

San Diego Newsline

Downtown San Diego news — the budget, public safety, business, and the civic life of America's Finest City

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COUNTY

County Adopts Balanced \$9.16B Budget, Investing in Community Services and Long-Term Stability



Illustration from a photo by Edward O'Connor (hober) · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted a balanced \$9.16 billion budget for fiscal year 2026-27, approving a spending plan that maintains core services, responds to rising community needs, and provides fiscal stability to manage uncertainties at the state and federal levels.

The new budget is effective July 1. It increases spending by \$522 million, or 6.1%, over the current year and also includes 20,389.25 staff years, a net increase of 109.

The plan reflects the County's year-round financial strategy, which maintains a balanced budget, healthy reserves and long-term stability. It ensures the County can meet today's needs while positioning it to meet the needs of the region well into the future.

"I think it's a pretty extraordinary budget," Board Chair Terra Lawson-Remer said. "It protects the core services that San Diegans count on — public safety, fire, emergency response, behavioral health, health care food assistance, homeless services, veterans' services, parks and libraries, arts, roads and the day-to-day work of our County government.

"This is a responsible budget," Lawson-Remer continued, "it's a balanced budget; I think it's a visionary budget, and is a budget built for the moment we are in."

Joan Bracci, the County's Assistant Chief Administrative

Officer-Chief Financial Officer, presented the budget item at Thursday's Board meeting. Bracci said the budget was the product of year-round planning working with numerous groups, including the Board of Supervisors, County departments, the public and stakeholders. She said it not only aimed to ensure the County's financial stability and flexibility into the future, but to also "provide programs and services that make meaningful differences to residents in every corner of this County."

"This budget is driven by our values ... It makes our region a better place to live, work and play" Bracci said.

Officials said that in addition to being balanced, the budget responds to the region's needs. It expands critical safety net services, strengthens behavioral health and public health support. It invests in public safety and fire protection, roads, parks, libraries and community spaces.

The budget also advances sustainability through open space and agricultural preservation, renewed regional collaboration in the Tijuana River Valley, and greener building practices. It protects vital resources for future generations while preparing the County to navigate an evolving and uncertain environment.

Each year, the County crafts its Five-Year Financial Forecast to ensure the County's long-term structural financial stability. This year,

leaders emphasized that a combination of flattening intergovernmental revenues, increased service demands, and the rising cost of doing business required careful, thoughtful and strategic choices. More information about the budget process is on budget.sandiegocounty.gov.

To balance the budget, the County reduced costs, implemented new efficiencies, shrunk its facilities footprint and shifted staff to priority services.

The County's recommended budget, released May 18 and revised in June, incorporated feedback from surveys, open houses, virtual and in-person forums, and an 11-day public comment period.

County services reach nearly all 3.3 million San Diego County residents — across 18 cities and its 18 federally recognized tribes, and in unincorporated communities — through public safety, food and financial assistance, public and behavioral health, and use, libraries parks, animal services, elections, inspections and more.

The budget reflects close collaboration with community members, the Board of Supervisors and its ad hoc subcommittees to:

Bolster public safety and meet Proposition 36 responsibilities.

Expand behavioral health care, establishing Behavioral Health as a standalone County department for the first time.

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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County Adopts Balanced \$9.16B Budget, Investing in Community Services and Long-Term Stability

Maintain investments in homelessness response, public health, infrastructure, libraries and parks.

Address environmental and public health concerns stemming from the Tijuana River Valley pollution crisis.

\$1.4 billion in behavioral health spending, including:

Housing Interventions – \$88 million Provides a full continuum of housing to ensure people are sheltered while receiving treatment and support services. This includes a Flexible Housing Pool pilot as part of the new Transitional Rent benefit that will strengthen long-term housing stability.

Residential & Long-Term Care – \$176 million Provides behavioral health treatment and 24-hour support in a structured, therapeutic setting for people needing a higher level of care.

BH CONNECT Implementation –Adding \$47.3 million Expands community-based behavioral health care through evidence-based programs that support children and adults with complex conditions.

Substance Use Treatment for Adults – Adding \$23 million Enhances the network of substance use services and supports, including narcotic treatment programs and a new chemical dependency recovery program.

Behavioral Health Workforce – \$15.2 million Supports development and retention of a skilled public behavioral health workforce through the ELEVATE Fund and training and technical assistance for small, diverse community-based organizations.

Community Engagement and Network Support – \$14.4 million Strengthens community engagement and supports

providers through technical assistance, ensuring meaningful involvement of all 29 state-identified stakeholder groups (BHSA) in shaping behavioral health work in the region.

Behavioral Health Wellness Campus – Adding \$12.7 million Supports the design and development of the new integrated campus on County-owned property that will offer a continuum of mental health and substance use treatment and supportive services. The County was awarded a \$99.5 million state behavioral health grant for this project in March 2026.

