

ALERT

Bills Threaten to Destabilize State's Water Rights System



Four bills that threaten to destabilize California's water rights system and revoke rights upon which communities have relied for decades are moving in the Legislature despite concerns

raised by the California Chamber of Commerce and coalitions of agricultural and business groups and water agencies.

The water rights bills **opposed** by the coalitions are:

- **AB 460 (Bauer-Kahan; D-Orinda)**, giving the State Water Resources Control Board broad enforcement authority that differs vastly from current authority and

sidesteps fundamental constitutional due process protections.

- **AB 1337 (Wicks; D-Oakland)**, giving the State Water Board broad authority to curtail water rights of any seniority or claim of right. The curtailments may be issued without a hearing, depriving water rights holders of due process protections.

- **SB 389 (Allen; D-Santa Monica)**, empowering the State Water Board to investigate claimed water rights with little process and stacking the deck against water rights holders.

- **AB 1205 (Bauer-Kahan; D-Orinda)**, calling the transfer or sale of water rights "for profit" from agricultural land a waste and unreasonable use of water if an investment fund is involved.

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CalChamber Signs Equal Pay Pledge, Offers White Paper on Equal Pay Laws



The California Chamber of Commerce this week signed California's Equal Pay

Pledge, underscoring its commitment to and endorsement of efforts to close the gender pay gap.

CalChamber President and CEO Jennifer Barrera stressed the critical importance of pay equity in a May 2 statement:

"Equal pay is not only the law in California, it is the right thing to do. Additionally, studies underscore the fact that gender-equality practices increase productivity and profitability," she said. "California's Equal Pay Pledge promotes best practices for ensuring a culture and environment of fairness and equality in the workplace and encourages training so that companies can implement new policies in a way that best fits their resources and structure."

Pledge Commitment

Companies that sign the Equal Pay Pledge commit to:

- Conduct an annual internal company-wide gender pay analysis;
- Review hiring and promotion processes and procedures to reduce unconscious bias and structural barriers to equality; and

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Mexico Advocacy Day Luncheon at CalChamber



(From left) CalChamber Vice President, International Affairs Susanne T. Stirling; Mexico's Consul General in Sacramento Liliana Ferrer; Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. Esteban Moctezuma; and CalChamber President and CEO Jennifer Barrera at the 14th Annual Mexico Advocacy Day luncheon on May 1. See story on [Page 9](#).

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Labor Law Corner

Steps to Follow When Providing Lactation Accommodation to Employee



Lisa Guzman
Employment Law
Expert

One of my employees is returning from pregnancy leave and is asking for lactation accommodations. What must we do to accommodate this employee?

Both federal and California law require that all employers, regardless of size, reasonably accommodate an employee's request to express milk at work. There are some differences between federal and state law and employers in California must follow the more restrictive provisions. California employers are

required to provide adequate lactation space, breaks and policies.

Lactation Space Requirements

The California Labor Code requires that an employer provide an employee with the use of a room other than a bathroom, for the employee to express milk. The room must be close to the employee's work area and private. The room itself must:

- Be safe, clean, and free of toxic or hazardous materials;
- Contain a surface to place a breast pump and other personal items;
- Contain seating; and
- Have access to electricity or alternative devices (such as extension cords or charging stations) allowing operation of an electric or battery-powered breast pump. (*California Labor Code Section 1031*).

In addition, an employer must provide access to a sink with running water and a refrigerator or employer-provided cooler suitable for storing milk close to the employee's workspace. (*Labor Code Section 1031*).

A temporary location is acceptable if an employer has "operational, financial or space limitations." A temporary space must not be a bathroom, and must be near an employee's work area, private, free from intrusion while the employee is

expressing milk, and otherwise compliant with the law. Where a multipurpose room is used, the use for lactation takes precedence over other uses, but only for the time it is in use for lactation purposes. (*Labor Code Section 1031*).

Lactation Breaks

The Labor Code also requires every employer to provide a reasonable amount of break time to an employee for the purpose of expressing milk at work.

