



Newsletter Number 13

MATTERS OF STATE CONCERN

They're Growing

www.wakeca.org

Affordability, Safety, and Local Accountability

A MATTER OF STATEWIDE CONCERN

Don't Build What You Can't Unbuild

Communities can't plan for the future if they're not allowed to adapt to it

If you've been writing letters to your legislators, or submitting through the portal, or showing up to committee hearings, you know the feeling. The comment period is sudden and short. Bill after bill passes.

Here is something different: a decision your city council or board of supervisors still gets to make. A choice, made locally, that determines whether your town keeps a road open or gives it away permanently.

You already know your traffic is getting worse. Mandated density is coming, and the streets that will carry it may already be narrowed by on-street parking, backing up into gridlock. That's the baseline. Now add fire.

If you live in a fire-threatened area, those same constrained streets are your evacuation routes, and they must be depended upon to work under the worst circumstances.

California has already limited local control over many housing decisions. Now Sacramento is moving further into how communities manage the roads and infrastructure needed to support that growth.

Is your city considering a dedicated or protected bike lane on a road you would evacuate on?

If the answer is yes, this is where SB 569 comes in. The window to speak up is **now** — while the bill is still being debated, and before your city commits to a project that could limit future flexibility.

SB 569 (Blakespear), moving through the Legislature, would prohibit a bikeway built even partly with State General Fund money from being reverted to a “nonactive transportation use” for up to twenty years. Read the bill text as amended June 24: there is no findings process, engineering exception, emergency off-ramp, or wildfire exception. A city can't simply decide later that it made a mistake.

And the bill goes further. Section 2 declares that how your city configures its own streets is **a matter of statewide concern rather than a municipal**

affair — claiming new state power over all localities. This goes well beyond zoning for housing.

SB 569 eliminates our options to change bike lane configurations that no longer work for the community.

We can support safe bicycle infrastructure and still believe communities should have the flexibility to respond when traffic, emergency response, or evacuation needs evolve.

The bike coalitions sponsoring this bill describe a reasonable-sounding safeguard: a safety analysis, public findings, and an opportunity to replace the facility with something equally safe. **But those protections are not in the bill.** The current text instead contains a flat prohibition against reverting the bikeway.

Stewardship requires learning from experience. When conditions change, communities deserve to make local decisions about whether a street design still serves public safety, emergency response, evacuation, and mobility.

That flexibility should not be lost simply because state funding was accepted years earlier.

A Cautionary Tale

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Paradise narrowed its main road by two lanes despite warnings of gridlock during a major wildfire

By Paige St. John, Rong-Gong Lin II and Joseph Serna · Nov. 20, 2018

Paradise put more than one street on a road diet. Skyway — the largest of the town's four ways out — went from four lanes to two through downtown. Pearson Road, a major cross street, had its travel lanes reduced and bike lanes added. On November 8, 2018, both of them jammed.

Paradise still had the authority to change its own street configuration when the fire came — during the evacuation, police converted every lane to outbound traffic to claw back capacity the road had been designed to give away. Under SB 569, a town in the same position would not have that authority.

This means the last real decision point is the one your council makes *before the lane goes in*. After that, it isn't a local decision anymore.

TAKE ACTION

SB 569 is still moving through the Legislature. There is still time to stop or improve the bill.

1. Contact your State Senator. Ask them to oppose SB 569, or support amendments that preserve local flexibility for public safety, emergency

evacuation, and engineering-based decisions.

2. Contact your Assembly Member. Ask them to oppose the bill, or support the same amendments, when SB 569 reaches the Assembly.

3. Contact your City Council or County Supervisors. If your community is considering protected bikeways on major corridors or evacuation routes, ask local officials to carefully evaluate whether accepting State General Fund money — and its long-term restrictions — is in your community's best interest.

[Sample letters can be found here →](#)

[Read SB 569 \(Blakespear\) — full text, as amended June 24, 2026 →](#)

FROM OUR NETWORK

SHIFT Bay Area: Two Tax Measures on the November Ballot

[SHIFT Bay Area](#) does serious analysis on taxation, infrastructure, and transit — the fiscal machinery underneath the policies we track. They're hosting a seminar on two measures headed for the November ballot: the proposed **Wealth Tax (Proposition 40)** and the initiative to **Save Proposition 13**.

Between them, these measures raise questions about property rights, state competitiveness, public finance, and California's long-term economic future. Public affairs strategist **Mason Harrison** will walk through the policy implications of both, and what they could mean for residents, businesses, and taxpayers.

Saturday, July 18 · 10:00 AM · Zoom

[Join the SHIFT seminar →](#)

More on SHIFT's work: shift-ba.org