Crisis Residential Treatment – Adding \$9.6 million Increases capacity within community-based crisis care settings that offer step down care along with diversion from unnecessary hospitalization.

Behavioral Health Facilities – Adding \$3.5 million Supports facility improvements to develop new Children’s Crisis Residential Care and Substance Use Recovery Treatment Services programs funded through State grant funds.

Child & Youth Behavioral Health – Adding \$2 million Prioritizes early intervention, outpatient, residential treatment, and crisis stabilization care to ensure children and youth have access to care.

In-Home Outreach Teams – Adding \$1.1 million Connects people with serious mental illness who haven’t engaged in services to care.

Regional Watershed Protection & Ocean Pollution Prevention – \$25.6 million Supports watershed protection efforts that reduce ocean pollution and promote clean beaches, healthy ecosystems and safe drinking water.

Waste Diversion, Emissions Reduction & Closed Landfill Management – \$25 million Integrates programs that divert waste from landfills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions

with long-term monitoring and management of closed landfills to protect air and groundwater quality and strengthen regional environmental safeguards.

Farmland Preservation, Open Space Protection & Agricultural Safeguards – \$17.3 million Protects the region’s agricultural economy and natural landscapes by permanently preserving farmland, expanding protection of open space and enhancing efforts to detect and prevent invasive pests that threaten crops and local ecosystems.

Climate Action Plan-related Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Investments – \$15 million (includes some programs referenced in other areas of the budget) Implementation of the County’s Climate Action Plan measures that cut GHG emissions, improve air quality and strengthen long-term climate resilience.

Groundwater Resource Management – \$3.4 million Supports long-term groundwater management and protects regional water security.

Green Building & Solar Energy Promotion – \$1.4 million Promotes green building practices and accelerates solar energy adoption throughout the region.

EV Roadmap Expansion & Fleet Electrification – \$1.2 million Advances the County’s EV Roadmap by replacing fleet vehicles with electric vehicles and installing new charging stations at sites including Campo RMS, Julian RMS, Pine Valley Park, Tijuana River Valley Regional Park, El Monte Park and Lake Morena Park.

Tree Planting – \$500,000 Plants 1,000 new trees to improve air quality, expand shade coverage and support healthier neighborhoods. In addition to planting trees on County properties in support of our climate action goals, our private property tree program gives unincorporated area private property owners or

their designees free 15-gallon trees to plant themselves.

Pollution Chief for Tijuana River Valley Regional Coordination A new Pollution Chief to lead regional collaboration, identify resources and drive long-term solutions for the Tijuana River Valley.

\$93.1 million in housing resources for vulnerable residents Supports the development of affordable and supportive housing, rental assistance and services that help families achieve self-sufficiency. Including: \$16 million total, including \$11.6 million prior year funds, for the Regional Homeless Assistance Program and Inclement Weather Program . Provides safe, short-term housing through hotel placements and supplies hotel/motel vouchers during cold or wet weather for residents of unincorporated communities needing emergency shelter.

\$3.4 million for the Housing our Youth Program Continues dedicated housing and supportive services for youth ages 18–24, connecting hundreds of young adults to stability and long-term well-being.

\$2.8 million in prior year funds for the Shallow Rental Subsidy Program Launches a new round of support for 200 senior households, offering a \$500 monthly subsidy for 18 months to prevent homelessness and support housing retention.

\$1.6 million in prior year funds to extend the LGBTQ+ Innovative Housing Program Continues case management, supportive services, and housing navigation for LGBTQ+ individuals experiencing homelessness.

\$1.6 million in prior year funds for the Bancroft and Magnolia Safe Parking Programs Operates 43 safe parking spaces with onsite services to support individuals living in vehicles as they transition to permanent housing.

\$29.2 million for housing support and development services Funds sustainable housing development, affordability programs, ADU and tiny home initiatives, homelessness cleanup and assistance, inspections, and streamlined land use review.

\$600,000 for the District Attorney’s Shelter Ready app Enhances real time transparency by supporting an innovative tool that connects people experiencing homelessness with emergency shelter and safe parking programs.

Road Safety and Maintenance Investments – \$266.9 million Funds enhancements such as new traffic signals, curb ramps, pedestrian crossings, guardrails and supports maintenance of 2,000 miles of County roads in unincorporated communities to ensure safe, reliable travel.

Facility Maintenance and Safety Upgrades—\$73.3 million Funds critical repairs, facility maintenance and major safety upgrades across County facilities, including: Repairs at San Diego Central Jail, new cameras at George F. Bailey Detention Facility and East Mesa Reentry Facility, and improvements at Rock Mountain Detention Facility.

HVAC and roof upgrades at the County Emergency Operations Center, along with HVAC improvements at the San Marcos Offices and Edgemoor Skilled Nursing Facility.

Installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the County.

Maintains safe, clean park and library facilities through ongoing maintenance, repairs and weed management.

Stormwater and Flood Prevention – \$63.6 million Supports storm flood prevention through maintenance of culverts, channels, and storm drains, and funds the operation and maintenance of the County’s sewer system

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY (CONTINUED)

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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County Adopts Balanced \$9.16B Budget, Investing in Community Services and Long-Term Stability

and water districts.

Parks & Recreation Operations — \$37.7 million Operates 159 park facilities, 60,000 acres of parkland and 398 miles of trails for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Ramona Sheriff Station Replacement — \$34.3 million Builds a new Ramona Sheriff Station to replace the existing facility constructed in the 1970s, enhancing public safety services in the region.

Library Operations — \$71.5 million The County Library system operates 33 branch libraries, four electric outreach vans and five automated book kiosks. This budget maintains hours of operation to ensure access to materials, programs and other resources. In 2025, the system circulated 11.79 million items, ranking among largest library systems in California, the nation and the world.

Vista Detention Facility Planning — \$3 million Begins planning, environmental review and design for a new Vista Detention Facility to meet long-term operational needs.

Community Facility Investments Continues investments in new and upgraded facilities that serve communities, including the Casa de Oro Library — opening summer 2026 with double the space — and the Epicentre in Mira Mesa, reopening as a County operated community and teen center shaped through extensive community engagement.

Firefighting Operations and Emergency Medical Services — \$84.5 million Strengthens firefighting and emergency medical services in unincorporated areas, including added staffing for water tender trucks that deliver large volume water to fire scenes.

County Fire Night Flying Helicopter Expected to be ready to

serve in FY 2026-27, it represents a major regional investment that expands critical nighttime wildfire and emergency response capability.

Citizen’s Law Enforcement Review Board (CLERB)— \$600,000 Supports CLERB’s expanded oversight role, including outreach, policy development, investigations and specialized medical case expertise.

Community Care Coordination and Alternatives to Incarceration — \$5.5 million Connects justice involved people with significant health and behavioral health needs to housing, treatment, medical care, education and employment.

Justice Prevention, Diversion and Reentry Services — \$4.5 million Bolsters prevention, diversion and reentry support, including the newly implemented Resource and Reentry Hub where individuals can access case management, peer support, treatment, healthcare and tailored assistance following jail, arrest or law enforcement contact.

Expanding Community-Led Violence Prevention in Spring Valley — \$250,000 Supports implementation of the No Shots Fired program through outreach, mentorship and wrap-around services aimed at reducing gang and gun violence using a community-driven, prevention-focused approach.

Gun Violence Reduction Program — \$227,000 Supports a public health-aligned approach to reducing suicide, domestic violence and community violence through early intervention, improved crisis response and collaboration between public health, law enforcement and community partners.

Eligibility and Self Sufficiency Services — \$852 million Supports CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal and General Relief, including \$23.7 million tied to the local

revenue impact of federal H.R. 1 CalFresh administrative requirements and related staffing to help residents keep their benefits.

Child and Family Well-Being — \$502 million Invests in family strengthening, prevention and child protection services, with over \$163 million dedicated to foster and adoptive families.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) — \$248.7 million Includes \$25.2 million in new funding to support roughly 50,000 vulnerable adults and people with disabilities with home and personal care assistance.

Health and Medical Care in Jails — \$198.9 million Supports medical care for adults in custody.

Health and Medical Care for Youth in Custody — \$14.36 million Maintains and enhances health and medical care services for youth in custody.

Animal Services — \$12.2 million Funds enforcement, sheltering and veterinary care in unincorporated areas and adoption services countywide.

Immigrant Legal Defense Program — \$13.2 million Provides legal representation to detained immigrants and unaccompanied minors in removal proceedings. This represents \$5.5 million in one-time funding and \$7.7 in on-going funding, which is an increase of \$2.7 million over last year.

Sheriff’s Office (Proposition 36) — \$15.3 million Includes adding 23 full-time employees to support increased jail bookings and related operational needs.

Public Defender (Proposition 36) — \$4.82 million Includes adding 18 full-time employees to meet higher caseloads and ensure timely, constitutionally required legal representation for people who cannot afford an attorney.

Probation (Proposition 36) — \$2.97 million Includes adding 15 full-time employees to expand pretrial and felony

supervision and support increased assessment, treatment and housing needs.

Library Wi-Fi Access — \$381,000 Provides free, 24/7 Wi-Fi at County library locations.

Library High School Program — \$245,000 Continues the program that helps adults earn their high school diplomas.

Citizenship Training — \$221,000 Offers training through County Library to support County residents pursuing citizenship.

¡Mas Fresco! Plus Program- \$500,000 Extends the program, which delivers fresh, locally grown produce to residents facing food insecurity.

