

# ALERT

## Join Impact California: Amplify Your Voice

*Critical Decisions Require Your Input*



After returning from their summer recess on Monday, in the next few weeks, legislators will be making critical decisions that will shape the future of our state's business climate.

It is crucial for business leaders to have their voices heard and to participate actively in the legislative process. One effective way to do this is through Impact California, the grassroots advocacy effort of the California Chamber of Commerce.

### What is Impact California?

Impact California is designed to empower residents and business leaders by providing them with the tools needed to communicate effectively with their legislators about bills having a significant impact on the business community.

Through this program, participants receive Action Alerts about important legislative issues and have the opportunity to send letters and communications directly to their elected representatives.

### Why Register?

By registering with Impact California, you join a network of engaged business leaders who are committed to shaping policies that foster economic growth and sustainability. Registration allows you to receive targeted Action Alerts through our online system, ensuring you are

informed and ready to act on key legislative issues.

Although we can send direct emails only to the people who register, we also encourage our local chamber and business association allies to disseminate these alerts, amplifying the collective voice of California's business community.

### Impact in Action: Reforming PAGA

The business community's engagement through Impact California has already made a significant impact this year. The California Legislature recently passed two bills reforming the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA), a labor law that had been a priority for businesses across the state.

Through coordinated efforts, stakeholders were mobilized, and their voices were heard, demonstrating the power of collective advocacy. This reform is a testament to what can be achieved when the business community comes together to drive meaningful change.

### How to Get Involved

**1. Register Online:** Visit the [Impact California Action Center](#) to sign up and become part of the action. Click the "Sign Up for Alerts" button at the upper right of the page. The registration process is straightforward, and your involvement is vital.

**2. Engage with Legislators:** Use the tools provided by Impact California to communicate your concerns and perspectives to lawmakers as they finalize policies for the year. Your voice can make a

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## CalChamber, Tech Experts, Leading Calif. Democrat Oppose AI Bill



An artificial intelligence (AI) bill **opposed** by the California Chamber of Commerce and other groups, was sent to the Assembly Appropriations

### OPPOSE

Committee Suspense File this week.

**SB 1047 (Wiener; D-San Francisco)** enacts the Safe and Secure Innovation for Frontier Artificial Intelligence Models Act.

In addition to being opposed by a CalChamber-led coalition of business and industry groups, SB 1047 was opposed this week in a *Fortune* commentary by a renowned computer scientist, and letters from the ranking member of the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space and Technology, and academic AI researchers from seven University of California campuses plus the University of Southern California and Stanford University.

### SB 1047

SB 1047 requires frontier AI developers to make a positive safety determination before initiating training of a covered model, among other things, subject to harsh penalties that include criminal penalties. The bill creates significant uncertainty for businesses due to vague, overbroad and impractical, and at times

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### Inside

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*Cal/OSHA Corner***How Indoor Heat Illness Rule Applies to Air Conditioned Workplace**

**Mel Davis**  
Workplace Safety  
Expert

*Our indoor office is air conditioned. Does our business need to include the indoor heat illness requirements in our Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)?*

Yes. The indoor heat illness prevention requirements can either be included in the IIPP or maintained as a separate document or amendment to the IIPP.

The requirements are in effect now. On June 20, 2024, the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board adopted the proposed indoor heat illness prevention

standard. It was forwarded to the Office of Administrative Law, approved on July 23, 2024, and, as requested by the Standards Board, became effective immediately.

**Power Outage**

The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) [news release](#) states that the Heat Illness Prevention in Indoor Places of Employment regulation applies to most indoor workplaces, such as restaurants, warehouses, and manufacturing facilities where temperatures commonly reach and exceed 82 degrees Fahrenheit.

Employers should keep in mind, however, that it is not uncommon for workplaces to lose power, disabling the office air conditioning units. Depending on the length of the power outage, the office temperature could rise to 82 degrees or more. Therefore, there should be included in the IIPP a note to have emergency contingencies for the office staff.

**Requirements**

Where the indoor heat illness regulation applies, copious amounts of water must be made available — a minimum of one quart per hour per exposed employee.

Moreover, the temperature or heat index, whichever is greater, is to be recorded and maintained. The record should include the time, date and location of the measurement, and all other environmental risk factors relating to heat illness should be noted.

The regulation also addresses emergency procedures in the event of an incident, emergency contact information, and supervisor protocol if an incident is in progress or there is concern that an employee may be experiencing heat-related problems.