The employee may use rest and meal breaks to express milk, but if the employee cannot use their regular break time or needs additional time, an employer must provide the time. Any additional break time needed can be unpaid. (*Labor Code Section 1030*).

Exceptions and Undue Hardship

The law provides some exceptions for certain job sites and smaller employers. (*Labor Code Section 1031*).

- Agricultural employers may provide an employee wanting to express milk, with a private, enclosed and shaded space, such as an air-conditioned cab of a truck or tractor.

- Employers with multiemployer or multitenant worksites can comply by

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CalChamber-Sponsored Seminars/Trade Shows

More at www.calchamber.com/events.

Business Resources

California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA) Compliance. CalChamber and Mariner Strategies. May 24, Online. (800) 331-8877.

Labor and Employment

Avoiding Meal and Rest Break Traps. CalChamber. May 18, Online. (800) 331-8877.

HR Boot Camp 1-Day Seminar.

CalChamber. May 25, Sacramento (Online-SOLD OUT). (800) 331-8877.

Leaves of Absence: Making Sense of It All Virtual Seminar. CalChamber. August 24–25, September 21–22, Online. (800) 331-8877.

International Trade

2023 Taiwan Trade Shows. Taiwan Trade Center, San Francisco. March 6–November 8, Taiwan and Online. (408) 988-5018.

Access Africa Now Webinar Series.

U.S. Commercial Service. April 11–September 27. (512) 936-0039.

The Stockholm Model — Creating Sustainable Impact for Society through Collaboration and Innovation. KTH Royal Institute of Technology. May 8–9, San Francisco. 46-8-790 65 50.

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CalChamber Calendar

Capitol Summit:

May 17, Sacramento

International Forum:

May 17, Sacramento

Sacramento Host Breakfast:

May 17–18, Sacramento

Board of Directors:

May 17–18, Sacramento

CalChamber-Backed ‘Right to Cure’ Bill Passes Policy Committee



SUPPORT

California Chamber of Commerce-supported legislation providing businesses with time to correct an alleged violation of the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA) passed the Senate Judiciary Committee this week.

The bill, **SB 585 (Niello; D-Sacramento)**, prohibits construction-related accessibility claims from being started until a business has been served with a letter specifying each alleged violation

and given 120 days to correct the alleged violation.

Because of California’s current framework for construction-related ADA claims, a limited group of attorneys has been targeting businesses to leverage extortion-type settlements for technical construction-related standards that do not actually impede physical access to the facility for patrons with disabilities.

An alleged violation for something as simple as not having the appropriate signage or symbol can prompt a claim but doesn’t necessarily impede physical access to a facility and can be resolved quickly.

Unfortunately, business owners are

being pressured into paying settlements for these lawsuits instead of focusing financial resources on improving access at their place of business.

Providing businesses with the opportunity to fix all alleged violations within 120 days of receiving a demand letter, as proposed by SB 585, will encourage improved access in California and curb frivolous litigation, allowing businesses to avoid high-price tag shakedowns.

SB 585 passed Senate Judiciary on May 2 with bipartisan support and will be considered next by the full Senate.

Staff Contact: Ashley Hoffman

Steps to Follow When Providing Lactation Accommodation to Employee

From Page 2

providing a space shared among multiple employers within the building or worksite if the employer cannot provide a lactation location within the employer’s own workspace.

In addition, the law includes an undue hardship exemption regarding the location provided for lactation accommodation. An employer with fewer than 50 employees may be exempt from a requirement if the employer can show that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship, that is, significant difficulty or expense based on the size, financial resources, nature or structure of the employer’s business.

In this case, an employer must make reasonable efforts to find a close location other than a toilet stall for an employee to express milk in private. (*Labor Code Section 1031*).

Accommodation Period

Federal law limits the lactation accommodation period to one year from the child’s birth. California law has no upper time limit. California employers must accommodate employees if they request accommodation, even if it’s beyond a year.

An employee has the right to file a claim with the Labor Commissioner if they believe they have been denied their lactation accommodation rights. The Labor Commissioner may issue a citation and impose a civil penalty of \$100 for each violation. (*Labor Code Section 1033*).