Department of Youth Development- \$250,000 Funds a feasibility study for potential County department to coordinate youth services and strengthen pathways to safety, wellness and opportunity.

Child Support Services Supports financial, emotional and physical well-being of nearly 39,900 families across the region.

Public Health Services — \$235.6 million Protects community health through epidemic prevention, disease control, public health centers, home visiting programs and pharmaceutical services that ensure broad access to care.

Food Safety Inspections — \$18 million Safeguards public health by inspecting 15,700 restaurants, food trucks and other food facilities, supporting 530 temporary events and conducting 1,200 complaint investigations and 520 foodborne illness investigations.

District Attorney Consumer Protection Expansion — \$16.3 million Expands countywide consumer protection activities to investigate and evaluate reports of fraudulent and unfair business practices and take appropriate action to protect the public.

Consumer Fairness and

Public Protection Unit — \$2.4 million Establishes a new eight-person team in County Counsel focused on consumer protection, product safety, financial abuse, unfair competition, environmental justice and economic fairness, broadening efforts to protect consumers in coordination with other enforcement agencies, such as the San Diego County District Attorney and City Attorneys.

Vector Control and Mosquito-Borne Disease Prevention — \$16 million Monitors and treats more than 1,600 mosquito breeding sites to protect residents from West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne illnesses.

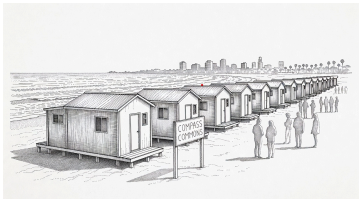
Beach Water Quality Testing — \$1.9 million Delivers same day beach water quality testing and public reporting at 45 locations, helping residents stay informed and safe.

Ethics, Compliance & Labor Standards — \$300,000 Adds the equivalent of two full-time positions to enhance labor standards enforcement, strengthen safety in County parks, and improve contract compliance efforts.

Mobile Veterinary Surgical Unit Brings spay/neuter services and basic pet wellness directly to underserved and high need communities in the unincorporated areas, improving animal health and accessibility for families.

Arts & Culture and Film Office — \$3.25 million Investment in arts and culture initiatives and support the implementation of a film office.

County of San Diego news release · Jun 25, 2026



Illustration

COUNTY County Celebrates Workforce Sleep Cabins to Provide Safe Housing in Pacific Beach

The County of San Diego celebrated a first-of-its-kind

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY (CONTINUED)

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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County Celebrates Workforce Sleep Cabins to Provide Safe Housing in Pacific Beach

workforce sleeping cabin site Tuesday in Pacific Beach. Compass Commons is a tiny home community operated by Shoreline Community Services to provide safe, climate-controlled housing for people working their way out of homelessness.

Compass Commons features six 64-square-foot sleeping cabins for Shoreline’s Community Care Crew, a workforce hired by local businesses, churches and neighborhood organizations for street cleaning, power washing, custodial work, graffiti removal, landscaping and event support.

The cabins are located in the parking lot of Christ Lutheran Church and include locking doors, electricity, climate control and safety features. Participants have 24-hour access to on-site

restrooms, gym memberships for daily showers and meals provided by faith-based partners.

“There isn’t a ‘one size fits all’ solution to homelessness and these sleeping cabins provide one more housing option we haven’t had before,” said County Interim Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Health and Human Services, Elizabeth Hernández, PhD. “With support provided by Shoreline Community Services, the cabins will help stabilize and connect program participants to permanent housing, employment and supportive services.”

Shoreline Community Services is the first organization to turn the County of San Diego’s Building Partnerships sleeping cabin program into an operating workforce housing model. Through the program, the County awarded Shoreline about \$95,000 for the purchase, delivery and assembly of the six ADA-compliant Pallet Shelter homes.

The County’s Building

Partnerships initiative , approved in 2022, gives trusted local groups a faster, lower-cost tool to expand emergency and transitional housing options. It is part of the County’s Framework for Ending Homelessness , which focuses on prevention, diversion services, emergency housing and permanent housing.

Compass Commons is designed to connect work, wages, services and safe shelter. The program offers a path forward for residents rebuilding their lives in one of San Diego’s highest cost coastal communities, strengthening local homelessness response efforts through practical, community-based partnerships.

County of San Diego news release · Jun 25, 2026

COUNTY
Board Approves Food Distribution Program to Support Residents Facing CalFresh Reduction

The County Board of

Supervisors has approved a new food distribution program designed to help an estimated 93,500 people who may see their CalFresh benefits reduced or eliminated due to new federal work requirements.

Under the plan, the County will partner with Feeding San Diego and the San Diego Food Bank to host regular food distribution events at County facilities across the 16 high impact ZIP codes where families face the greatest need.

Additional distributions will be coordinated through trusted community partners to help fill service gaps.

