



**MAYORS' AND COUNCIL MEMBERS' ASSOCIATION OF SONOMA COUNTY  
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sonoma, Windsor

Finley Community Center  
Manzanita Room  
2060 West College Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
Friday August 21, 2026  
9:00 AM

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

|            |  |              |  |            |  |
|------------|--|--------------|--|------------|--|
| Cloverdale |  | Petaluma     |  | Sebastopol |  |
| Cotati     |  | Rohnert Park |  | Sonoma     |  |
| Healdsburg |  | Santa Rosa   |  | Windsor    |  |

**3. Public Comment**

If members of the public would like to provide public comment, we encourage you to submit them via email to Lauren Berges, by 8:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting: [lberges@sonomacountylocalleaders.org](mailto:lberges@sonomacountylocalleaders.org)

**4. Approval of Minutes**

A. July 17, 2026 Minutes

**5. Business**

A. Legislative Updates and Discussion

- a. Goat Grazing Wage Parity – Wildfire Mitigation Impacts
- b. Utility Liability Reform – Public Agency Cost Recovery

B. City and Legislative Representative Updates

**6. Adjournment to Next Meeting: September 18, 2026**

/s/ Lauren Berges, Executive Director

Copies of all staff reports and documents subject to disclosure that relate to any item of business referred to on the agenda are available for public review the Tuesday prior to the regularly scheduled meeting on the Sonoma County Mayors' and Councilmembers' website: <https://sonomacountylocalleaders.org/> or by email upon request at [lberges@sonomacountylocalleaders.org](mailto:lberges@sonomacountylocalleaders.org). Any documents subject to disclosure that are provided to all, or a majority of all, of the members of the Association regarding any item on this agenda, after the agenda has been distributed, will be made available for review. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Santa Rosa City Clerk's Office at 707-543-3015. Notification 72-hours prior to the meeting will enable the Association to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

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Friday July 17, 2026  
9:00 AM

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

|            |   |              |   |            |   |
|------------|---|--------------|---|------------|---|
| Cloverdale |   | Petaluma     |   | Sebastopol | X |
| Cotati     | X | Rohnert Park | X | Sonoma     |   |
| Healdsburg | X | Santa Rosa   | X | Windsor    | X |

**3. Public Comment**

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No Public Comment

**4. Business**

**A. Legislative Update: Review of Current Assembly and Senate Bills**

The Committee discussed the legislative bills presented and took action to support the following bills:

- AB 2134 (Addis) City council members: absences without permission.
- AB 2296 (Papan D) Planning and zoning: housing element: regional housing needs allocation.
- AB 1821 (Pacheco) California Public Records Act: agency response time.

Oppose: AB 1383 (McKinnor) Public employees' retirement benefits.

B. City and Legislative Representative Updates

Staff from Senator Cabaldon and Assemblymember Connolly presented on member's legislative package.

**5. Adjournment to Next Meeting:** August 21, 2026



# Cities' ability to mitigate wildfire risk with goat grazing at risk

Aug 12, 2026

**By Brian Hendershot, Cal Cities Advocate managing editor,**  
**(<https://www.calcities.org/people/brian-hendershot>) and Johnnie Piña, legislative**  
**advocate (<https://www.calcities.org/people/johnnie-pina>)**

Cal Cities and others are warning state leaders that a change to state law could force goat grazing companies out of business and jeopardize wildfire risk reduction services. Unless the Legislature acts, ranchers will need to pay herders up to \$240,000 a year due to new overtime requirements, according to an estimate by the California Farm Bureau.

The ([/docs/default-source/advocacy/sheep-goat-herder-parity-coalition-letter-8-12-26.pdf?sfvrsn=e5d4600f\\_1](/docs/default-source/advocacy/sheep-goat-herder-parity-coalition-letter-8-12-26.pdf?sfvrsn=e5d4600f_1)) letter ([/docs/default-source/advocacy/sheep-goat-herder-parity-coalition-letter-8-12-264cb8564e-56fd-47fb-87e2-e4a830105547.pdf?sfvrsn=c37564d7\\_1](/docs/default-source/advocacy/sheep-goat-herder-parity-coalition-letter-8-12-264cb8564e-56fd-47fb-87e2-e4a830105547.pdf?sfvrsn=c37564d7_1)), signed by a group of agricultural, environmental, local government, firefighting, climate, and environmental justice organizations, mirrors a letter sent by a bipartisan group of state lawmakers ([/docs/default-source/advocacy/sheep-and-goat-herder-legislative-letter-of-support.pdf?sfvrsn=852fd2c6\\_1](/docs/default-source/advocacy/sheep-and-goat-herder-legislative-letter-of-support.pdf?sfvrsn=852fd2c6_1)).