Adopt Lactation Policy

California employers are required to create a lactation policy that includes the following:

- A statement about an employee’s

right to request lactation accommodation.

- The process by which the employee makes the request.
- A statement of the employer’s obligation to respond to each employee request.
- A statement about an employee’s right to file a complaint with the Labor Commissioner for any violation of the law.

The lactation policy must be given to all new hires, be included in an employee handbook, and given to any employee who asks about or requests parental leave. (*Labor Code Section 1034*).

Column based on questions asked by callers on the Labor Law Helpline, a service to California Chamber of Commerce preferred members and above. For expert explanations of labor laws and Cal/OSHA regulations, not legal counsel for specific situations, call (800) 348-2262 or submit your question at www.hrcalifornia.com.



CalChamber Member Feedback

“CalChamber brings together diverse constituencies to promote business growth and job creation for all regions of the state.”

Michael Lizárraga
President and Chief Executive Officer
TELACU

Bills Threaten to Destabilize State's Water Rights System

From Page 1

AB 460

AB 460 gives the State Water Board the ability to issue an interim relief order based on an alleged violation of a laundry list of water-related laws. The board can order the water diverter to stop the diversion immediately, providing little or no opportunity for the diverter to defend itself.

The bill also prevents the recipient of an interim relief order from seeking judicial review, further insulating the water board from judicial scrutiny.

An existing process already enables the water board to go to court to obtain a temporary restraining order to stop water diversions that are affecting fish and wildlife. A temporary restraining order is more effective and enforceable than an interim relief order and is issued by a neutral party.

AB 460 allows an interim relief order to be issued without notification and to remain in place for 180 days (six months) — an entire irrigation season during which the water diverter has no real opportunity to defend itself while its right to divert water has been suspended.

The CalChamber has offered amendments to deal with the perceived enforcement gap that AB 460 aims to address.

AB 1337

The impact of AB 1337 goes far beyond managing scarce water supplies during a drought and would be an unprecedented expansion of the State Water Board's authority over riparian and

pre-1914 water right holders in all hydrologic conditions.

It in essence would allow the water board to adopt regulations as it sees fit and issue an order to curtail water use in non-drought years, thereby elevating curtailment from a measure of last resort to standard operating procedure.

That ability could allow the water board to supersede existing water management done through court decrees, by law, local agreements and other means, many of which have been in place for years or even decades.

SB 389

SB 389 expands the State Water Board's authority to affect all water rights in the state, empowering the water board to decide to investigate a water right holder's claim or right with no meaningful threshold to trigger such an investigation.

The bill shifts onto the water right holder the burden of proving its right, rather than requiring the water board to show that the right doesn't exist as claimed.

SB 389 also changes the law governing forfeiture of water rights in a way that, unlike other areas of law, would allow the State Water Board to take away water rights without the existence of a conflicting claim of right.

This change in forfeiture may create perverse incentives against conservation and other drought planning because using the entirety of the right would help protect against a claim of forfeiture in a future water board investigation.

AB 1205

Vague or missing definitions in AB 1205 raise significant concerns about the continued viability of essential water transactions in California and the flexibility needed to manage the movement of water around the state.

Many housing development projects need to acquire water via a contractual relationship or buy a right to obtain project approvals. Agricultural landowners and irrigation districts in the northern part of the state transfer water in dry years to help meet demands in the Central Valley and Southern California.

As the state continues to implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014, groundwater transfers and trading are seen as among the more efficient ways to satisfy needs while ensuring basin sustainability.

Studies of markets in Australia have indicated investor participation didn't lead to negative impacts on agriculture or water users. More study of a perceived issue with water markets would be prudent.

AB 460, AB 1337 and SB 389 have been referred to the fiscal committees of their respective houses for further consideration, while AB 1205 is headed for a vote by the full Assembly.

The CalChamber continues to work with the authors and other opponents of these bills in seeking amendments to prevent the problems identified.