The program is expected to launch mid-summer. Event details will be posted on the County’s website and shared by partner organizations.

County locations include library branches, Family Resource Centers and a community center. County staff will be onsite to help people apply for benefits, answer questions and offer other resources.

The \$1 million program is funded through County reserves dedicated to safety-net services. Funding will support food distribution events, staffing, and nominal facility costs, along with potential adjustments to the program based on need, like homedelivery options.

County staff will monitor needs in real-time to ensure resources are delivered where they are needed most.

While most of the County’s 372,000 CalFresh recipients will not see changes to their benefits, the federal changes under H.R. 1 could affect 93,500 people. Residents with eligibility questions or who need to update their contact information can call the Access Customer Service Center at 866-262-9881, Monday to Friday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

County of San Diego news release · Jun 25, 2026

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

BUSINESS

County Vehicle Miles Traveled Mitigation

The County Board of Supervisors considered options for implementing a Local Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Program at their June 10 Board meeting. VMT is a measure that housing development must mitigate under state law. This regulation adds burdensome costs to the construction of much needed new housing in the County’s unincorporated area.

Due to a recent court decision, housing development that is consistent with the County’s General Plan does not currently need to mitigate for VMT, which has allowed for the possibility of new housing in the unincorporated area. The County Board of Supervisors considered whether to direct County staff

to work on a Local VMT Mitigation Program for housing projects that are not consistent with the County’s General Plan. Chamber staff met with County offices and County staff to advocate against this idea, as it would seldom be used by the development community and

would take staff away from more important ongoing housing initiatives, including the County’s Sustainable Land Use Frame

work, which will modernize land use planning across the unincorporated area and allow for possible new housing in climate efficient areas.

The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to not move forward with a Local Mitigation Program currently, but to instead monitor changes to VMT policy at the state level, work with SANDAG on a regional mitigation program, and direct staff time to the Sustainable Land Use Framework. We appreciate

the Board’s leadership on this issue and their common-sense approach to ensuring more housing opportunities for our region’s workforce!

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Jun 25, 2026

BUSINESS
TJRV Update & Survey
The Chamber continues to elevate transboundary pollution as a regional priority on both sides of the border.

Earlier this month, Vice President of International

and Public Affairs Kenia Zamarripa presented an overview of the Chamber’s recently released report and proposed framework , commissioned by the Prebys Foundation, to the TJRV Congressional Working Group led by Representatives Scott Peters and Juan Vargas.

The following week, Kenia also shared the report’s findings and recommendations with SANDAG and regional stakeholders as part of ongoing efforts to build alignment around long-term solutions. The Chamber is also partnering with the SD World Affairs Council on July 10 for Poisoned Waters: The Tijuana River Crisis and the Future of Cross-Border Cooperation , a discussion featuring Kenia alongside regional leaders from WILDCOAST, USD, and Tijuana Verde. The conversation will explore the impacts of transboundary pollution, current response efforts, and next steps.

In addition, the County of San Diego’s Office of Economic Development and Government Affairs continues to advance an economic impact study on the Tijuana River Valley transboundary pollution crisis. The Chamber

is supporting outreach by distributing surveys to businesses, tourism stakeholders, community organizations, and other partners to capture data on how this issue has hindered economic growth and investment.

The survey should take between 5-20 minutes to complete depending on the track (business, resident, visitor, or organization). You will be asked questions about how the sewage crisis may have affected you, your household, your business, or your community. Your responses are critical to inform and advance policy and actions to mitigate transboundary pollution, and will be added to other research, data, and community input. The survey will remain open for about 4 weeks, so please take time to provide your input soon.

This study is expected to be finalized and presented to the Board of Supervisors in October.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Jun 25, 2026

BUSINESS
Chamber Honored for Advocacy at State Level
Chamber Team Member Jimena (center) at the awards

event.

The Chamber was honored to receive the President’s Circle Award earlier this month from the California Chamber of Commerce.

The Award is given annually to chambers throughout the state that are leaders in advocacy, engagement, and support for their local business communities. Chamber Business Programs Manager Jimena Villasenor-Martinez traveled to Sacramento to accept the award and represent the Chamber at CalChamber’s annual Business Outlook event.

Chamber staff continue strong state advocacy efforts as Chamber sponsored, co-sponsored, supported, and opposed bills move through their second houses in the State Legislature. Chamber sponsored AB 1834 (Patel), moved unanimously through the Senate Local Government Committee and will head to the Senate Floor for consideration next. We look forward to this important bill for mixed-use development continuing to move through the legislative process.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Jun 25, 2026

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AROUND CALIFORNIA

Statewide news

CALIFORNIA
DOJ Sues to Block California's Glock Ban and Challenge Its Handgun Roster

The federal action, brought under the Trump administration, contends that the state's limits on commonly used handguns for self-defense run afoul of the Second Amendment.