Also, if the temperature reaches 87 degrees, then additional requirements are introduced, such as cooling down the work area, work rest schedules and other mandates. Training of the supervisors and employees is stressed.

In some situations, the regulation's requirements do not apply, such as when a worker is exposed to temperatures below 95 degrees for 15 minutes within a 1-hour period or for employees teleworking from a location of the employees' choice not under the control of the employer.

**More Information**

The complete regulation can be found at the Cal/OSHA website on [Indoor Heat Illness Prevention](#). Information also can be found in the division's [frequently asked questions](#) section.

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*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](http://www.hrcalifornia.com).*

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More information at [www.calchamber.com/events](http://www.calchamber.com/events).

**Labor and Employment**

HR Boot Camp. CalChamber. August 22–23, September 12–13, Online. (800) 331-8877.

**International Trade**

2024 Green Expo: California Pavilion. Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). September 3–5, Mexico City. [Diana.Dominguez@gobiz.ca.gov](mailto:Diana.Dominguez@gobiz.ca.gov).

2024 California Pavilion @ Industrial Transformation Mexico. GO-Biz. October 8–11, Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico. [Diana.Dominguez@gobiz.ca.gov](mailto:Diana.Dominguez@gobiz.ca.gov).

Japan International Aerospace Exhibition: California Pavilion. GO-Biz. October 16–18, Tokyo, Japan. [emily.desai@gobiz.ca.gov](mailto:emily.desai@gobiz.ca.gov).

Africa Health. GO-Biz awarding export vouchers. October 22–24, Cape Town, South Africa. [Register interest. patricia.utterback@gobiz.ca.gov](mailto:patricia.utterback@gobiz.ca.gov).

Cosmoprof Hong Kong. GO-Biz. [Registration of interest required](#). November 12–14, Hong Kong, China.

Rebuild Ukraine 2024: Business in Ukraine and Poland. GO-Biz. November 12–15, Warsaw, Poland. [patricia.utterback@gobiz.ca.gov](mailto:patricia.utterback@gobiz.ca.gov).

## *The Workplace*

# How Remote Work Is Changing California's Workforce



In **Episode 202** of The Workplace podcast, CalChamber Associate General Counsel Matthew Roberts and PPIC research-

ers Sarah Bohn and Hans Johnson discuss how remote work is reshaping the California labor market.

*The article below provides a brief summary of the topics discussed in the podcast episode. Readers are encouraged to listen to the podcast for a more detailed discussion.*

### PPIC Research

Remote work is now a feature of our lives thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, and remote work arrangements have become an outright expectation of many workers, Roberts says.

Thanks to research by Sarah Bohn, Hans Johnson and Eric McGhee for the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), we are now starting to see how much the labor market has changed as a result.

Their work, released in a [three-part blog series](#), examines who is working from home, how remote work has affected migration, and how remote work has reshaped California's labor market.

### Who Is Working Remotely?

Bohn, vice president and director of the PPIC Economic Policy Center and senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, says that many more Californians are working remotely now than

before the pandemic. Jobs most likely to be done remotely include writers, editors, and software developers.

Johnson, senior fellow at the PPIC Higher Education Center and a member of the PPIC Economic Policy Center, adds that in PPIC surveys, the majority of Californians want to work remotely. However, it's no surprise that only certain types of workers are able to avail themselves of these opportunities.

For example, workers with a college degree are about three times more likely to be able to work remotely compared to workers who have only a high school diploma.

There also is a huge wage divide, he says. A third of workers who have very high incomes, making more than \$200,000 a year, primarily work remotely.

The age group with the highest share of remote workers are those aged 65 and over, with one out of four working primarily from home.

### Migration

Remote work led to a substantial increase in the number of workers leaving the Bay Area and to a lesser extent, Los Angeles, and moving either elsewhere in California, or also moving out of the state, Johnson says. Within California, one of the most popular destinations from the Bay Area is Sacramento.

The main driver of this migration was the high cost of housing. This driver was also true for people leaving the state, Johnson explains.

"As we know, California and the Bay Area are exorbitantly expensive, but even for people who are renting, rents tend to be much lower in interior locations, and

in other states than in California," he points out.

### Changes, Impacts on Labor Market

The shift to remote work is the biggest change we will probably ever see, Bohn says. Before the pandemic, about 5% of workdays were done from home and today the number is at about 27%. For the past two years, the percentage of work done at home has been consistent, between 25% and 30%.

