

2026 Washington, D.C., Priority Summaries

ENVIRONMENT

- Wildfire – Support bipartisan wildfire prevention and protection whether as independent legislation or as part of a budget bill such as the Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Act and Wildfire Response Improvement Act.
- Water – Continue investment in water infrastructure – including the Delta Conveyance Project and Sites Reservoir – to maintain and modernize one of the world’s most complex and vital water systems. In addition, ensure Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan is processed through USFWS more expeditiously and without undue delay.

HEALTHCARE

- Protect Medicaid Funding – No further cuts to Medicaid, ultimately ensuring stability for safety-net hospitals serving high Medi-Cal populations like the Inland Empire with 40.4% of the IE residents relying on Medicaid.
- Physician Shortage – Increase federal support to address severe shortages of primary and specialty physicians as the Inland Empire has almost one-half the needed primary care physicians as compared to the federal benchmark.

TRANSPORTATION

- Multi-year Reauthorization Bill - The Inland Empire is one of the nation’s most critical logistics and mobility corridors, moving the goods that power America’s economy and supporting millions of jobs nationwide. Every federal dollar invested here delivers outsized national benefits. To continue this success, we need federal certainty via a multi-year transportation reauthorization bill.

EDUCATION

- Pell Grant – Invest in workforce readiness through Pell Grants and a commitment to increase Pell 5% per year for 5 years. This includes the new “Workforce Pell” (or “Short-Term Pell”) which allows students to use funds for short-term credential programs in high-demand fields such as IT and healthcare.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Housing – As one of the fastest-growing population centers in the U.S., the Inland Empire is struggling to meet the staggering demand for housing. Address the housing crisis via H.R. 5085 NEPA Reform Act, AHCA (Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act) – H.R. 2725, and Housing Opportunity Preservation Enhancement Act of 2025.
- Workforce Development – The largest employment sectors in the Inland Empire are facing unprecedented disruptions. As the needs of employers and the opportunities for employees change, the region is working to close skills gaps, support business growth, and strengthen long-term economic competitiveness. Support WIOA Reauthorization and AI implementation policy.

JUDICIARY

- Eastern Division Courthouse – Accelerate courthouse needs via an accelerated feasibility study schedule or possible/new federal public/private partnership project option. Until this is addressed, almost 50% of all criminal cases are reassigned to the Western Division, primarily Los Angeles.

Inland Action 2026 priority details and member organizations are available on our website.



A non-profit, non-partisan corporation of public spirited leaders who have joined together to be catalysts for the economic well-being of the Inland Empire region of California – San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

Support Bipartisan Wildfire Prevention and Protection

Support the goals of bipartisan wildfire legislation whether as independent legislation or as part of a budget bill:

- **Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Act:** H.R. 582, sponsored by Huffman (D-CA-2), Obernolte (R-CA-23), and Min (D-CA-47); and S. 3609 sponsored by Padilla (D-CA) and Sheehy (R-MT) – Would invest \$1 billion per year in grants administered by FEMA to help communities establish and then implement Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Plans (CPWRPs). The plans will focus on strategies that improve early detection, address vulnerable populations, harden critical infrastructure and homes, and implement strategic land use planning. Grants would be up to \$250,000 for developing plans and up to \$10 million for implementing the plans.
- **Wildfire Response Improvement Act:** H.R. 1393, sponsored by Stanton (D-AZ-4), LaMalfa (R-CA-1) and Huffman (D-CA-2) – Expands FEMA wildfire assistance beyond the active fire period; updates federal recovery guidance to reflect wildfire-specific impacts; improves cost-effectiveness criteria for mitigation projects; directs funding toward data-driven, resilience-focused investments; strengthens state and local capacity to respond to and recover from wildfires.



Impact of Wildfires

Wildfires impose a major economic burden in California, causing hundreds of billions of dollars in losses across property, business activity, insurance, and public recovery costs. In January 2025, the Palisades Fire and Eaton Fire in Los Angeles County together destroyed thousands of homes and structures and are estimated to have caused roughly \$28-\$54 billion in property damage, with broader economic losses projected into the billions more over time due to business disruptions, lost jobs, and reduced tax revenue.