The U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit on July 1, 2026, against California seeking to prevent enforcement of a new law that bars retail purchases of handguns with firing mechanisms like those in Glocks and to contest the state's longstanding list of approved handguns that restricts consumer choices.

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche stated that the Second Amendment protects all Americans. "The Second Amendment is a sacred right

belonging to all Americans, even those in California. California cannot ban the most popular type of handgun in America," he said.

The suit addresses a statute signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in October 2025 that targets pistols using mechanisms common to Glocks. The source reporting on the case noted that California is the first state to pass such a specific prohibition, while Maryland, Connecticut and New York have considered comparable restrictions.

The state's existing approved handgun roster adds further limits on what models may be sold. The DOJ argues that these measures unconstitutionally restrict law-abiding residents from obtaining firearms widely used for self-defense.

Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon, who

leads the Civil Rights Division, said her office would protect citizens from what it views as illegal state overreach. "The Civil Rights Division will defend law-abiding citizens from states that seek to disarm them illegally," Dhillon said. She added that the case shows the department "enforcing the Second Amendment by protecting citizens against unconstitutional state regulation of firearms."

In a letter sent the same day to Newsom and Attorney General Rob Bonta, Dhillon proposed settlement negotiations before the suit proceeds. She indicated that if the state did not respond within a week, litigation would follow. "Because handguns are the most popular weapon chosen by Americans for self-defense, a prohibition of their use is invalid," Dhillon wrote.

The complaint cites the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Wolford v. Lopez*, which the DOJ says confirmed that the Second and Fourteenth Amendments protect the ability to carry handguns outside the home for self-defense and prevent states from denying access to commonly chosen firearms for that purpose.

The author of the underlying legislation, Assemblyman Jesse Gabriel, has called the Glock a "DIY Machine Gun Loophole" and argued that such measures are needed because "we refuse to stand idly by while our schools and communities are being threatened by illegal machine guns" and to protect communities "from mass shootings." He sponsored the bill with multiple Democratic coauthors.

The legislation, Assembly

Bill 1127, passed the state Legislature and was signed into law by Newsom in October 2025. It became effective on July 1, 2026, the same day the DOJ filed its challenge.

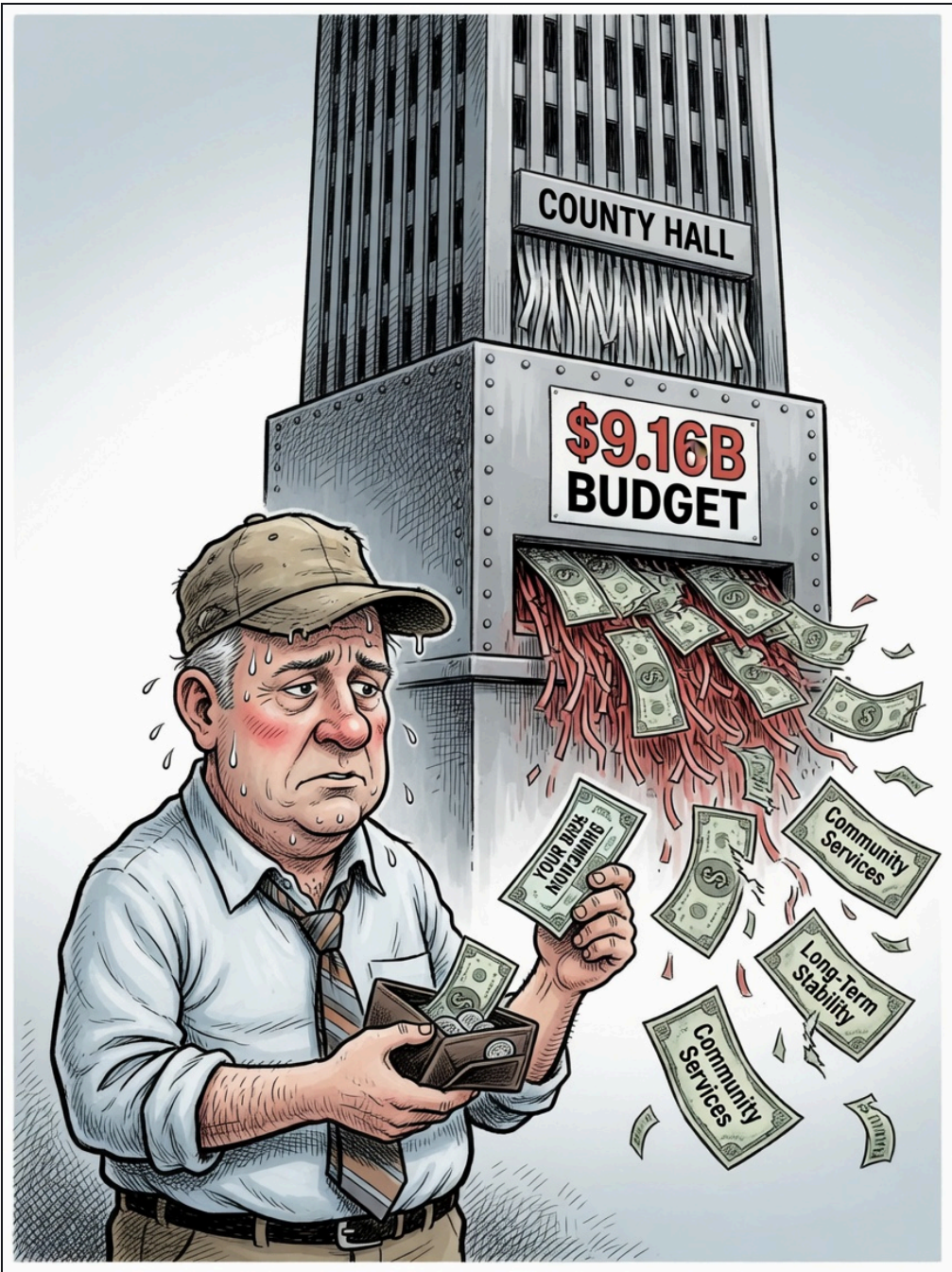
The department has previously sued California over its gun laws, and officials see the current case as potentially influencing similar efforts underway in other states. The DOJ has directed increasing attention toward firearm regulations enacted in Democratic-led states.