Staff Contact: Brenda Bass

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Engaging in Global Market Key to Keeping US, California Economies Strong, Growing



Susanne T. Stirling

In a post-pandemic era, the world's economic outlook is full of mixed messages. The World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF),

World Bank and the U.S. Department of Treasury are not in sync on a global outlook. Despite this, all agree on the importance of trade for economic growth.

For World Trade Month this May, the California Chamber of Commerce underscores the significance of international trade in maintaining economic growth. World Trade Month activities each May provide many opportunities to acknowledge the importance of global trade to the economies of California and the United States.

To obtain this economic growth, more and more business and agricultural groups are calling on the Biden administration to approve trade promotion authority and enter into more free trade agreements.

Extending trade promotion authority so that the President of the United States may negotiate new multilateral, sectoral and regional trade agreements would ensure that the United States may continue to gain access to world markets, resulting in an improved economy and additional employment of Americans.

Trade Promotion Authority

With more than 30% of U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) tied to international trade and investment and 95% of the world's population abroad, representing 80% of the world's purchasing power, U.S. engagement in the international marketplace is more important than ever to the nation's economy.

Passage of trade promotion authority will help Congress and the President to work together to forge new and beneficial trade agreements for the United States. Congress needs to renew trade promo-

tion authority to enable the United States to continue pursuing new trade deals aggressively.

Without trade promotion authority, the United States will be compelled to sit on the sidelines while other countries negotiate numerous preferential trade agreements that put U.S. companies at a competitive disadvantage.

Commentary

By Susanne T. Stirling

By approving trade promotion authority, Congress can help strategically address the range of possible U.S. trade negotiations: a U.S.-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (FTA); a U.S.-European Union FTA; a U.S.-Kenya FTA; and even a possible re-admission to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) — now Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) — as well as other future trade negotiations.

California

California is the fifth largest economy in the world with a gross state product of more than \$3.5 trillion. International trade and investment are major parts of our economic engine that broadly benefit businesses, communities, consumers and state government.

California's economy is diverse, and the state's prosperity is tied to exports and imports of both goods and services by California-based companies, to exports and imports through California's transportation gateways, and to movement of human and capital resources.

The CalChamber supports expansion of international trade and investment, fair and equitable market access for California products abroad, and elimination of disincentives that impede the international competitiveness of California business.

California exports reached a record high in 2022, with companies exporting \$185.55 billion worth of goods to the world. As usual, computer and electronic products made up the bulk of exports at 22.4% (\$41.59 billion). Nonelectrical

machinery and chemicals made up 11.7% and 9.5% of total exports, respectively.

California's top five export markets remained the same in 2022; in order: Mexico, Canada, China, Japan and South Korea.

There was some shuffling with the next five export partners to round out the top 10. Taiwan remained California's sixth largest export partner, but the Netherlands took over the seventh place, followed by Germany, India and Hong Kong, which moved down from ninth to 10th place.

U.S.-U.K. Free Trade Agreement

The CalChamber believes in strengthening economic ties and enhancing regulatory cooperation through agreements with our top trading partners that encompass both goods and services, including financial services, is essential to eliminating unnecessary regulatory divergences that may act as a drag on economic growth and job creation.

The United States maintains a deep trade and investment relationship with the United Kingdom, which officially left the European Union on January 31, 2020. Now that the two countries are in a position to enter into a formal free trade agreement, negotiations for a U.S.-U.K. FTA should be underway.

The CalChamber supports the goal of strengthening the trading and investment relationship between the two countries, with a focus on securing open market access, and further supports the following issues being discussed during negotiations:

- market access for goods;
- data protection and data transfers;
- financial services;
- intellectual property rights;
- movement of labor; and
- regulatory cooperation.

Two-way trade between the United States and the United Kingdom was \$141.31 billion in 2022 and the U.K. was the fifth largest importer of U.S. goods with a total value of \$77.3 billion.

In 2022, exports from California into the United Kingdom totaled \$4.689 billion, while imports into California

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Engaging in Global Market Key to Keeping US, State Economies Strong

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from the United Kingdom were approximately \$4.125 billion. Top export categories included: computer/electronic products, chemicals, nonelectrical machinery, and transportation equipment. Top import categories included: transportation equipment, which made up more than 25% of the total, followed by computer/electronic products, nonelectrical machinery, reimports, and chemicals.

