47 years at the East Bay Regional Park District, including the past 10 as its general manager, Robert E. Doyle has announced that he will retire at the end of December,

Doyle got an early start in the field of parks and natural resources. While still in high school; he served as president of Save America's Natural Environment, a youth group in Contra Costa County that worked to acquire and preserve Las Trampas Ridge and Black Diamond Mines and Mount Diablo State Park.

Later he was a founding board member of Save Mount Diablo, the non-profit land trust and conservation organization whose name describes its mission. As board president, he increased the organization from 1,000 to 5,000 members, negotiated acquisition of 5,000 acres for Mount Diablo State Park and hired the organization's first full-time staff. Doyle still found time to earn a bachelor's degree in management from St. Mary's College. In the time since he became chief of land acquisition, Doyle's efforts have doubled the park district's size, including 20 new parks. The district now comprises 73 regional parklands totaling 125,000 acres in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, hosting 25 million visits a year. Doyle had many many other accomplishments during his career with the park district.

At East Bay Regional Park District, Doyle rose through the ranks. He began his park district career in 1973 as a park ranger at Tilden Regional Park near Berkeley. He also worked at Kennedy Grove, Miller-Knox, Point Pinole, Diamond Mines. Ultimately, he was East Bay Regional Park District General Manager. Robert Doyle became chief of. Land acquisition and trail planning in

1986, then spent 20 years as an assistant general manager, leading land acquisition, trail planning and interagency and advanced planning. The park district board appointed Doyle the agency's general manager in 2010.

## Donations Accepted

The Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) provides all types of California Special Districts with the opportunity for their board members and staff to receive the education needed to become well-trained, knowledgeable decision-makers that engage the public through a transparent process.

SDLF programs also promote and recognize excellence in the governance and management of special districts. Your donation helps support SDLF's programs and scholarships. <https://www.sdlf.org/donate>

## Contra Costa Special District Thank You

We wish to thank Chad Davisson for his hosting of our Zoom virtual meetings, Celia Goff for her Chapter administrative services, and Vice President Sue Morgan for finding great speakers and helping us adapt to our virtual meetings in 2020. We wish to thank Bert Michalczyk Treasurer for his services, filing our tax forms, keeping us on track financially, and invoicing and billing our members.

Chad Davisson - Member at Large needs a special thank you for hosting the Zoom virtual meetings along with Cecilia Goff Chapter Administrative Services support. Susan Morgan - Vice President who has found great speakers and end us adapt to virtual meetings in 2020. Thank you to the executive team.

We also thank John Burgh and Al Miller for proofreading and correcting Newsletter.

We also want to thank you all for your participation.

## Ironhouse has a new board Member



Angela has Wastewater Experience, is a Community Advocate and has an Environmental Commitment she understands wastewater regulations, and will support programs that protect the environment, and will actively promote transparency.

Angela Lowery

As an East Contra Costa County wastewater professional for more than 11 years, I know first-hand how essential it is that we ensure our sanitary public health resources are properly administrated, utilized and maintained.



Please send your district news releases to stan\_caldwell@comcast.net keep us informed of all of the exciting things your special district is doing, share you news with other districts by having it as an article in the next newsletter.

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**Mark your calendars with our future Chapter Meeting Dates:**

~ January 25, 2021 ~ March 22, 2021 ~ July 12 or 19, 2021 ~  
September 13, 2021 ~

Join in at 9:30 AM for a meet and greet opportunity  
And network opportunities within a Zoom breakout room.

Meeting begins at 10:00 AM

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**The Meeting will be held via Zoom.**

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Our chapter now has its own dedicated web site  
<https://contracostasda.specialdistrict.org/>

Our website was designed by Streamline. We thank them for the services they provide to Special Districts and chapters.