Thank You!

We appreciate your support of **H.R. 6938, the FY 2026 Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act**, now signed into law. This bill provides essential resources for federal wildfire response by funding Wildland Fire Management at roughly \$6.4 billion, including cap-adjusted suppression funding of about \$2.9 billion for urgent firefighting operations – helping ensure our firefighters have the tools and support they need to protect communities. These investments demonstrate a strong commitment to public safety and wildfire resilience in California and across the country.



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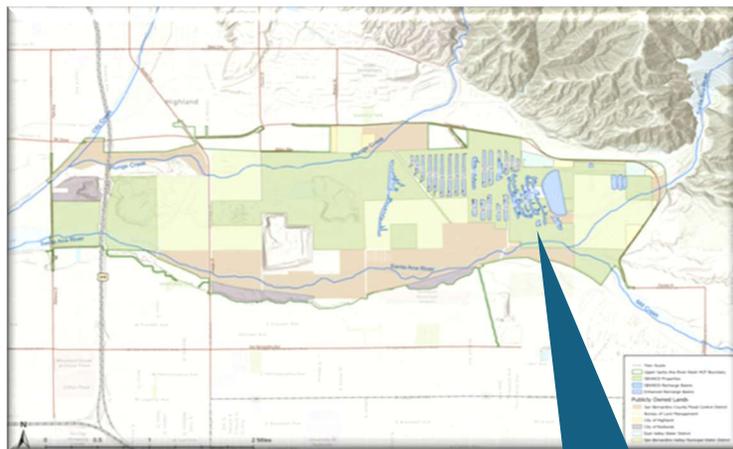
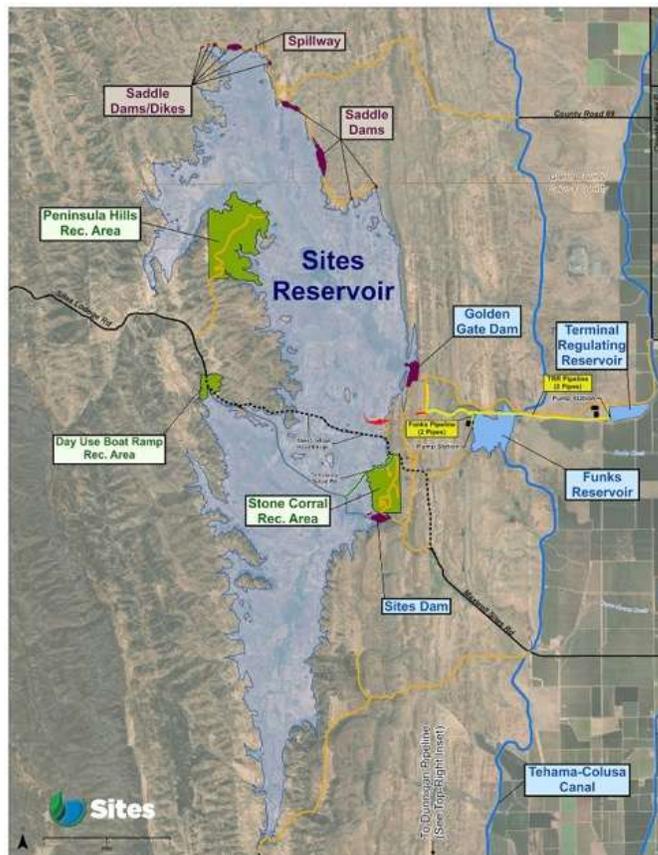
Continue Investment in Water Infrastructure

Investing in California’s water infrastructure – including the **Delta Conveyance Project** and **Sites Reservoir** – is essential to maintain and modernize one of the world’s most complex and vital water systems. The Delta Conveyance Project will modernize aging infrastructure, ensuring reliable delivery of water to more than 27 million Californians and 750,000 acres of farmland while adapting to climate change, sea-level rise, and seismic risks. At the same time, the Sites Reservoir will provide up to 1.5 million acre-feet of additional water storage, capturing excess flows from major storms to boost dry-year water supplies for cities, farms, and the environment.



