

2023-2024 Priority Legislation

The California Association of Winegrape Growers is advocating in Sacramento during the deliberation on these proposed changes in the law. As a strong voice for California winegrape growers, CAWG helps make lawmakers aware of the potential effects of the legislation they are considering. In many cases, this includes unintended but devastating consequences.

CAWG sponsors and supports legislation that positively impacts grape growing in California and opposes legislation that can negatively impact the industry, our workers, and our communities. Below are a few of the many priorities CAWG is working on in Sacramento:

Legislation Sponsored (or co-sponsored) by CAWG:

AB 1861 (Addis, D-Morro Bay)

This bill would extend the Pierce's Disease Control Program at CDFA for five years, pending approval by growers in a referendum in 2025.

The bill moved through the legislature with bipartisan support and no opposition. CAWG is sending a wine industry coalition letter to the governor asking for his signature.

Status: Signed into law

AB 2827 (E. Reyes, D-Colton)

This bill enjoyed bipartisan support, but unfortunately, it was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee and is a dead bill. This bill would have established a statewide goal to manage the introduction and spread of invasive species across California.

Status: Failed passage

AB 1024 (Aguilar-Curry, D-Winters)

Despite us working with the Department of Fish and Wildlife on amendments to address their concerns, this bill was held in Senate Appropriations Committee. This bill would have required the State Water Resources Board to give priority to adopting conditions that permit specified to store water for small irrigation use during times of high streamflow.

Status: Failed passage

SB 1135 (Limon, D-Santa Barbara)

This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee. This bill would have created a tax credit for growers to cover the cost of composting.

Status: Failed passage

AB 2746 (Villapudua, D-Stockton)

This bill is not moving. It was our ag employee housing bill. We had a meeting with researchers at UC Davis which will be releasing a study this fall. We continue to have conversations with stakeholders preparing for 2025. The housing bond is not going forward, which had money for ag employee housing.

Status: Failed passage

Legislation CAWG is Supporting:

SB 92 (Umberg) & AB 2288 (Kalra)

These bills collectively reform the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA) to ensure workers retain a strong tool for resolving labor claims and receiving fair compensation while limiting the shakedown lawsuits that negatively impact employers and employees.

Status: Signed into law

AB 3056 (Gallagher)

A UC Berkeley study shows that the current ag overtime law has resulted in less take-home pay for ag employees. This bill would increase regular hours worked from 8 hours to 9 hours per day.

Status: Defeated in Assembly Labor Committee

AB 2240 (Arambula) and AB 3035 (Pellerin)

These bills would potentially increase the availability of ag worker housing either through labor camp funding or streamlined housing in areas adjacent to ag land.

Status: Signed into law

AB 2011 (Bauer-Kahan)

This bill would repeal the sunset on the Small Employer Family Leave Pilot Program thereby making it permanent.

Status: Signed into law

SB 366 (Caballero)

This bill requires an update to the California Water Plan to create long-term supply targets.

Status: Vetoed by the Governor

SB 1374 (Becker)

The Public Utilities Commission's recent rule changes unfairly penalize non-residential utility customers, including farms, by taking away any benefit for self-consuming their own on-site solar generation, if it is metered separately from their other usage. This bill creates fairness so that all customers can self-consume the power that they generate on their property and that multiple-metered customers get the same treatment as everyone else and not be required to sell their power to the utility at low prices and immediately buy it back at much higher retail prices.

Status: Vetoed by the Governor

AB 3285 (Assembly G.O. Committee)

This bill was amended to extend the charitable giving law to January 1, 2030. This allows wineries to sell wine with the express purpose of giving a portion of the proceeds to a nonprofit. This is noncontroversial and is moving through the Senate on consent.

Status: Signed into law

Legislation where CAWG is Neutral:

AB 2113 (Garcia)

This bill unfortunately increases the mill tax. However, it is a compromised approach as it also includes requirements for the Department of Pesticide Regulation to speed up its work in approving new pesticides and increased oversight of DPR. This was an alternative to a budget trailer bill that included only an increase in the mill tax.

Status: Signed into law

AB 460 (Bauer-Kahan)

This bill initially proposed to expand the authority to impose civil and administrative liabilities and penalties by the State Water Board. The bill was substantially amended to address concerns. CAWG's opposition and all other ag opposition was removed.

Status: Signed into law

Legislation CAWG is Opposing:

AB 2149 (Connolly)

This bill would have required inspections of any gate weighing more than 50 lbs. and more than 48 inches wide or more than 84 inches high that is intended to be used by the public, an entire community or neighborhood, or any considerable number of persons to meet certain standards. CAWG, Wine Institute and California State Association of Counties led a large coalition in opposition and the bill was held in Senate Appropriations Committee.

Status: Failed passage

AB 2863 (Schiavo)

This bill originally would have created unworkable duties for wine clubs. This bill was substantially amended to address our concerns.

Status: Signed into law

AB 828 (Connolly)

This bill would prohibit a Groundwater Sustainability Agency from imposing a fee upon a small community water system serving a disadvantaged community or on a managed wetland. This would increase costs for all other water users.

Status: Vetoed by the Governor

SB 399 (Wahab)

This bill would create new restrictions relative to workplace communications on potentially religious or political matter. For example, an employee could object to a grower having a campaign sign in a vineyard alongside a highway. This bill was approved on the last day of session and Governor Newsom is likely to sign it. We anticipate SB 399 will be challenged in court.

Status: Signed into law

AB 1963 (Friedman)

This bill would prohibit the use of paraquat.

Status: Signed into law

SB 1299 (Cortese)

The bill would create a rebuttable presumption that a heat-related injury that develops from working outdoors for an employer in the agriculture industry that fails to comply with existing heat illness prevention standards has arisen from the course of employment. This means that any heat illness would become a worker's compensation case.

Status: Vetoed by the Governor

SB 1116 (Portantino)

This bill would increase Unemployment Insurance taxes for all industries and all employers (including growers) by providing UI Benefits for striking workers.

Status: Defeated in Assembly Labor Committee.

AB 2741 (Haney)

This bill would have steered employees of an FLC into working for growers who contract with a vineyard management company. Employees should choose where they want to work and should not be pushed into jobs they don't want. The author dropped the issue. The bill now deals with rental cars.

Status: Signed into law

SB 1434 (Durazo)

This bill proposed a major change in UI taxes, expand coverage, and change the calculation of benefits. This would have been potentially an increase in UI taxes of 400% or more.

Status: The author dropped the bill.

AB 3106 (Schiavo)

This bill, contrary to science and medicine, would have provided 10 days of paid sick leave for COVID. This would have been incredibly costly for all employers. The bill was scaled back and now deals only with schoolteachers.

Status: Defeated in Assembly Appropriations Committee.