The U.S. Department of Commerce describes the U.S.-U.K. investment relationship as the largest in the world, creating more than 2 million jobs, about 1 million in each country.

In California, the No. 2 country for foreign direct investment is the United Kingdom (2022 statistics). British companies in California provide more than 94,601 jobs through 2,358 firms — amounting to \$9.36 billion in wages.

The top jobs by sector are professional/business services, manufacturing, retail trade, leisure/hospitality, information, transportation/warehousing/utilities, financial activities, and wholesale trade.

U.S.-Kenya Free Trade Agreement

The CalChamber supports stable and sustainable economic growth and development in sub-Saharan Africa and supports the United States seeking to facilitate market-led economic growth

in, and thereby the social and economic development of, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

In particular, the CalChamber is supportive of the United States seeking to assist sub-Saharan African countries, and the private sector in those countries, to achieve economic self-reliance. A trade agreement between the United States and Kenya would be the first agreement between the U.S. and a sub-Saharan African country.

A U.S.-Kenya trade agreement also would complement Africa's regional integration efforts, which include the landmark African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). From its location on the eastern coast of Africa, Kenya serves as a gateway to the region and a major commercial hub that can provide opportunities for U.S. consumers, businesses, farmers, ranchers and workers.

Global Leaders in International Trade

The CalChamber believes that California's position as a global leader in international trade should be considered and asks the administration and Congress to continue to advance bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements which are critical to consumers, workers, businesses, farmers and ranchers.

In addition, the United States should reinvest efforts to establish free trade

agreements with partners that share our trade philosophy, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, and others. These markets offer new access opportunities for U.S. products and creating these alliances would ensure the U.S. can maintain its position as a major exporter.

Susanne T. Stirling is vice president of international affairs for the California Chamber of Commerce.



WORLD TRADE MONTH
MAY 2023
WORLD TRADE WEEK
MAY 21-27, 2023

World Trade Week, which occurs during the third full week of May, was initiated by the Los Angeles Chamber, officially established in 1935 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and is recognized annually by presidential proclamation. More recently, the celebration has evolved into World Trade Month with the support of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

CalChamber-Sponsored Seminars/Trade Shows

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Annual Export Conference. National Association of District Export Councils (NADEC). May 9-10, Washington, D.C. aburkett@naita.org.

9th Annual Orange County World Trade Week Forum: Global Trade: Transitioning, Resilient and Growing. District Export Council of Southern California. May 17, Irvine.

U.S. to EU: How to Sell into European Union via eCommerce. International Trade Administration, Getting to Global and U.S. Commercial Service. May 18, Online. (800) 872-8723.

NAFSA Annual Conference & Expo. National Association of International

Educators. May 30-June 2, Washington, D.C. (202) 737-3699.

Trade Mission 2: California Water Tech Trade Mission to Mexico. Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). June 5-9, Tijuana and La Paz. diana.dominiguez@gobiz.ca.gov.

Infosecurity. Infosecurity Europe. June 20-22, London. (+44) 20 82712130.

2023 Canada Specialty Food & Beverage Outbound to Canada. Western U.S. Agricultural Association. June 25-30, Toronto and Vancouver, Canada. (360) 693-3373.

Select USA San Francisco Spin-Off Program. GlobalSF and QB3. June 30,

Berkeley. info@globalsf.biz. Trade Mission to Africa. Global Diversity Export Initiative. August 6-15, South Africa, Ghana and Nigeria (optional stop). eve.lerman@trade.gov.

The Green Expo 2023. The Green Expo and International Environmental Congress of the Consejo Nacional de Industriales Ecologistas (CONIECO). September 5-7, Mexico City. 55-1087-1650.

Smart City Expo World Congress (SCEWC). Smart City Expo World Congress. November 7-9, Barcelona, Spain. (704) 248-6875.

California Works

Ironstone Vineyards Carves Place for State on World Stage with Dedication, Passion



This article is a part of a series of profiles of CalChamber member companies that are contributing to the state's economic strength and ability to stay competitive in a global economy. Visit [California Works](#) to learn more about this series and read past and future profiles.



