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August 31, 2026

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE PASSES TWO CRITICAL CLEAN ENERGY BILLS

AB 1156 addresses California's changing agricultural landscape. AB 550 advances renewable energy and conservation planning

SACRAMENTO - The California Legislature has passed two bills sponsored by the Large-scale Solar Association (LSA) that address a central challenge of California's clean energy transition: building the clean energy we need while stewarding the land, water, wildlife and communities that make California what it is.

[AB 1156](#), authored by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, and [AB 550](#), authored by Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris, now head to Governor Newsom for signature.

"Climate, water, agriculture, biodiversity and rural economies are interconnected," said Shannon Eddy, Executive Director of LSA. "The challenge before California is to find thoughtful ways for them to coexist. Both of these bills move us in that direction."

AB 1156: Creating options for a changing agricultural landscape

In California's critically overdrafted groundwater basins, implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act will require substantial reductions in agricultural water use, leaving some farmland without sufficient water to remain in production.

AB 1156 creates a voluntary pathway for farmers to transition qualifying water-constrained agricultural land to solar by addressing Williamson Act cancellation fees that can make such transitions financially impractical.

"As groundwater use comes into balance, we have an opportunity to consider how to best shape what comes next: keeping productive agricultural land in farming, conserving scarce water, creating new sources of income for farming families, and producing clean energy on land that can no longer be farmed as it once was," Eddy said.

The final bill, narrowly focused on areas facing California's most severe groundwater challenges, reflects extensive negotiations with state agencies and other stakeholders. The bill also includes a Community Benefits component.

"Solar is not the answer for every acre, nor should it be," Eddy said. "But on the right land, responsibly developed solar can be part of a more resilient future for agriculture and rural California."

AB 550: Planning for clean energy and conservation together

AB 550 allows renewable energy developers and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to anticipate the potential future listing of a species under the California Endangered Species Act and incorporate appropriate protections and mitigation earlier in the permitting process.

“Renewable energy and conservation are not opposing objectives,” Eddy said. “AB 550 gives us a better way to protect species while providing the certainty necessary to build the clean energy infrastructure California needs.”

“These bills reflect a larger principle,” Eddy said. “California’s response to climate change will touch our landscapes, our water, our wildlife and our communities. Our responsibility is to make the transition wisely, and to leave California more resilient in the process.”

LSA applauds Assembly Members Wicks and Petrie-Norris for their vision and leadership in advancing both bills and urges Governor Newsom to sign AB 1156 and AB 550.

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