Bohn explains that economists have paid close attention to remote work's impact on productivity, and they have not seen a noticeable dip. For employers who are balancing business costs, this could be a key factor.

Perhaps having a smaller in-person workforce could be less costly for some employers as they are not losing productivity from remote workers, she said.

An area affected by remote work is retention and recruitment. Research evidence suggests that when hybrid options or fully remote options are on the table, it can improve recruitment and improve retention, Bohn says.

Interestingly, employees are even willing to trade off higher wages for the flexibility of working remotely.

"That catches my attention as an economist, because we also know that wages and earnings are usually the No. 1 thing that employees are looking for," she says.

This makes remote work worth consideration by employers looking to cut costs, she adds.

To read more about Bohn's and Johnson's research on remote work, [click here](#).

## Join Impact California: Amplify Your Voice in the Legislative Process

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difference in the legislative outcomes that affect your business.

**3. Spread the Word:** Encourage colleagues and fellow business leaders to join Impact California. The more voices we have, the greater our influence on policy decisions that affect the business environment in California.

### Act Now

With just weeks remaining in the legislative session, now is the time to ensure that the business community's interests are well-represented in policy discussions. Too often, businesses are left to deal with the unintended consequences of policies.

By engaging now, you're making sure that your perspectives are taken into consideration. By registering with Impact California, you can play a pivotal role in advocating for a prosperous and dynamic business climate in our state.

Join us today and make your voice heard!

**Staff Contact: Nick Ortiz**

## Taxpayers' Bill of Rights Public Hearing Scheduled for August 27



On August 27, the State Board of Equalization (BOE) will hold its annual

public hearing on property taxes and the Alcoholic Beverage Tax to listen to public suggestions, comments and concerns.

The hearing will also provide an opportunity for taxpayers, county assessors and other local agency representatives to provide comments on items discussed in the most recent [Taxpayers' Rights Advocate's Annual Report](#), published earlier this year.

### Annual Report

According to the report, for fiscal year 2022–23, the Taxpayers' Rights Advocate (TRA) Office completed work on 310 cases, all relating to property taxes. Of those cases, 78% were in the valuation category, which includes topics such as changes in ownership, decline in value or value reductions, appraisal methodology, exclusions, exemptions, assessment appeals, new construction, general property tax information and definitions, and actual enrollment of values.

The remaining 22% of cases were in the administrative category, which includes topics such as creating and mailing tax bills, refunds, and penalties.

The report provides examples of property tax cases to illustrate how the TRA Office staff resolves taxpayers' issues and the range of services provided by the property tax technical advisers. The report explains that the office's role usually involves review and explanation of processes and methodologies of prop-

erty tax assessments and property tax payment and collection, as well as facilitating resolutions between taxpayers and county departments.

### Hearing Information

Although advance arrangements are not required to speak at a taxpayers' bill of rights hearing, the BOE asks that speakers contact the [Taxpayers Rights Advocate \(TRA\) Office](#) beforehand to let them know the nature of the speaker's topic.

The 2024 Taxpayers' Bill of Rights

Hearing will be held on **Tuesday, August 27, 2024 at 10 a.m.**

Taxpayers and stakeholders have the option to participate in person, by phone, or submit written comments in advance:

- In person location: May Lee State Office Complex, Auditorium, 651 Bannon Street, Sacramento, CA 95811.

- By phone: 1-877-336-4440, access code 4192718#

- To submit comments in advance, [click here](#).

For more information about this hearing, visit [www.boe.ca.gov/tra](http://www.boe.ca.gov/tra).

# 2024 TAXPAYERS' BILL OF RIGHTS HEARING

## Tuesday, August 27, 10:00 a.m.

Taxpayers and stakeholders are invited to present ideas and concerns on Property Taxes and Alcoholic Beverage Tax.

For more information, visit [www.boe.ca.gov/tra](http://www.boe.ca.gov/tra).



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## Reexamining California COVID-19 Workplace Regulations



In the past two weeks, positive COVID-19 tests have increased to 18% in the

U.S. Health and Human Services Agency's Region 9, which includes California — and this particular surge is, as the *Los Angeles Times* reports, “surprisingly stronger [and] longer lasting than experts had expected.”

And although California's COVID-19 State of Emergency proclamation ended in February 2023, special rules for employers still apply under the [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations](#), which are enforced by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) and involve a wide range of rules including, but not limited to, testing, face covering, and quarantine and isolation.