How did this happen?

**For decades** (<https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/article316719916.html>), California recognized that herders caring for sheep and goats should be compensated under the same minimum *monthly* wage structure, reflecting the

unique nature of this around-the-clock occupation. While the Legislature temporarily clarified this policy in 2023, that provision expired on July 1, 2026. That same year, the Legislature also directed the Department of Industrial Relations to study the employment of sheep and goat herders.

The **study** (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/Reports/California-Shepherders-and-Goat-Herders-SB-143-Study.pdf>), released this March, found “[Ranchers, herders, and worker advocates] agreed that the same alternative minimum monthly wage should apply to sheep and goat herders because the workers and work are similar and often overlap.”

### Why this matters

Goats have become a key part of the **local wildfire mitigation efforts** (<https://www.westerncity.com/article/paso-robles-fire-risk-mitigation-strategy-nothing-kid-about>). There is **very little** (<https://www.npr.org/2023/08/10/1192905277/goat-grazing-california-wildfire-prevention>) they won't eat, making them perfect for clearing flammable brush from hillsides, flatlands, and other hard-to-reach terrain even during California's increasingly hot, dry summers. By acreage, targeted grazing **ranks third** (<https://www.dailydemocrat.com/2026/07/16/california-grazing-sector-threatened-as-goat-herder-wage-soars-to-240k/>) in the state's wildfire resilience activities.

Without legislative action, employers must compensate goat herders under California's standard hourly wage and overtime rules, dramatically increasing labor costs and placing prescribed grazing operations at serious financial risk.

### Many **grazing operators**

(<https://www.abc10.com/article/news/local/sacramento/california-goat-grazing-companies-wage-law-could-force-closures/103-ef440ecb-60ed-46e4-87d9-d0205baf9d04>) have indicated these costs are unsustainable and could force them to reduce or eliminate their goat herds. This would significantly reduce an important wildfire prevention resource relied upon by cities.

## What can my city do?

Prescribed grazing is one of the most effective, environmentally sustainable, and cost-effective fuel reduction tools. Impacted cities should contact their state senator and assembly member and urge them to restore wage parity between sheep and goat herders.

The Legislature adjourns at the end of the month, leaving a narrow window to create a legislative fix. To learn how you can make your voice heard on this critical issue, contact your [regional public affairs manager \(/get-involved/regional-divisions\)](#) or contact your state lawmakers [using Cal Cities' sample letter \(/docs/default-source/advocacy/goat-parity-city-sample-letter.docx?sfvrsn=45bfc5ab\\_1\)](#) .

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# Closed-door bailout for private utilities would leave cities and wildfire survivors footing the bill

Aug 12, 2026

Contact your lawmakers and tell them you oppose the bailout

***By Brian Hendershot, Cal Cities Advocate managing editor,***  
***(<https://www.calcities.org/people/brian-hendershot>) and Melissa Sparks-Kranz,***  
***legislative advocate (<https://www.calcities.org/people/melissa-sparks-kranz>)***

Gov. Gavin Newsom is putting his might behind a last-minute bailout for private utility giants that cause wildfires. The yet-unveiled proposal is expected to dramatically limit how much money cities, insurance companies, and even individuals can recover from utility companies.

Cal Cities' response will be the same as it has been **in the months** (<https://www.calcities.org/home/post/2026/04/15/the-hotly-debated-return-of-wildfire-liability>) leading up to this closed-door deal: Cal Cities opposes any attempt to undermine public infrastructure and emergency response or shift recovery costs to cities and taxpayers.