Ensure **Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan** is processed through USFWS more expeditiously and without undue delay.

- Plan is over 10 years in making.
- Plan is result of collaboration among local, private, state, and federal partners.
- Plan will provide environmental clearance for \$2.4 billion in local water supply projects while simultaneously protecting habitat (1660 acre preserve) for protected species including the Cactus Wren, Coastal California Gnatcatcher and San Bernardino Kangaroo Rat.

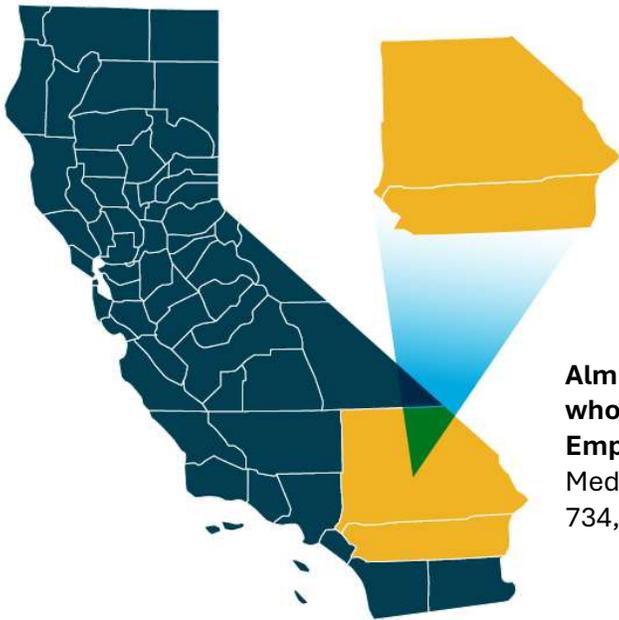


Success Story – Santa Ana River Enhanced Recharge Phase 1B Project

20 new recharge basins created through partnership of multiple entities. 26 billion gallons of water recharged per year. **Delivered on time and under budget.** The Inland Empire is a good investment.

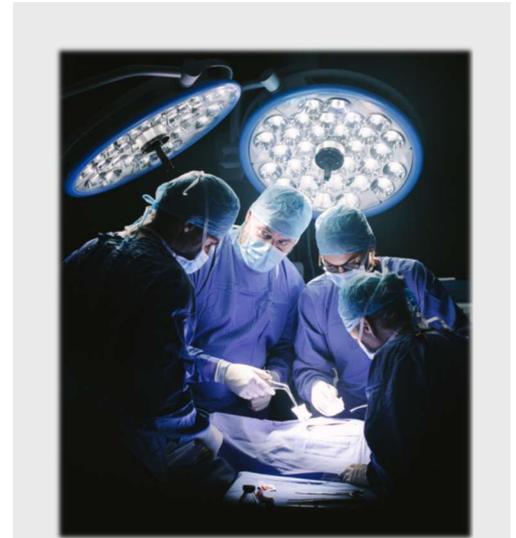
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Protect Medicaid Funding



40.4% of Inland Empire residents rely on Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California)

Almost 65% of children who live in the Inland Empire rely on Medicaid, representing 734,500 children.



1. Hospitals receive on average 80 cents on the dollar for Medicare/Medicaid services.
2. Many Inland Empire hospitals already operate on thin or negative margins.
3. Further federal cuts would harm high-growth, working-class regions like the Inland empire and would:
 - Reduce access to care
 - Eliminate services
 - Increase ER overcrowding
 - Threaten hospital stability

Proposed Solutions

No further cuts to Medicaid, ultimately ensuring stability for safety-net hospitals serving high Medi-Cal populations like the Inland Empire.

In the Inland Empire, there are 21 hospitals that qualify for the Medi-Cal Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program out of 48 total hospitals in the region – (44% – close to half) – thus indicating the significant reliance on Medi-Cal services.

Anticipated Outcomes

1. Continued stability of Inland Empire hospitals.
2. Improved access to primary and specialty care.
3. Reduced ER congestion and preventable hospitalizations.
4. Healthcare is one of the largest employers in the Inland Empire, so focusing on these important initiatives positively affects jobs, local tax base, business recruitment, and regional economic growth.



