

CALPIRG

Standing Up To Powerful Interests

2015 Legislative Agenda

California Public Interest Research Group

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OUR MISSION

The California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG) is an advocate for the public interest.

When consumers are cheated or the voices of ordinary citizens are drowned out by special interest lobbyists, CALPIRG speaks up and takes action. We uncover threats to public health and well-being and fight to end them, using the time-tested tools of investigative research, media exposés, grassroots organizing, advocacy and litigation. CALPIRG's mission is to deliver persistent, result-oriented public interest activism that protects consumers, encourages a fair, sustainable economy, and fosters responsive, democratic government.

For more information about CALPIRG's 2015 Legislative Priorities, to request our support for a bill, or to ask questions about our position on a specific issue, please don't hesitate to reach out. We look forward to working with you in 2015 and throughout the entire legislative cycle.

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Reclaim our Democracy

The influence of wealthy special interests in the funding of elections has eroded public trust in our political system and has discouraged civic participation. CALPIRG supports policies that ensure that every citizen, regardless of wealth, has more or less equal opportunity to influence the actions of our government, including policies that:

- Force political spending into the light of day and make it easier for the public to access information about political spending.
- Amplify the power of small donors at the state and local level.
- Promote democratic shareholder decision making in corporate campaign spending.
- Help overturn the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United and McCutcheon decisions which have unleashed unprecedented spending by a handful of millionaires and corporations in our elections.
- Increase opportunities for Californians to register to vote and/or update their registration.
- Increase options for Californians to cast a valid ballot on or before Election Day.

Protect Public Health

At least 23,000 Americans die every year from antibiotic-resistant bacteria and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns that the widespread overuse of antibiotics on factory farms is unnecessary, inappropriate and makes everyone less safe. CALPIRG supports policies that protect the effectiveness of our medicine, including policies that:

- Stop the routine use of antibiotics on animals that are not sick.
- Require tracking and reporting on the use of antibiotics.

(Continue on reverse)

Protect Consumers

Consumers should be able to buy products on the marketplace without concern that they are unsafe. Consumers have a right to know what is in the food or other products that they purchase. CALPIRG supports policies that:

- Give consumers information about what's in their food, including the labeling of genetically modified food.
- Give consumers more information about potentially harmful toxic chemicals in the products they purchase.
- Make sure that the Department of Public Health is appropriately funded to conduct needed inspections to protect public health and safety.
- Stop the sale of unfixed, recalled cars.
- Protect elderly consumers who are moving out of hospitals and into long-term care.
- Prevent identity theft and provide increased protections for consumers whose financial information has been compromised.

High-quality, affordable health care

While millions of additional Californians have insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act, health care costs continue to rise, and more insurance plans are requiring significant deductibles and cost-sharing plans that burden consumers with high costs. CALPIRG is working to reduce health care costs and increase the quality and efficiency of care. CALPIRG supports policies that:

- Give consumers access to an accurate, updated provider directory so that they can easily find out which doctors and hospitals are covered under different insurance plans.
- Increase transparency in health care costs through the establishment of an all claims database.
- Provide increased transparency and consumer protections against unjustified health insurance rates, surprise out-of-network bills from providers, and high prescription drug costs.

Promote clean, efficient energy use

California's reliance on polluting fossil fuels and risky nuclear power put our health and safety at risk. The growth of cleaner technologies in California benefits both our environment and our economy. CALPIRG supports policies that:

- Increase conservation and energy efficiency to reduce pollution and save consumers money.
- End our dependence on fossil fuels and nuclear power and transition our economy to clean, renewable sources of energy.
- Increase the efficiency of vehicles sold to consumers, and make zero emission and low emission vehicles accessible to all consumers.

Encourage Transit Not Traffic

Our transportation system should reflect and support the myriad ways we want to travel within our city and around our state, with less congestion and pollution. CALPIRG supports policies that prioritize fixing existing roads and bridges and making it easier for people to travel by public transit, biking and walking. CALPIRG supports policies that:

- Invest in transportation infrastructure that creates more transportation choices, improves air quality and serves communities in need.
- Prioritize using road dollars on repair and maintenance of our current aging infrastructure.
- Invest in infrastructure that empowers Californians to travel by rail, bus, bike, and on foot, including better local public transit investments and high-speed rail connecting our cities.

Sound Budget & Tax Policy

Californian taxpayers have the right to know how our money is being spent, and no company should be able to game the tax system to avoid paying what it legitimately owes. CALPIRG supports policies that:

- Encourage transparency and accountability in public spending.
- Eliminate corporate tax-avoidance schemes.