French government wanted to buy the nugget for the Louvre Museum when the nugget arose for sale, but Kautz, feeling it belonged in California, purchased the specimen and it is now on display at the winery, which is located only 9 air miles from where the nugget was found.

Advocating for California

For decades, the Kautz family has been a part of state and national efforts to spur the agricultural economy at home and abroad.

John Kautz and his wife, Gail, have participated in numerous international delegations. Shortly after the Iron Curtain fell, in 1990, Kautz, Gail and their son, Kurt, were part of the American contingent of agriculturalists from 34 countries who gathered in Yalta for the 17th annual General Assembly of the International Organization of Vine and Wine, a Paris-based association advocating uniform laws to govern the international commerce of wines and

Ironstone Vineyards is one of California's agricultural crown jewels, spearheaded by a family of Californians whose farming tradition spans half a century.

This award-winning winery exports its wines to every state in the nation and to more than 50 countries.

Top Tourist Destination

Founded by John Kautz in 1989, Ironstone Vineyards was built by blasting 10,000 feet of caverns into the mountainside. Kautz' visionary creation is now a top tourist destination in Calaveras County. It lures visitors with a beautifully designed landscape and draws hundreds of visitors each year to enjoy the blooming of the more than 300,000 daffodils planted on the vineyard grounds.

In addition to its wine tasting, dining and retail shop offerings, the winery also houses a museum that is organized around three themes: local geology, the Gold Rush and the Native Americans of the area.

The centerpiece of the museum is a crystalline gold leaf specimen, weighing 44 pounds troy—the largest in the world. According to a *Sonora Union Democrat* report published in 2010, the



The winery also boasts a 200,000 square-foot amphitheater, which frequently hosts festivals, events and concerts.

In a book chronicling the Kautz family history and efforts in California, Visit California President and CEO Caroline Beteta refers to the winery as a Gold Country cultural center, integral to the region's tourism.

"It's easy to forget that only decades ago, the Route 49 corridor and indeed great swaths of California were largely off the map for tourists," Beteta said. "It has taken visionaries like John (Kautz), rooted in California traditions and animated by our pioneering spirit, to inspire the world's travelers to discover all corners of our Golden State."

table grapes.

The following year, in 1991, Kautz and Gail represented California Governor Pete Wilson at the California State World Trade Commission. The agenda of the mission was complex: a round of top-level discussions with European Community officials in Brussels to press for more market-oriented trade policies; a series of talks with General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiators in Geneva; official visits to the Governor's Foreign Offices of Trade and Investment in London and Frankfurt; and through other contacts, an effort to gain a better understanding of European competition, particularly production and marketing practices.

Kautz also became involved as chair—*See Ironstone: Page 8*

Ironstone Vineyards Carves Place for California on World Stage

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man of the board of the Agricultural Network, an organization designed to formulate and communicate the case for agriculture in as many venues as possible.

With the support of Kautz and the Agricultural Network, KVIE, a Public Broadcasting Service member station in Sacramento, launched *California Heartland*, a documentary series chronicling rural life and agriculture in Central California.

In 2006, a Vision for the Valley campaign was launched to finance the continuation of television programming in the years to come, and to which the Kautzes donated. After 10 years on the air, *California Heartland* was renamed *America's Heartland*, with an expanded scope, and reached a national audience.

Sustainable Agricultural Practices

Ironstone Vineyards practices sustainable viticulture, reducing water use, building healthy soil, and maintaining the surrounding wildlife habitat. These practices include:

- **Using Drip Irrigation:** Drip irrigation systems are beneficial in delivering water deliberately and more uniformly to the vines. Past practices in the industry included flood irrigation and the use of sprinklers. These poorly developed practices added to the overuse of limited water resources. Drip irrigation lines can also be used to administer fertilizer and soil additives.

- **Reduced Pesticide Use:** For years, Ironstone Vineyards has fervently strived to reduce its use of pesticides and herbicides. If applications of these are necessary, they use the softest chemicals and the lowest doses possible.