To help employers navigate this new, enduring wave of COVID-19 infections, let's take a refresher course on the COVID-19 non-emergency regulations.

### Policies and Procedures

Employers who are not already covered by the [Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard](#) must inspect for and address any hazards in the workplace to prevent COVID-19 infections among their workforce. The non-emergency regulations also have specific indoor air ventilation and filtration rules, and employers should review this [guidance](#) to assist with any ventilation or filtration changes.

Mitigation procedures may include any combination of administrative and engineering controls, such as an increase in remote work, physical distancing, a reduction of the number of people indoors and increased or improved ventilation or filtration of indoor air. The mitigation measures utilized by an employer depends upon the nature of its operations.

Any procedures developed for the prevention or mitigation of COVID-19 infections must be documented in a written COVID-19 Prevention Plan. This plan may be integrated as part of an employer's already existing Injury and Illness

Prevention Plan or may be a standalone document specific to only COVID-19 prevention.

### Quarantine and Isolation

The non-emergency regulations require employers to exclude from the workplace any known, symptomatic COVID-19 case for their “infectious period,” which is defined as at least 24 hours from the onset of the symptoms until 24 hours have passed with no fever, and their symptoms are mild and improving.

Asymptomatic cases do not have an “infectious period” and don't have to be excluded from work.

Whether an employee is a “close contact” with an infected coworker depends upon the workspace. In indoor spaces with 400,000 or fewer cubic feet per floor, the employee will be a close contact if they spend 15 cumulative minutes in the same airspace as the infected coworker during their “infectious period.” In larger indoor spaces, the close contact must be within six feet of the infected coworker during that coworker's “infectious period.”

Although employers don't need to exclude “close contacts,” they must notify them without divulging the name of the infected coworker, as well as meet other requirements (see below).

### Testing

The non-emergency regulations require employers to offer testing at no cost and during paid work time to all “close contacts.” In addition, although much more rare, employers must offer testing to all other employees within an exposed group — all employees at a work location, working area or common area at work subject to very few narrow exceptions — during an outbreak or major outbreak.

During an outbreak (three cases in an exposed group during a seven-day period) employers must offer testing at no cost and during paid work hours once a week until the outbreak ends.

During a major outbreak (20 cases in an exposed group during a 30-day period) employers must offer testing at no cost and during work hours twice a week.

Employers don't have to offer testing to employees who have returned to work after an infection within 30 days from either the onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic, the date of a positive test.

An employer complies with this standard as long as it is offered at no cost and during work hours, even if the employee declines to take the test.

### Face Coverings

There are no current general industry face covering requirements; however, an employee returning to work from a COVID-19 infection must wear a face covering as follows:

- Symptomatic cases must wear face coverings at the worksite until 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms; or
- Asymptomatic cases must wear face coverings at the worksite until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 test.

Employees in the “exposed group” during an outbreak or major outbreak must also wear face coverings until the outbreak or major outbreak ends.

Employers also may institute their own requirement for face coverings at the workplace, allowing for accommodations where reasonable (if, for example, someone with a disability is unable to wear a face covering).

Employers must allow an employee to voluntarily wear a face covering when not otherwise required as long as the face covering doesn't interfere with the safe performance of their job duties. If the employee requests a respirator, such as an N95 mask, employers must provide one of the correct size along with instructions of its use.

### The Future

As recent history shows, COVID-19 infection rates appear to be cyclical, so while the present spike may subside, future spikes may arise. The specific rules under the COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations are in effect until February 3, 2025, and employers should continue to ensure compliance and stay up-to-date on any changes by utilizing [Cal/OSHA's resources](#).

**Staff Contact: Matthew J. Roberts**

# Mexico Advocacy Day Highlights Sonora’s Potential as Clean Energy Hub



Mexico Consul General Christian Tonatiuh González Jiménez



Dr. Francisco Acuña Méndez



CalChamber President and CEO Jennifer Barrera



Sonora’s strategic advantages in the manufacturing of renewable energy and potential to become the “Silicon Valley of Mexico” was the focus of the 15th Annual Mexico Advocacy Day International Forum presentation on August 7.

California Chamber of Commerce President Jennifer Barrera gave the forum’s welcoming remarks, which was attended by close to 90 business and government leaders, including 11 California legislators.

## Mexico Advocacy Day

Mexico Advocacy Day was started by the Consulate General of Mexico in 2010 to provide a platform that highlights the importance of the relationship of Mexico with the United States and California.