Last year, the state's three largest utility companies posted billions of dollars in profits. The leaders of those companies have seen their pay surge to **\$16 million, \$19 million, and \$22 million** (<https://energyandpolicy.org/utility-ceo-pay-2025/>) — making them some of the nation's wealthiest utility CEOs — as over half of Californians report **trouble paying their utility bills**

[\(https://www.ppic.org/blog/low-income-households-struggle-with-the-cost-of-electricity-bills/\)](https://www.ppic.org/blog/low-income-households-struggle-with-the-cost-of-electricity-bills/) .

Wildfire survivors, insurance companies, and other local government groups have blasted the deal. “In government, what we should be doing at the end of the day is protecting people who are the most vulnerable, not protecting the richest, not protecting corporate interests,” Joy Chen, executive director of the Every Fire Survivor’s Network, **told *Politico*** (<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/california-currents/2026/08/10/the-wildfire-fight-newsom-cant-quit-01031974>) . “This proposal does the opposite of what public policy should be doing.”

### What do we think the proposal would do to cities?

The proposal is still not yet in print. But cities, along with counties, special districts, and other local public agencies, could take a major hit in three key areas.

The Governor’s proposal would limit damage claims on public property and infrastructure to the depreciated value of the asset. For example: Cities could only recover what a 60-year-old water system costs, not what it costs to replace the infrastructure when the utility has damaged the system.

To fill the gap to get to replacement cost, the Governor’s proposal suggests that cities recover those costs through their own insurance, instead of the utility company. However, those costs would then be borne by local residents and wildfire survivors themselves, rather than the utility that caused the fire.

The proposal would also eliminate emergency response and mutual aid as recoverable costs. This would completely disincentivize local agencies, which are typically the first responders, from participating in mutual aid and emergency response.

In theory, the Federal Emergency Management Agency could reimburse cities for mutual aid costs, but there is significant uncertainty over when and how much they will be reimbursed. FEMA is **far from a reliable source of funding**

<https://www.npr.org/2026/04/10/nx-s1-5770433/delay-funding-fema-hurricanes-disasters-wildfires-floods>) and is squabbling with local fire agencies on costs associated with past utility-caused wildfires. Newsom himself is still calling on the federal government to provide promised aid for survivors of **last year's Los Angeles wildfires** (<https://www.gov.ca.gov/2026/08/04/governor-newsom-invites-president-trump-to-deliver-overdue-wildfire-recovery-funding-during-los-angeles-visit/>) .

Finally, the package would eliminate property tax loss revenue as a recoverable cost. This is typically baked into any claims that a city brings forward and would impact cities' bottom line until new homes are built, which could take years.

The total that the utilities have paid out in public agency damages from 2017 to 2024 is 4% of their total payout — arguably pennies on the dollar for the utilities but a substantial hit to local public agencies.

### How would this impact cities?

When a utility causes a wildfire, they must fully compensate for property damage. Public infrastructure, lost tax revenue, emergency response, and mutual aid are necessary and critical for local governments to function. If public agencies cannot recover costs from negligent utilities, the very survivors whose community burned will likely foot the bill instead. Limiting public agency recovery will only shift costs to taxpayers and financially strand local governments, increasing strain on municipal budgets or even bankruptcy.

### Does the proposal do anything else?

The proposal is also expected to include changes to the state's last-resort home insurance program, streamline and fund wildfire mitigation, and modify oversight of utility wildfire mitigation plans and require increased climate credits to electricity ratepayers.

## What can cities do?

Cal Cities is urging all city officials and cities to call or text their **assembly member** (<https://www.assembly.ca.gov/assemblymembers>) and **senator** (<https://www.senate.ca.gov/senators>) to express their opposition to the bailout. City officials and cities can also sign on to Cal Cities' letter urging lawmakers to oppose any reforms that limit public agency recovery. To sign on to the letter or learn more, contact your **regional public affairs manager** ([/docs/default-source/advocacy/regional-public-affairs-managers---all.pdf?sfvrsn=a1f558ff\\_25](/docs/default-source/advocacy/regional-public-affairs-managers---all.pdf?sfvrsn=a1f558ff_25)) .

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