- **Leaf Pulling:** This technique involves removing leaves around the grape clusters when the berries are about the size of a pea, which improves air circulation in the grape canopy, reducing the likelihood of rot. This practice also exposes grape bunches to sunlight which significantly improves winegrape quality.

- **Planting Cover Crops:** Cover crops help reduce evaporation of water, decrease soil erosion, give haven to beneficial insects and organisms, and when the cover crops decompose, they add organic matter back to the soil.

- **Using Compost:** Adding compost, grape pumice (the remains of the grape

skins, leaves and stems after the pressing process) or manure to the vineyard soil reintroduces valuable nutrients.

- **Creating Owl Boxes and Raptor Perches:** Placing owl boxes throughout vineyards increases their habitation. Perches allow for hawks, falcons and other predators to scout for vineyard vermin. These birds are necessary to naturally reduce the impact of gophers and voles, which can cause extensive damage to the vines and their root system.

- **Restoring Riparian Habitat:** Ripar-

ian ecosystems, the interface between land and water, are highly productive areas associated with creeks, streams, rivers and wetlands. They support more diverse and abundant wildlife populations. As caretakers of large portions of land, Ironstone Vineyards takes the responsibility to restore these valuable habitats which are incorporated into its vineyards. Through water bank stabilization, the removal of nonnative plants and the restoration of the natural flora, these habitats now provide safe haven for many creatures.



Mexico's Ambassador to US Highlights Importance of Past, Future Partnership



In celebration of the bicentennial anniversary of diplomatic relations between

Mexico and the U.S. this year, Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. Esteban Moctezuma highlighted our countries' past trade relationships and stressed the importance of our continuing trade partnership at the 14th Annual Mexico Advocacy Day luncheon on May 1.

The luncheon is hosted each year by the California Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the Consulate General of Mexico in Sacramento. The event drew nearly 100 attendees, and was attended by several California legislators, including Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil; Senator John Laird; Senator Roger Niello; Assemblymember David Alvarez; Assemblymember Laurie Davies; Assemblymember Liz Ortega; Assemblymember Blanca Rubio; Assemblymember Tri Ta; Assemblymember Avelino Valencia; and Assemblymember Carlos Villapudua.

Also in attendance were Consul General of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Vice Dean of the San Francisco Consular Corps Azamat Abdraimov; Consul General of Japan Yasushi Naguchi; and Board of Equalization Chairman Antonio Vazquez

CalChamber Board members Rick Fowler, COO of Kronick Moskovitz Tiedemann & Girard, and Margaret Wong, president and CEO of McWong International, also attended the luncheon.

More Than Neighbors

After an introduction by Ambassador Liliana Ferrer, Consul General of Mexico in Sacramento, Ambassador Moctezuma touched on some of the lessons we should remember when thinking about the 200 years of diplomatic relationships between the United States and Mexico.

One lesson, he said, is perspective. Next January marks the 30th anniversary of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and it evolved the countries' relationship from being just neighbors to becoming strategic trade partners.

Prior to the NAFTA, trade between Mexico and the U.S. came in at about \$300

billion. Today, the figure has grown to \$1.3 trillion. In February, Mexico became the United States' top trading partner for the second consecutive month this year.

"To put this in perspective...trade between Mexico and the United States was greater than between the United States and Japan, Germany, South Korea and the United Kingdom combined," Moctezuma said.



Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. Esteban Moctezuma speaks at the CalChamber 14th Annual Mexico Advocacy Day luncheon.

NAFTA "fundamentally reshaped the economic relations of North America," but it did not happen organically. Rather, it came about thanks to the decades of hard work of government, private sector organizations and communities in the three countries.

Present, Future Lessons

Another lesson Moctezuma spoke about was having a renewed approach toward the present. The COVID-19 pandemic showed the magnitude of the highly integrated economic ties between our countries' industries and supply chains, manufacturing critical goods such as medicines, medical protective equipment, automobile production and agriculture, among others.

Additionally, the invasion of Ukraine made North America the world's breadbasket and it is a "wake up call that allows us to take a closer look at the strength and depth of our interdependence," he said.