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Increase Federal Support to Address Severe Shortages of Primary and Specialty Physicians



In the Inland Empire:

42 primary care physicians per 100,000 residents, well below the federal benchmark of 60-80 per 100,000 – a problem that is only going to worsen as our region grows.

83-88 specialists per 100,000 residents, also well below the federal benchmark (100-105 specialists per 100,000).

These shortages result in long wait times for appointments, patients needing to seek care outside the region, delays in diagnosis and treatment for chronic and complex conditions, increased ER usage and worsened health outcomes.

We're not alone: California needs 10,500 additional primary care physicians by 2030.

Additionally:

The IE's physician workforce is aging, and residency slots are limited.

Large portions of the region are federally designation Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), meaning they qualify for federal workforce programs (NHSC, loan repayment) and signal federally recognized gaps in provider capacity.

Proposed Solutions

Assist and support the expansion of the Inland Empire physicians' workforce by:

- Increasing federally funded Graduate Medical Education (GME) residency slots.
- Expanding National Health Service Corps (NHSC) funding.
- Prioritizing HPSA-designated regions like the Inland Empire.
- Supporting loan repayment and scholarship programs tied to underserved service commitments.

Anticipated Outcomes

1. Improved access to primary and specialty care.
2. Healthcare is one of the largest employers in the Inland Empire, so focusing on these important initiatives positively affects jobs, local tax base, business recruitment, and regional economic growth.

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Immediate Need for a Multi-Year Transportation Reauthorization Bill

The Inland Empire is an essential logistics and mobility corridor, moving the goods that power America's economy and supporting millions of jobs. Every federal dollar invested here delivers **outsized national benefits** by strengthening the supply chain, easing congestion, improving air quality and enhancing quality of life.



For decades, Inland Action has championed a stable, predictable federal transportation program, and our region has proven its value as a **self-help leader** that delivers projects faster, more efficiently and with strong local financial participation. Today, that momentum is accelerating through innovation, public-private partnerships and a project pipeline that turns policy into real-world results.

What we need now is federal certainty. Short-term extensions slow progress; a multi-year transportation reauthorization bill fuels it. Long-term authorization allows agencies, private partners and local governments to plan boldly, invest confidently and deliver infrastructure at the scale our nation requires.

A Population, Economic & Transportation Hub

The Inland Empire will see **household growth of more than 600,000 by 2050** – an increase of more than 40% – requiring more housing and putting additional strain on existing infrastructure.

Ontario International Airport has emerged as a major international gateway, serving more than 7 million passengers per year. ONT also is one of the Top 10 cargo airports in the U.S. **San Bernardino International Airport** is the 25th largest cargo airport in the U.S.

More than **200,000 workers in the Inland Empire** are employed in the logistics industry.

Proposed Solutions

1. **Enact a minimum 5-year transportation bill** – funding certainty and long-term planning stability.
2. **Increase formula-based funding** to ensure predictable and equitable distribution.
3. **Reduce over-reliance on competitive grant programs**, which delay project delivery.
4. Apply a **formula-driven approach to freight funding** to recognize national supply chain impacts.
5. **Incentivize self-help counties** that invest local dollars and accelerate project readiness.
6. Promote **one consistent U.S. DOT voice** to improve coordination and efficiency.
7. **Reconfigure TIFIA** to better support transformative infrastructure projects.

