

CALIFORNIA PROP 45

Expedites Environmental Review Requirements for Certain Projects

Purpose

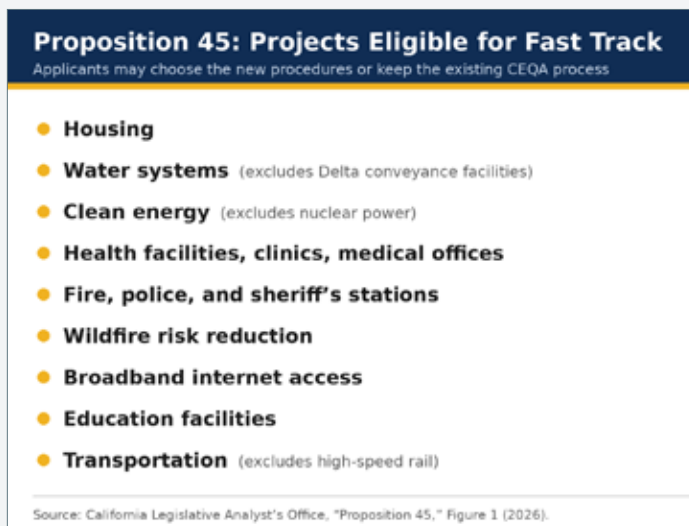
Proposition 45 is a citizen initiated measure that would create an optional, expedited environmental review, permitting, and judicial process under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), with binding deadlines for agencies and courts, for projects the measure designates as “essential.”¹

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Background

Enacted in 1970, CEQA requires state and local agencies to consider how a proposed project might harm the environment before approving it. The Act applies to many kinds of public and private projects.² When a project's significant impacts cannot be avoided with minor changes, the agency must prepare an environmental impact report (EIR), a detailed study of the project's likely impacts and of alternatives that could reduce them. Most projects do not require one.³ Anyone who believes an agency did not follow CEQA may sue, and a favorable court ruling can stop the entire project until the agency fixes the problem.⁴

Figure 1.



Proposal

Proposition 45 would let applicants for eligible projects choose between existing CEQA procedures and a new, faster set of procedures. The eligible categories, with their exclusions, are shown in Figure 1.⁵

For opted-in projects, the reviewing agency would have to specify up front all information an application must contain, judge the project by the laws and standards in effect when the application is filed, and finish an EIR within 365 business days. The applicant could develop a single project alternative rather than several, and public comment periods would be capped at 45 days for a draft EIR, extendable only by court order.⁶ Required tribal consultation would be limited to federally recognized tribes.⁷

The measure would also change how courts handle CEQA challenges to these projects. It would narrow the scope of what a court may consider; require courts to resolve challenges, including appeals, generally within 270 days; and bar courts from stopping an entire project. Only the portion found out of compliance could be halted while the agency fixes it.⁸

Fiscal Impact

The California Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) estimates initial costs to state and local governments, including the courts, to be the high tens of millions of dollars annually. Most of these initial costs would be associated with the adoption of new procedures. Fees paid by applicants and litigants would cover some of these costs, and some costs would likely decline over time. Longer-term fiscal effects are uncertain, could be more substantial than the near-term costs, and could be positive or negative.⁹

SUPPORT FOR PROPOSITION 45

Supporters of Proposition 45 Include:¹⁰

- California Chamber of Commerce
- Building a Better California
- California Building Industry Association (CBIA)
- California Housing Consortium
- Associated General Contractors of California
- Reform California
- California Republican Party
- California Hospital Association

The proponents' official website is <https://yesonprop45.com/>.

As of September 19, 2026, proponents had raised a total of \$70,027,383.¹¹

Arguments for Proposition 45¹²

Supporters of Proposition 45 argue that:

- The state's environmental review law is outdated and has resulted in expensive bureaucracy and frivolous litigation that slow development.
- Delays increase costs that are ultimately passed on to taxpayers and consumers.
- The measure speeds development while keeping essential environmental protections, and the existing process remains available to any applicant who prefers it.