The United States and Mexico share more than just goods — the countries also

share growing social, cultural and humanistic values. Moctezuma also pointed out that the countries share family ties, with 8 million people of Mexican origin living in the United States, and nearly 2 million Americans living in Mexico.

Moctezuma also spoke about the interdependence between our economies, highlighting the fact that California's trade with Mexico supports more than 600,000 jobs and more than 13,000 jobs are sustained by Mexican companies in the state. Our factories are so intertwined that some goods manufactured in Mexico for export into the U.S. are made with parts manufactured in the U.S.

The final lesson Moctezuma shared with luncheon attendees was that there is a "need for a constructive roadmap for the future that we must imagine together."

California is uniquely positioned to work with Mexico to "consolidate a humanistic and competitive North American vision," he said. This humanitarian region could show the world how "two nations can work together and build together a better future."

Our countries, he said, are closer and more integrated than ever, and our relationship directly affects the daily lives of both Americans and Mexicans. This is why it's important that we "find ways to understand and communicate the benefits of the North American relationship to our people and to explain how our future will be much better by working together and understanding ourselves as a unit," he said.

Mexico-California Trade

Mexico continues to be California's No. 1 export market, purchasing 16.5% of all California exports. California exports to Mexico amounted to \$30.77 billion in 2022, an increase of 13.1% from 2021.

Computers and electronic products remained California's largest exports, accounting for 16.3% of all California exports to Mexico. Imports from Mexico into California totaled \$60.47 billion in 2022. Mexico is the 16th largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) through foreign-owned enterprises (FOEs) in California. In 2021, Mexican FOEs in California provided 9,875 jobs through 401 firms amounting to \$1.089 billion in wages.

Staff Contact: Susanne T. Stirling

CalChamber Signs Equal Pay Pledge, Offers Free White Paper, Webinar

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- Promote equal pay best practices.

The CalChamber's pledge builds on its support for closing the gender pay gap. The CalChamber supported the 2015 Fair Pay Act authored by Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson which requires employers to pay employees, regardless of gender, equal pay for performing substantially similar duties unless the employer can show the pay discrepancies are based on seniority, merit, experience, education, training, or any other bona fide factor. It also allows employees to share compensation information with one another without fear of retaliation.

Free White Paper Available

To help employers better understand their legal obligations, the CalChamber has released a free white paper that outlines pay equity-focused requirements in California with an emphasis on

employer compliance issues, tips and best practices.

The *California's Focus on Pay Equity Increases Responsibilities for Employers* white paper includes:

- Equal Pay Act basics;
- Salary history restrictions;
- Pay disclosure requirements;
- Pay data reporting for large employers; and
- Tips and best practices for complying with pay equity laws.

To download the free white paper, [click here](#).

CalChamber Webinar

The CalChamber will be presenting a live webinar on May 16 covering legal requirements and best practices for ensuring pay equity and compliance for all workers. *On Equal Footing: Best Employer Practices for Pay Equity Laws* will feature CalChamber employment law

experts leading a broad discussion about:

- The California Fair Pay Act;
- Complying with California's salary history ban;
- Bona fide factors justifying pay disparity;
- Pay data reporting to the California Civil Rights Department;
- Creating and providing pay scales to employees and applications.

Registration is required to attend and online seats are limited. The webinar is free for CalChamber members and \$149 for nonmembers. Members should have received an email with a link for the free registration. Nonmembers may register at the [CalChamber Store](#).

Equal Pay Pledge

Companies wishing to sign the California Equal Pay Pledge are encouraged to visit [Take the Equal Pay Pledge Today! CCSWG \(ca.gov\)](#).

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LIVE WEBINAR | MAY 18, 2023 | 10 AM - 11:30 AM PT

Avoiding Meal and Rest Break Traps

California's meal and rest break laws are not only robust, they're also rapidly evolving — making it more challenging than ever to comply with all the rules.

Join CalChamber's employment law experts for a discussion of this important and highly litigated area of wage and hour law.



Preferred Members and above receive their 20% member discount.

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