Anticipated Outcomes

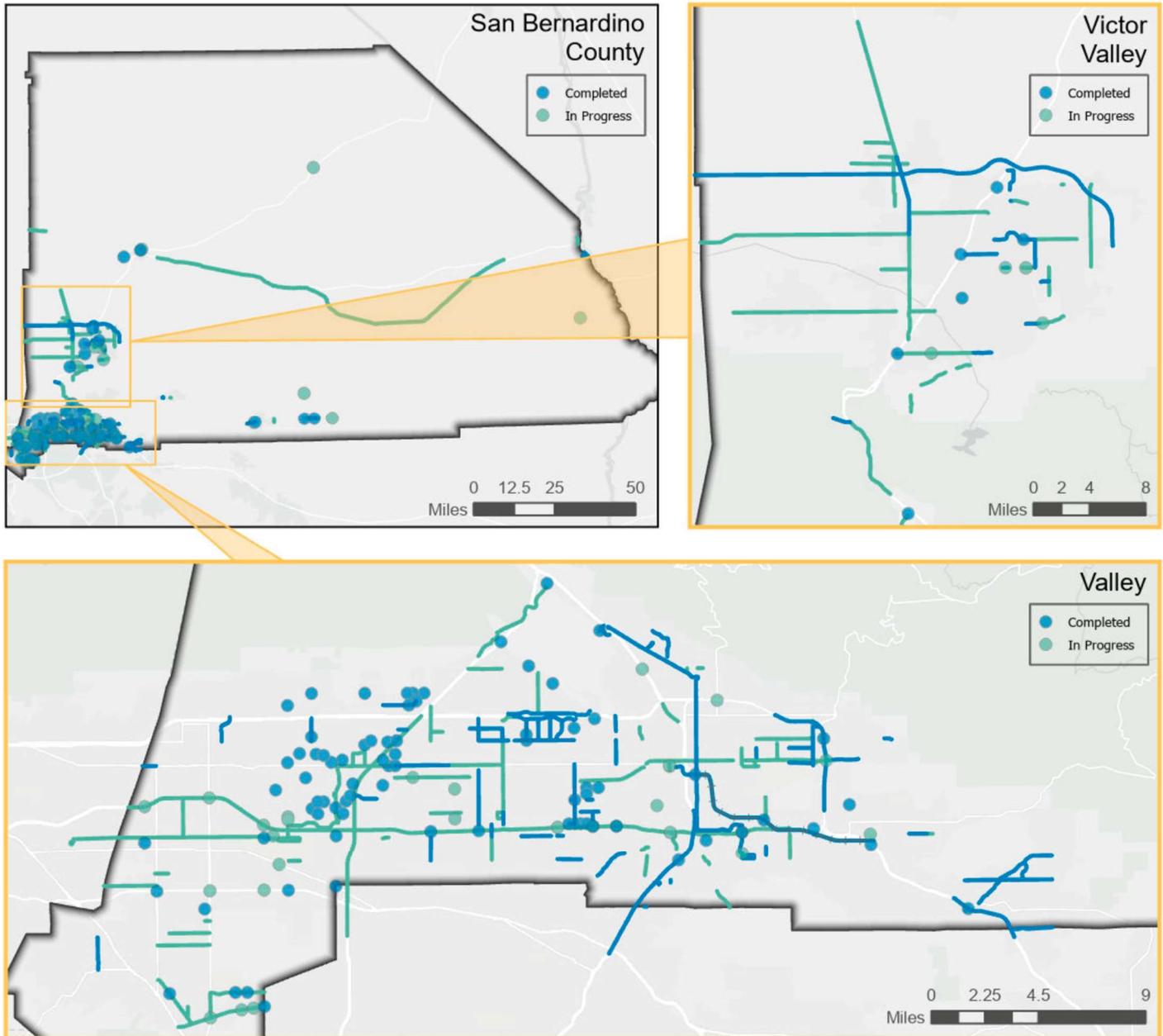
Strategic investment in the Inland Empire produces immediate and long-term benefits for Southern California and the U.S. supply chain. These priority projects will **ease congestion, strengthen goods movement and enhance economic resilience**:

- **Brightline West** – Private Activity Bond Funding (IRS, SEC)
- **US Route 395** – Phase II
- Build out of **connected express lanes network**
- **Cajon Pass Truck Climbing Lane**

Funding delivered here means projects are built faster, smarter and with greater accountability. It means America's logistics backbone becomes stronger. It means people and goods move more efficiently, safely and reliably. With a multi-year transportation bill, we can continue to deliver results that benefit the entire nation.