As part of this year’s Advocacy Day, the California Select Committee on California-Mexico Cooperation and Dialogue held an informational hearing on Tuesday, August 6 focusing on “Building an Agenda with a Gender Perspective

through Bilateral Cooperation Between Mexico and California.”

A reception was held later that evening at the Leland Stanford Mansion hosted by the Mexican Consulate General.

To close Mexico Advocacy Day, the CalChamber and the Consulate General of Mexico in Sacramento presented the August 7 International Forum, which featured as keynote speaker Dr. Francisco



Attendees at the 15th Annual Mexico Advocacy Day breakfast on August 7 included (from left) Assemblymember Eduardo García, Dr. Francisco Acuña Méndez, Senate Minority Leader Brian Jones, Senator Maria Elena Durazo, Mexico Consul General Christian Tonatiuh González Jiménez, Mexico Migrant Senator-Elect Karina Ruiz, Senator Ben Allen, Senator Steve Padilla, CalChamber President and CEO Jennifer Barrera, Tayrin Riojas (Lazos International), Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo.

Acuña Méndez, chief of staff to Sonora Governor Alfonso Durazo and honorary president of Sonora’s Council for Sustainable Development (CODESO).

## Mexico Consul General

Introductory remarks were given by Consul General of Mexico in Sacramento Christian Tonatiuh González Jiménez.

González most recently served as chief of protocol and public diplomacy at the Permanent Mission of Mexico in the United Nations. During Mexico’s participation as an elected member of the U.N. Security Council, the Consul General served as the spokesperson and was in charge of disseminating Mexico’s activities, results and positions in the U.N. Security Council.

The Consul General, who is also an attorney, further served as a delegate for Human Rights, Cultural, Social and Humanitarian Affairs, and managed the Cultural Affairs sector during his tenure in the Mexican delegation to the U.N.

## Sonora Plan

Dr. Francisco Acuña Méndez began his remarks by sharing that it was Mexico President Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s vision to turn Sonora into the Silicon Valley of Mexico. President Obrador identified the need to

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## CalChamber, Tech Experts, Leading Calif. Democrat Oppose AI Bill

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infeasible, standards, requirements, and definitions. It focuses almost exclusively on developer liability, creating liability for failing to foresee and block any and all conceivable uses of a model that might do harm—even if a third party jailbreaks the model.

As a consequence of such issues, deters open-source development, undermines technological innovation and our economy. It further imposes unreasonable requirements on operators of computing clusters, including a requirement to predict if a prospective customer “intends to utilize the computing cluster to deploy a covered model” and implement a “kill switch” to enact a full shutdown in the event of an emergency. It also establishes a totally new regulatory body, the “Frontier Model Division,” within the Department of Technology, with an ambiguous and ambitious preview.

### Commentary

In an [August 6 commentary for Fortune](#), Dr. Fei-Fei Li warns that SB 1047 would have significant unintended consequences that will stifle innovation.

Widely credited with being the “Godmother of AI,” Li is a professor and co-director of Stanford’s Human-Centered AI Institute.

In her commentary, Li calls SB 1047 “well-meaning,” but warns that due to the penalties and restrictions the legislation sets on open-source development, SB 1047 will not just harm innovation in California, but in the entire country as well.

“If passed into law, SB-1047 will harm our budding AI ecosystem, especially the parts of it that are already at a disadvantage to today’s tech giants: the public sector, academia, and ‘little tech.’” she says. “SB-1047 will unnecessarily penalize developers, stifle our open-source community, and hamstring academic AI research, all while failing to address the very real issues it was authored to solve.”

Li points out that it’s impossible for

each AI developer—particularly budding coders and entrepreneurs—to predict every possible use of their model. SB 1047’s penalties unduly punish developers and will force them to pull back.

The bill also “shackles” open-source development, mandating a “kill switch” in certain cases, which is a mechanism by which the program can be shut down at any time.

“If developers are concerned that the programs they download and build on will be deleted, they will be much more hesitant to write code and collaborate,” she says.

Open-source development is also vital to academia and the restrictions on open-source development would be a “death knell” to academic AI, Li warns.

“Take computer science students, who study open-weight AI models. How will we train the next generation of AI leaders if our institutions don’t have access to the proper models and data? A kill switch would even further dampen the efforts of these students and researchers, already at such a data and computation disadvantage compared to Big Tech,” she says.

