



City Manager's Office

September 18, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Re: Berkeley Pier-Ferry Project Certified by Governor Newsom for Judicial Streamlining under Senate Bill 149

On September 16, 2026, the Berkeley Water Transportation Pier Ferry Project was certified by Governor Newsom for Judicial Streamlining under the Senate Bill (SB) 149 Infrastructure Streamlining Program. SB 149 was established to expedite delivery of critical climate infrastructure by streamlining judicial review processes for projects essential to California's climate and sustainability goals. The Governor's certification places this project in a tier of infrastructure recognized as essential to meeting California's climate and equity goals. The Pier-Ferry Project is only the second SB149 Certified transportation project in the state of California.

With this certification, the project will receive expedited judicial review protection if challenged in court under CEQA. Rather than litigation potentially extending 3–5 years, SB 149 establishes a target of 270 days (to the extent feasible) for resolution of any CEQA-related legal challenges. This accelerates the project permitting and construction timeline and recognizes the project's critical importance to the region's climate and transportation goals.

The Berkeley Water Transportation Pier-Ferry Project is currently in the design and environmental permitting phase. This phase of work is funded by grants from the California State Coastal Conservancy (\$2.96M), the Alameda County Transportation Commission (\$5.14M), and San Francisco Bay Ferry RM3 Funds (\$3M). The project will replace the closed Berkeley Pier with a new pier and breakwater providing recreation and fishing access as well as a new, zero-emission electric ferry terminal connecting Berkeley to San Francisco. Additional project improvements include completing portions of the Bay Trail, a new Class IV Bikeway on University Avenue, a new plaza with public restroom, seating and secure bicycle parking, reconfiguration of Seawall Parking Lot, including electric vehicle charging, and new landscaping and public art throughout the project.

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Berkeley Pier-Ferry Project Certified by Governor Newsom for Judicial Streamlining under Senate Bill 149

Attachment:

1. September 16, 2026, State of California Press Release
2. Berkeley Pier Ferry Rendering

cc: David White, Deputy City Manager
Jenny Wong, City Auditor
Farimah Brown, City Attorney
Mark Numainville, City Clerk
Matthai Chakko, Assistant to the City Manager

News

Sep 16, 2026

Governor Newsom cuts red tape to accelerate new zero-emissions ferry project in San Francisco Bay

California presses ahead with clean transportation future, while House Republicans vote to choke port communities with dirty air





What you need to know: Governor Newsom cut red tape to fast-track a new pier in Berkeley for a zero-emission ferry connecting Berkeley, San Francisco, and Larkspur. This comes after House Republicans voted twice this week to let diesel-burning ships and boats emit much more toxic pollution over California's port and harbor communities, a handout to an oil industry that posted \$85.2 billion in profits last quarter.

SACRAMENTO – Governor Gavin Newsom today certified the San Francisco Bay Ferry and City of Berkeley's **Water Transportation Pier Ferry Project** for judicial streamlining under Senate Bill 149 (Caballero, 2023), clearing a faster path for a new zero-emission ferry route connecting Berkeley to San Francisco and Larkspur. This comes after House Republicans voted this week to advance two resolutions that would let diesel-burning ships and boats spew much more toxic pollution over California's port and harbor communities, a handout to an oil industry that just posted \$85.2 billion in profits last quarter.

California is moving full speed ahead on our clean transportation future, even as the federal government clings to 19th-century polluting technologies. Berkeley's new ferry pier will host a zero-emission ferry that cuts pollution, cuts health costs, saves families money, and spares commuters the headache of sitting in traffic. We're the fourth largest economy in the world, and we're not going to stop building the economy of the future that brings good-paying jobs to our shores and cuts costs. Meanwhile, House Republicans just voted twice to try to stop California's efforts to clean up boats and ships in California — a giveaway to Big Oil while Americans pay more for gas, diesel, back-to-school clothes, groceries, and more thanks to Trump's disastrous Iran war.

Governor Gavin Newsom

"This project shows what's possible when multiple benefits work in sync to create something exceptional to meet community needs for a healthier

environment and greater resilience to a changing climate,” said **Samuel Assefa, Director of the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)**. “The CEQA judicial streamlining certification is a demonstration of California’s innovative approach to delivering needed infrastructure more expeditiously while protecting resources.”

The project, a partnership between the City of Berkeley and the San Francisco Bay Ferry, will replace the long-shuttered Berkeley Municipal Pier with a new dual-purpose pier supporting public recreation and an all-electric ferry service linking the Berkeley waterfront to the San Francisco and Larkspur ferry terminals. At full buildout, the project is projected to remove roughly 19,000 vehicle miles per day from Bay Area roads.

The **Governor certified** the project utilizing tools to build more faster that were extended in the **historic infrastructure package** passed with the support of the Legislature. The certification means a streamlined process for legal challenges that can otherwise cause long delays.

House Republicans choose Big Oil’s profits over our kids’ health

Instead of voting to make life more affordable and healthy for Americans, House Republicans this week — in their last legislative push before vacation — voted to choke port and harbor communities and harm our children with dirtier air. The two resolutions, advanced by two of California’s most well-known petroleum puppets (Rep. Vince Fong and Rep. James Gallagher), claim to roll back California’s At-Berth and Commercial Harbor Craft clean air protections—even though a **federal court has already ruled** that this Trump Administration rollback effort is illegal. Those protections keep large ships and working boats from spewing dirty diesel pollution at California’s docks and into the neighborhoods that breathe that air every day.

This is a Big Oil giveaway, plain and simple. Last quarter, the oil industry **profited** roughly \$39 million an hour thanks to Donald Trump’s gas price crises driven by his reckless Iran war. House Republicans just voted to hand them more.

The kicker? Neither of these Republican resolutions produces a drop of new oil, expands refinery capacity, or lowers gas or diesel prices by a cent, in California or anywhere else. Today, Americans nationwide have **spent more**

than \$107 billion in extra fuel costs, and it's wreaking havoc across the U.S. economy. According to a **Groundwork Collaborative analysis**, Big Oil is taking windfall profits and delivering them to shareholders, not American drivers. This past Labor Day weekend, the average nationwide price for a gallon of gas topped \$4 a gallon — the **most expensive** in the history of the holiday, according to AAA. Last week, average diesel fuel prices **reached \$6 per gallon** for the first time ever.

California's waivers build on decades of bipartisan Clean Air Act leadership — under both Republican and Democratic administrations — to reduce deadly pollution and protect public health. Analysis found that California's 2020 At-Berth updated protections are expected to reduce potential cancer risk in California portside communities by approximately 60%, with health benefits estimated at \$2.31 billion.

Building California's clean future, faster

Governor Newsom, in partnership with the legislature, signed SB 7 and SB 149 to help California build critical clean-energy, water, housing, and infrastructure projects faster, while maintaining California's nation-leading environmental protections and meaningful public participation. By establishing a faster, more predictable process for resolving CEQA litigation, the program helps prevent years of delay for projects that are essential to meeting California's climate, clean-energy, water-resilience, and affordability goals.

The program is already delivering results: major projects have been certified for judicial streamlining under the current framework, including the **Cornucopia Hybrid Project in Fresno County**, the **Easley Renewable Energy Project in Riverside County**, the **Sites Reservoir Project**, and the **Fourth & Central housing project in downtown Los Angeles**. Together, these projects demonstrate how California can expand clean power, strengthen water security, create good-paying jobs, and build more homes in the places people want to live.

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