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SBCTA Delivers Transportation Projects \$682M in Measure I Secures \$2.9B in Other Funding



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



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Invest in Workforce Readiness through Pell Grants

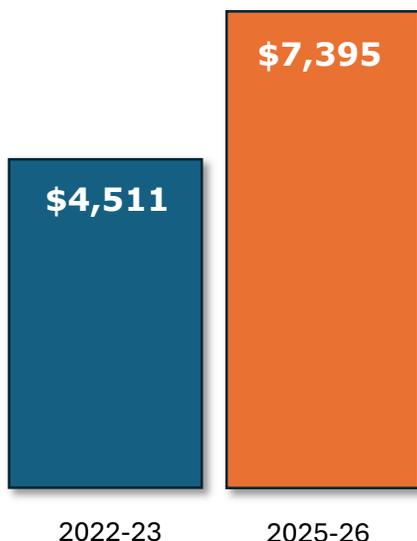
We **THANK YOU** for consistently increasing the Federal Pell Grant Program from 2020-2024 and ask that you support a multi-year commitment to **increase Pell 5% per year for 5 years.**

Pell Grants narrow the achievement gap, boost graduation rates, and often move recipients from **the bottom 20% to the top 20% of income of earners.**

In addition to annual increases in the Pell Grant program, the new “Workforce Pell” (or “Short-Term Pell”) allows students to use funds for short-term (8-15 months) credential programs in high-demand fields such as IT and healthcare.



Maximum Grant Amounts Under the Federal Pell Program



- Pell Grants serve around 6.5 million low-income undergraduates, narrowing the achievement gap, and boosting graduation rates with recipients often seeing significant income growth.
- They are designed specifically for students with the greatest financial need.
- Pell Grant recipients often move from the bottom 20% to the top 20% of income earners, with many earning more than their parents did within five years of graduation.
- The program increases future tax payments, with the federal government potentially recouping the cost of the grants within 10 years due to higher earnings of recipients.
- Students eligible for the largest grants are 13% more likely to graduate within four years compared to those who are not.
- Despite their importance, the purchasing power of Pell Grants has declined significantly. In the mid-1970s, the maximum grant covered 75% of the cost of attending a four-year public university; today, it covers less than 30%.

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Median Annual Income by Education Level



Economic/Workforce Benefits

Lower Unemployment: Degree holders consistently face lower unemployment rates. In 2023, the unemployment rate for college graduates was 2.2%, nearly half the 3.9% rate for those with only a high school diploma.

Recession Protection: During economic downturns, workers with higher education are less likely to be laid off. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, college graduates maintained much higher employment stability.

Access to Benefits: Graduates are more likely to have jobs that offer essential benefits like health insurance, retirement plans, and paid leave.

Health/Social Benefits

Health Outcomes: Education is strongly linked to a longer life and lower risks of chronic diseases. Roughly 60% of bachelor's degree holders rate their health as "excellent" or "very good," compared to 43% of those without higher education.

Skill Development: Beyond technical knowledge, postsecondary education cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving and advanced communication skills that are in high demand by employers.

Civic Engagement: Educated individuals are more likely to vote, volunteer in their communities, and contribute to national economic growth through innovation.

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Addressing the Housing Crisis

As one of the fastest-growing population centers in the U.S., the Inland Empire is struggling to meet the staggering demand for housing. The “Affordability Myth” – that the IE is less expensive than the rest of Southern California – is up against these harsh realities:

- Only 1 in 3 households can afford to purchase a median-priced home.
- Fewer than 50% can afford an entry-level home.
- More than 150,000 households cannot find affordable rental housing.

1. Current federal housing funding falls short of what’s needed to create sufficient housing to address the lack of availability and affordability.
2. Current regulations, including NEPA and BABA create unnecessary costs and delays to development.
3. Lack of dedicated funding for rehab and renovation of existing affordable housing will result in loss of affordable units.

Proposed Solutions

- Housing for the 21st Century Act, H.R. 6644** – Passed! – **THANK YOU!**
- H.R. 5085 NEPA Reform Act**
- AHCIA (Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act) (H.R. 2725)**
- Housing Opportunity Preservation Enhancement Act of 2025**



Successes – Thank you for Your Support

1. Vista Verde 2, Congresswoman Norma Torres: \$2M

Vista Verde II- a 150-unit affordable housing community in the city of Ontario, will complement the existing Vista Verde 101-unit affordable housing development National CORE built in 2021. This project will help the community by providing additional housing units for working families unable to afford market-rate rents.