Dhillon posted on social media that recent Supreme Court rulings on the Second Amendment align with the right to self-defense and that her division would keep defending that right in line with those precedents.

San Diego Newsline · Based on reporting by California Globe · Jul 1, 2026

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



Balanced on whose back?

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

California Cities Cannot Budget Their Way Out of Mission Problems, Argues Policy Expert

Mark Moses contends that unbounded government missions, not just poor budgeting, drive California's persistent local fiscal crises.

California cities face ongoing budget shortfalls that reveal deeper structural issues, according to Mark Moses, a senior fellow with the California Policy Center.

Recent examples include Los Angeles closing a nearly \$1 billion gap, San Jose tackling a \$50 million shortfall with remaining structural challenges, and Oakland reopening its two-year budget to cover roughly \$265 million while grappling with insolvency risks.

Moses, who spent three decades in local government finance and administration, writes that these pressures stem from rising costs, increased service demands, pension obligations, infrastructure needs and strains

on public finances.

When deficits arise, the typical response pits calls for spending restraint, transparency, accountability and efficiency against discussions of staffing, service cuts, tax hikes, reserves and long-term planning.

Yet after years advocating such reforms, Moses came to believe they address only symptoms rather than root causes. Most efforts improve how cities operate but leave untouched what cities do and why they do it.

Budget talks center on costs, but costs result from activities, which serve goals justified by an organization's mission, he explains. By focusing only on the cost end of that chain, cities overlook decisions made much earlier.

Reforms like better budgeting, oversight, transparency, incentives and efficiency can enhance administration but do little to challenge the missions and goals that create spending pressures in the first place, according to Moses.

While political will and

fiscal discipline matter, even committed leaders work within missions that constantly spawn new goals, activities and costs. Without scrutinizing the mission itself, restraint merely manages expansion instead of questioning it.

Moses notes that he long promoted conventional reforms and still sees their value. However, he realized they refine how cities pursue their missions without asking if those missions are appropriate or sustainable.

City mission statements illustrate the problem. San Jose aims to create a “great place to live, work, learn and play,” while Fremont focuses on enhancing quality of life through responsive government and community partnerships.

These broad declarations, Moses argues, offer no clear boundaries for governmental responsibilities. They assume an unlimited role for government, functioning like “aspirational poetry” that can justify almost any action.

When a mission excludes nothing, it limits nothing, he

writes. Every issue gains a presumption for government involvement, generating new activities, costs and expectations. This “mission creep” is the predictable outcome of unbounded mandates, not mere lack of discipline.

State mandates and pension costs can worsen fiscal strain, but they do not explain why cities adopt such expansive self-definitions. In doing so, cities often take on tasks that do not require unique governmental powers to tax, regulate or compel compliance.

This shift replaces voluntary, private solutions with political ones. Businesses, charities, churches, civic groups and entrepreneurs are crowded out, along with innovation, investment and community cooperation. These lost alternatives remain invisible when focus stays on government actions.

The result is a repeating cycle: expanding missions fuel larger budgets, growing constituencies and eventual fiscal crises. Debates then return to taxes, efficiency and reserves without addressing

upstream drivers.

Moses concludes that conventional conversations about budgeting are necessary but insufficient. To break chronic scarcity, California cities must confront fundamental questions: What activities properly belong in local government? What goals justify coercive powers? What limiting principles should define a city’s mission?

