

Hearing: February 13, 2026

ITEM 1
ELECTION OF OFFICERS
AND
SUBCOMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Government Code Sections 17527 and 17528
California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 1181.5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Background

State law requires the members to elect a chairperson and vice chairperson of the Commission on State Mandates (Commission). (Gov. Code, § 17528.) The election of officers occurs at the January meeting of each year, or at the next regularly scheduled meeting, if no meeting is held in January, except that in the calendar year following the statewide election of constitutional officers, the election may be postponed. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 1181.5(c).)

At the January 24, 2025, meeting, the Commission elected Joe Stephenshaw, Director of Finance, Chairperson of the Commission, and Malia Cohen, State Controller, Vice Chairperson.

Duties

- Duties of Chairperson. The chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Commission when present. The chairperson has all the rights and responsibilities of the other members, including the right to introduce motions or proposals and to speak and vote on them while presiding. The chairperson has the power to appoint one or more members of the Commission as a subcommittee to investigate and report to the Commission on any matter within the scope of the purposes of the Commission or to form advisory groups to assist the Commission or its subcommittees in fulfilling their purposes.
- Duties of Vice Chairperson. The vice chairperson shall preside over all meetings of the Commission at which the chairperson is not present. The vice chairperson has all the rights and responsibilities of the other members, including the right to introduce motions or proposals and to speak and vote on them while presiding. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 1181.5(b).)

Election Procedure

Eligibility. Commission members, as defined by Government Code section 17525, are eligible to be officers. The Commission consists of seven members as follows:

- The Controller (Malia Cohen)
- The Treasurer (Fiona Ma)

- The Director of Finance (Joe Stephenshaw)
- The Director of the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (Samuel Assefa)
- A public member with experience in public finance (Karen Greene Ross)
- A county supervisor (Lee Adams)
- A governing board member of a school district (Renee Nash)

Conduct of Election. The election may be conducted by the current chairperson or the Commission may authorize the executive director to conduct the election portion of its meeting. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 1181.5(c).)

The Commission's regulations do not describe an election procedure. However, the regulations specify that Robert's Rules of Order are the Commission's default rules. Under Robert's Rules, there are two ways to hold the election:

1. By Nomination:

Nominations may be made, and a vote taken. A nomination does not require a second.

2. By Motion:

A motion may be made to elect a member chairperson or vice chairperson. A motion requires a second.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the current chairperson conduct the elections of chairperson and vice chairperson.

B. SUBCOMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Background

The Commission may authorize a committee composed of one or more members to hold hearings at any time and place it may deem proper. (Gov. Code, § 17527(c).)

Currently, the Commission has three standing subcommittees: Personnel, Legislation, and Litigation. Each subcommittee has two members. The Legislation and Litigation subcommittees also include an alternate member.

The membership of the Commission's Subcommittees for 2025 is:

1. Personnel:

- Joe Stephenshaw (Director of the Department of Finance)
- Fiona Ma (State Treasurer)

2. Legislation:

- Malia Cohen (State Controller)
- Lee Adams (County Supervisor)

- Samuel Assefa (Director of the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation), Alternate

3. Litigation:

- Fiona Ma (State Treasurer)
- Renee Nash (School District Board Member)
- Malia Cohen (State Controller), Alternate

Duties

The duties of the subcommittee members are to investigate and report to the Commission on any matter within the scope of the purposes of the Commission or to form advisory groups to assist the Commission or its subcommittees in fulfilling their purposes.

Nomination and Election Procedure

Any member may volunteer and nominate themselves to serve and, upon a vote of the Commission, may serve on a subcommittee of the Commission.

Conduct of Election. The Commission's regulations do not describe an election procedure. However, the regulations specify that Robert's Rules of Order are the Commission's default rules. Under Robert's Rules, there are two ways to hold the election:

1. By Nomination:

Nominations may be made, and a vote taken. A nomination does not require a second.

2. By Motion:

A motion may be made to elect a member chairperson or vice chairperson. A motion requires a second.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the members nominate themselves to continue to serve or to be newly-appointed to the subcommittees upon approval of the Commission.

Staff further recommends that the chairperson conduct the elections for the positions on the Personnel, Legislation, and Litigation subcommittees.