2. Rancho Mirage Infrastructure, Congressman Ken Calvert: \$5M

The City of Rancho Mirage has taken the bold step of making 25 acres of city-owned land available for the development of three separate affordable housing communities. Once developed, these communities will provide over 600 units of high quality, professionally managed, and service-enriched housing that enhances the neighborhood and meets a critical need for workforce housing in the city.

Outcomes

By exempting the construction of infill housing from NEPA requirements and streamlining regulations coupled with increasing available funding, Congress can enable developers to move forward on shovel-ready projects that will increase the availability and affordability of housing in the region.

Tax incentives will generate funds to rehabilitate, renovate and preserve existing stock of aging affordable rental housing.

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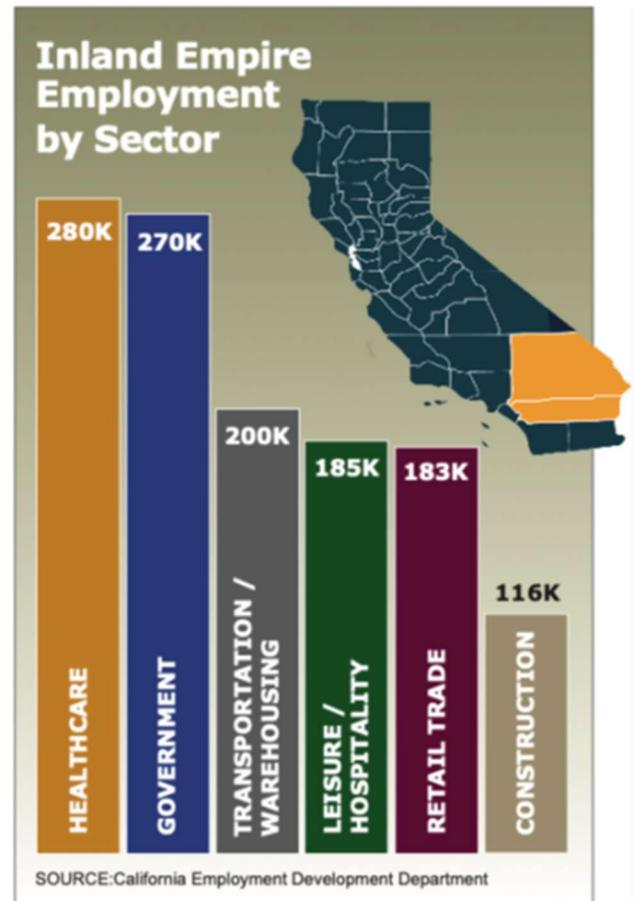
Key Regional Employment Sectors Face Risks

The Inland Empire is one of the fastest-growing regions in the state, with healthcare, logistics, and construction – among others – driving our economy. These sectors face a number of risks, with job losses due to AI and automation being a significant one. These risks are compounded by historically low educational attainment, putting the onus on our region to continue finding ways to address the shifting employment landscape.

All of that said, significant opportunities exist within the Inland Empire to play an increasingly vital role in the economic well-being of California and the nation:

- The region has become a leader in **transportation innovation**, creating a growing need for professionals and technical support in this critical industry.
- Other emerging employment sectors include **alternative energy production, cybersecurity, aerospace** and **business services**, among others.
- The two-county region now boasts a **civilian labor force of more than 2.2 million**.

There are currently two opportunities for Congress to act on in support of the region's economic growth: (1) Support for the workforce investment boards, and (2) A federal approach to AI integration as it affects the labor market.



WIOA Reauthorization

WIOA Reauthorization: H.R. 7148 continued funding, but a reauthorization would give our region the stability to plan ahead and keep pace with employer demand. WIOA is the backbone of how we prepare local workers for 21-century jobs. Many jobseekers face real barriers – transportation, housing instability, justice involvement, or being the first in their family to work in a career pathway. WIOA needs flexibility at the local level, paired with accountability that values progress and retention, not just quick placements. In the Inland Empire, that means paid work-based learning, strong employer partnerships, and credentials tied to regional industries.