Until those questions gain attention, cities will keep treating fiscal problems downstream while the primary causes remain upstream. No budget process can solve a problem created by an unbounded mission.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Jun 26, 2026

ABOUT THIS PAPER

San Diego Newsline covers downtown San Diego first — City Hall, the Gaslamp Quarter, East Village, Little Italy, Barrio Logan and the waterfront — and the county around it. Every item names its source; read the originals and our standards at sandiegonewsline.com.

MORE NEWS

COUNTY

County Moves Forward on Funding for Supportive Housing in Chula Vista

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors has voted to pursue \$20 million in state funding to help build new permanent supportive housing in Chula Vista. The proposed homes would serve veterans and people experiencing mental health or substance use challenges.

The County is partnering with Wakeland Housing and Development Corporation to apply for funding through California’s Homekey+ program. If approved, the money would support Paseo del Rey, a new development bringing 96 affordable housing units to Chula Vista.

Homekey+ is an expansion of the state’s original 2020 Homekey program and is funded by Prop. 1, a measure approved by voters in 2024. The statewide program provides \$2.1 billion to create permanent supportive housing for veterans and people facing homelessness or at risk of losing housing due to behavioral health needs.

Paseo del Rey would be the County’s second Homekey+ project in Chula Vista following the January 2026 groundbreaking of the 27 -unit Palomar Motel .

The County has also funded

six Homekey developments in the City of San Diego, creating a total of 616 supportive housing units, with an additional 81 units underway through the Homekey+ program.

Since 2017, the County has invested more than \$334 million in affordable housing through efforts like using excess County land and the Innovative Housing Trust Fund. These investments have created over 3,700 new homes, with another 2,200 now under construction.

Explore the County’s interactive dashboard for data on the County’s affordable housing inventory, along with the Housing for All Hub for services, resources, and property information through its Affordable Housing Map.

County of San Diego news release · Jun 25, 2026

COUNTY

Important Water Quality Resource for Beachgoers Updated

Our beaches are a precious natural resource to those that live and visit our region, and the County of San Diego has an improved website to ensure you know the water quality before you get in the water.

The County protects the public health of millions of residents and visitors each year through beach water

testing, public education, outreach, and beach postings.

Poor water quality at our beaches can threaten the health of swimmers and beachgoers and hurts San Diego’s ocean-dependent economy.

The public can check on water quality before getting in at an improved sdbeachinfo.com site. The site has an updated look http://www.sdbeachinfo.com/ and beachgoers can also sign up to receive direct alerts when their favorite beach’s water quality status changes. They can also see the exact sample testing data.

Location-specific alerts – Sign up to receive notifications for the exact beaches and bays you care about by subscribing for notifications .

Quick access to sample results – View the latest water quality test results in one location.

Timely updates – Receive notifications when new results or beach management actions are posted.

Improved navigation and maps – Quickly find beach locations, water quality information, and testing data.

Beach water quality monitoring covers the approximately 70 miles of shoreline in the County and focuses on locations with a number of different surface water runoff sources including storm

drains, creeks, rivers and lagoons, all which transport pollutants from inland areas to our beaches and bays.

The exact number of places we monitor varies depending on the season, with more locations monitored from April through October each year, when water recreation occurs most frequently.

Popular beaches will also see new signs at beach access points and lifeguard towers with QR codes that bring beachgoers directly to the water quality beach info website so they can “check in before you get in.”

Water-contact advisories or warnings are issued if bacteria levels exceed State health standards and closures are issued if there is a sewage or chemical spill that may pose a threat to public health. These notices include water contact advisories , warnings and water contact closures .

The County also works closely with local lifeguards and municipalities to keep them informed of any water-quality risks and results are uploaded daily. Visit www.sdbeachinfo.com for more information on San Diego County’s Beach and Bay Water Quality Monitoring Program.

County of San Diego news release · Jul 1, 2026

Downtown, City & County

COUNTY

County Offices to Close July 3-4 for Independence Day

San Diego County offices will be closed Friday, July 3 and Saturday, July 4 at most County facilities for the Independence Day holiday. The closure includes all County public health clinics, family resource centers, and library branches.

Essential services, including law enforcement and emergency animal control response, will continue without interruption.

County animal shelters will be closed on Friday, July 3, but will reopen on Saturday, July 4.

The Adams Park Pool will stay open Friday, July 3 and close on the Fourth of July.

County parks, campgrounds and neighborhood day-use parks will remain open. Several community facilities, however, will close July 3 and 4, including:

4S Ranch Recreation Office (all parks remain open)

Camping reservations can still be made online . But the reservation phone line will not be staffed during the holiday.

All County offices and facilities will resume normal business hours on Monday, July 6.

County of San Diego news release · Jun 29, 2026