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSITION 45

Opponents of Proposition 45 Include:¹³

- Sierra Club California
- Communities for a Better Environment
- Clean Water Action and Californians Against Waste
- Greenbelt Alliance¹⁴
- California Democratic Party
- Construction trades unions, including the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California and the District Council of Iron Workers¹⁵

The opponents' official website is <https://www.noprop45ca.com/>.

As of September 19, 2026, opponents had raised \$15,076,149.¹⁶

Arguments Against Proposition 45¹⁷

Opponents of Proposition 45 argue that:

- The legislature already enacted major CEQA streamlining in 2025 (AB 130 and SB 131), making the measure unnecessary.
- "Essential" is defined so broadly that it sweeps in highways, dams, and large subdivisions that cannot be adequately reviewed within the measure's one-year limit.
- The measure guts the alternatives analysis that steers projects toward less harmful designs, and freezing review standards at the application date would block agencies from applying updated science.
- The measure could be amended only by a two-thirds vote of the legislature, making mistakes difficult to fix.
- Weakened enforcement would shift the long-term costs of poorly planned projects onto communities and taxpayers.

A YES VOTE ON PROPOSITION 45

A YES vote on Prop. 45 would make certain public and private projects eligible for new environmental review and court challenge procedures with tighter time limits and a narrower scope of judicial review.¹⁸

A NO VOTE ON PROPOSITION 45

A NO vote on Prop. 45 would leave existing CEQA review and court challenge procedures in place for all projects.¹⁹

Endnotes

- 1 The text of the proposed initiative statute is at California Secretary of State, *Official Voter Information Guide, General Election, November 3, 2026*, pp. 157-173, <https://vig.cdn.sos.ca.gov/2026/general/pdf/complete-vig.pdf>.
- 2 California Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), Propositions on the November 3, 2026 Ballot, "Proposition 45," <https://lao.ca.gov/BallotAnalysis/Proposition?number=45&year=2026>; LAO, A.G. File No. 2025-023, December 10, 2025, Initiative Fiscal Analysis, <https://lao.ca.gov/BallotAnalysis/Initiative/2025-023>.
- 3 LAO, "Proposition 45."
- 4 LAO, "Proposition 45."
- 5 LAO, "Proposition 45," Figure 1.
- 6 LAO, "Proposition 45."
- 7 LAO, "Proposition 45" (tribal consultation limited to federally recognized tribes); California Association of Environmental Professionals, "Prop 45," accessed August 27, 2026, https://www.califaep.org/prop_45.php.
- 8 LAO, "Proposition 45."
- 9 LAO, "Proposition 45."
- 10 CalMatters, 2026 Voter Guide, "Proposition 45, Speed up environmental reviews for housing and infrastructure," <https://calmatters.org/california-voter-guide-2026/proposition-45-environmental-review/>.
- 11 Ballotpedia, "California Proposition 45, Changes to Environmental Review Process for Certain Projects Initiative (2026)," [https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_45_Changes_to_Environmental_Review_Process_for_Certain_Projects_Initiative_\(2026\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_45_Changes_to_Environmental_Review_Process_for_Certain_Projects_Initiative_(2026)).
- 12 CalMatters, "Proposition 45"; LAO, "Proposition 45"; and CA Secretary of State, *Official Voter Information Guide*, pp. 78-79.
- 13 CalMatters, "Proposition 45"; Jordan Grimes, "Chamber-Backed CEQA Initiative Is a Proposition Californians Can't Afford: No on Prop 45," Greenbelt Alliance, August 11, 2026, <https://www.greenbelt.org/blog/ceqa-baca-initiative/>.
- 14 Grimes, "Chamber-Backed CEQA Initiative."
- 15 FPPC, "November 2026 General Election."
- 16 Ballotpedia, "Proposition 45."
- 17 CalMatters, "Proposition 45"; Grimes, "Chamber-Backed CEQA Initiative." See also CA Secretary of State, *Official Voter Information Guide*, pp. 78-79.
- 18 LAO, "Proposition 45" ("What Your Vote Means").
- 19 LAO, "Proposition 45" ("What Your Vote Means").