Rather than pass an “overly and arbitrarily restrictive” mandate such as SB 1047, California should adopt a policy that will empower open-source development and put forward uniform and well-reasoned rules, Li states.

### Congressional Letter

In an [August 7 letter to the author of SB 1047](#), Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (D-San Jose) says that while she firmly supports AI governance to guard against demonstrable risks to public safety, “unfortunately, this bill would fall short of these goals — creating unnecessary risks for both the public and California’s economy.”

Lofgren is the ranking member of the U.S. House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, which has jurisdiction over AI.

She notes that the science surrounding AI safety is still in its infancy and that SB 1047 requires firms to adhere to volun-

tary guidance issued by industry and the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which does not yet exist.

“Further, SB 1047 seems heavily skewed toward addressing hypothetical existential risks while largely ignoring demonstrable AI risks like misinformation, discrimination, nonconsensual deepfakes, environmental impacts, and workforce displacement,” Lofgren writes.

She also voices concern that SB 1047 could have unintended consequences from its treatment of open-source models. “Given that most of the discoveries that led us to this moment were achieved through open source and open science, SB 1047 could have a pernicious impact on U.S. competitiveness in AI, especially in California,” Lofgren says.

She urges the California Legislature to put the bill aside for further study and consideration.

### AI Researchers

Signing a [statement of opposition to SB 1047](#) are academic AI researchers — faculty, postdoctorate, and graduate students of the University of California at Berkeley, Davis, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz, and postdoctorate and graduate students of the University of Southern California and Stanford University.

“We agree that this bill will have broad negative consequences, hamper economic dynamism, and weaken California’s position as a global AI hub, in the service of questionable, unscientific, and hypothetical public benefits,” the statement asserts.

As part of what the statement describes as a “researcher-centric” perspective in opposition to SB 1047, the signers cite the bill’s chilling effects for open-source model releases, to the detriment of research; comment on the “unscientific nature of AI risk forecasting and ‘capability’ assessment”; and express concerns about “the insufficiency of near-term carve outs for open-weight models,” among other concerns.

## Mexico Advocacy Day Highlights Sonora's Potential as Clean Energy Hub



Senator Steve Padilla (D-Chula Vista), chair of the Senate Select Committee on California-Mexico Cooperation and Dialogue, presents a California Senate Resolution commending the California Chamber of Commerce for joining with the Consulate General of Mexico in Sacramento in celebrating the 15th Annual Mexico Advocacy Day. Accepting the resolution during an August 6 evening reception at the Leland Stanford Mansion hosted by the Mexican Consulate General is CalChamber Senior Vice President International Affairs Susanne T. Stirling.

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develop clean energy, concentrate talent in Sonora, and to utilize the minerals produced in the state, which has the second largest mine in the world for copper and has large reserves of lithium and other minerals.

This vision is what developed the Sonora Plan, which will not only generate clean energy for Mexico, but has the potential to export to the United States, Acuña said.

The State of Sonora is working on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the California Energy Commission that, among other things, would establish electromobility charging stations. Sonora's close proximity to California would facilitate the export of clean energy—produced by renewable hydrogen and solar energy, he said.

The state is investing in new manufacturing facilities that will partner with companies in California, Arizona and Texas. These new facilities will create high-value manufacturing jobs on both sides of the border that will focus on semiconductors, automation and production of electric vehicles, Acuña said.

He points out that these three sectors make Sonora a better, closer alternative than Southeast Asia. Sonora not only borders Arizona and Texas, but it also has

the only port in Mexico that connects to the U.S. through a railroad system—the Port of Guaymas.

The port has received significant investment by the Mexican government and is working with Europe's Port of Antwerp-Bruges to develop the port so it can become competitive around the world and in North America.

More than 250 multinational companies work in Sonora, spanning the automobile industry, such as Ford Motors, agribusiness, electric vehicles, electronic, semiconductors, aerospace, renewables and minerals.

The state also is investing in education. Acuña said that to educate its workforce on renewable manufacturing, Sonora will be sending 30 students to Taiwan universities to learn about the semiconductor industry. It also is creating industrial and science innovation centers to teach the next generation of manufacturing. Additionally, the state is developing an agenda to teach all children in public schools English.

In addition to clean energy, Sonora is also focusing on transition energy, through liquified natural gas (LNG). It has become a hub that is competing with Qatar and other regions, he said.

**Staff Contact: Susanne T. Stirling**



 CalChamber

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