AI

S. 3319 and H.R. 6621 – In order to ensure a workforce that is prepared for an AI driven economy, the region needs to increase educational attainment and job skills training. This legislation will help equip our existing post-secondary educational and job-training resources to prepare students for the jobs of the future.

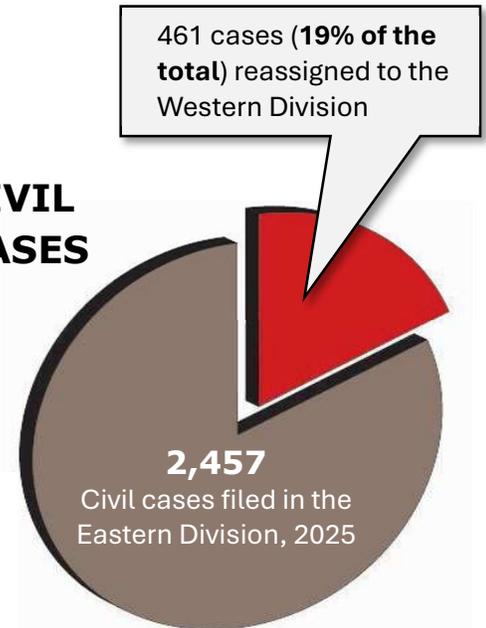
S. 3339 – The drivers of the region's economy are initiating AI implementation. As leaders of the region, we appreciate legislation at the federal level that creates well-informed policy. We support this and other legislation that will lead to a better understanding of the effects of AI on employment.

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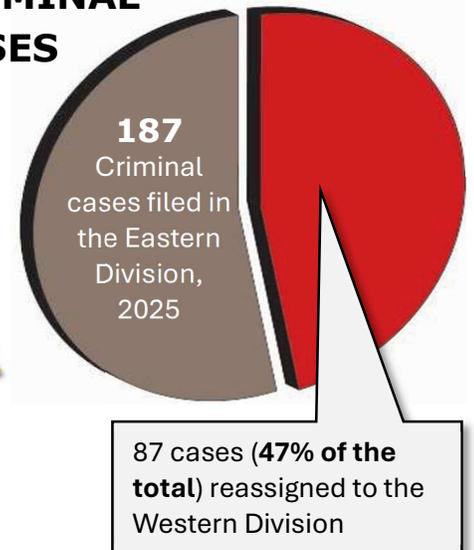
Judiciary Crisis - Eastern Division Courthouse

1. The Riverside Courthouse (Eastern Division) has three District Judges and three Magistrate Judges.
2. Each District Judge has their own courtroom.
3. Magistrate Judges share one courtroom. Two share chambers and the other has chambers in a makeshift space in another building.
4. Even if more judges were assigned, there is no place to house them.
5. The weighted filings of the Central District per judgeship was 759. This number reflects the transfers to the Western Division. This weighted filing is 42% higher than the National Average.
6. When cases are transferred from the Eastern Division to the Western Division, the average drive time (extra time) one-way is 90 minutes to 2 hours.

CIVIL CASES



CRIMINAL CASES



Proposed Solutions

1. Accelerate feasibility studies to include at least two studies/year.
2. Use consultants to support the GSA staff to ensure studies can be completed.
3. Explore the possibility of Public/Private Partnership for Federal Courthouses. State courthouse construction already allows this.

CENTRAL DISTRICT of California

- Western Division
- Eastern Division
- Southern Division



Anticipated Outcomes

1. With an accelerated feasibility study schedule, the Riverside Courthouse may be completed by 2055.
2. If a Public/Private Partnership is created as an option, the Riverside Courthouse may be accelerated to 2031. This would require P3 projects to be approved at the federal level.
3. We believe we are #1 on the first in/first out feasibility study list. We do not have confirmation and ask for assistance in this area. Until courthouse issues can be resolved, almost 50% of all criminal cases filed in the Eastern Division will be reassigned to the Western Division.

Cases are reassigned to balance caseload, primarily moving from the Eastern Division to Los Angeles.

Source: 2025 calendars noting blackout dates, caseloads, and transfers confirmed.