



# INFORMER

#9, October 2014

Professional Engineers in California Government

## 2014 LEGISLATION



2014 was a pretty good year for PECG's Legislative Program. As always, the main focus was the bill to adopt a State Budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year. This year's Budget included funding for the long-sought pay raise for PECG-represented supervisors and managers. The inequity was essentially eliminated when 95% of them received a 10.1% pay increase effective July 1. (The others received lesser increases which are still a topic of discussion between PECG and CalHR).

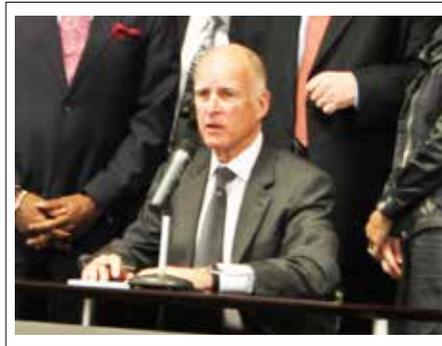
Caltrans staffing authorization was slightly reduced due to lower workload resulting from decreased transportation funding (shrinking gas tax revenue). The engineering staff/outsourced consultant ratio of 90%/10% for Caltrans was maintained in the Budget.

On the plus side, the Budget included staffing increases for PECG-represented employees in the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources to implement hydraulic fracturing regulations; new positions at the Air Resources Board for emissions monitoring and standards; and increased staff in the Department of Water Resources (various programs) and the Public Utilities Commission (additional rail safety inspectors).

The Drinking Water Program and its 300 employees were transferred from the Department of Public Health to the Water Resources Control Board. Negotiations between CalHR,

PECG, and the affected departments ensured that the transfer occurred without any classification or relocation problems.

Other positive legislation included a \$7.5 billion state water bond on the November ballot; authorization to proceed with a pilot project on using road usage charges (RUC) to generate transportation funds, rather than the declining gas tax; and a couple of bills by Assemblymember Pan to address outsourcing concerns.



Governor Brown signing new legislation

Just as important are bills which did not make it. Measures to give local agencies more authority over state highway projects; create additional bureaucracy for Caltrans SHOPP projects; make the approval of an MOU more cumbersome; and an attack on retiree healthcare were all opposed by PECG and failed to pass.

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## 2014-2015 Section Directors



## Lifetime Achievement Award



Incoming PEGC Corporate President **Roy Flores** thanks outgoing **President Cathrina Barros** for her dedicated service in leading PEGC in 2014.



PEGC's first **Lifetime Achievement Award** was presented to **Craig Copelan**, shown here with his wife **Joyce**, for his decades of dedicated service to PEGC, Caltrans, the engineering profession, and the people of California.



**Congressman Ami Bera** is flanked by Sacramento Section Officers **Mahin Khakizadeh** and **Greg Kaderabek** at the Sacramento Section Annual Meeting.

## Legislative Staffer of the Year



**Genevieve Morelos** is the **2014 PEGC Legislative Staffer of the Year**. As a consultant to the Assembly Budget Committee, Genevieve is committed to providing cost effective government services. She was instrumental in ensuring that the pay inequity adjustment for PEGC-represented supervisors and managers was included in the State Budget.

## Professional Achievement Award



**Herby Lissade** received this year's **Professional Achievement Award**. He is Chief of Caltrans' Office of Emergency Management, serves on AASHTO's Special Committee on Transportation Security and Emergency Management, and formed the non-profit Architecture and Engineering Design Group "Haiti Engineering" to assist in the restoration of Haiti's infrastructure after the 2010 earthquake.



**State Controller John Chiang** (right) spoke at the Inland Empire Section meeting, shown here with PEGC Corporate President **Cathrina Barros** and Section Officers **Aaron Brady** and **Jane Pham**.



**Congresswoman Janice Hahn** (left) was the keynote speaker at a recent Los Angeles Section meeting. With her are Section President **John Vassiliades** and PEGC Corporate Vice President At Large **Sutida Bergquist**.

# THANK YOU, BONNIE



Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal from Long Beach is Chair of the Assembly Committee on Transportation. She is leaving office due to term limits but, before departing, she wrote her opinion of Caltrans and its employees.

“So often the news is ripe with criticism of Caltrans employees and projects. We’re quick to judge and lay blame, and woefully slow to appreciate the great work when it’s complete. It’s time to change this perception and shed light on this incredible and effective workforce.”

“I couldn’t be more proud of our state’s transportation professionals and the work they perform...they are our unsung heroes. These are professionals who are collectively the best and the brightest in the world. They have dedicated their lives to ensuring our safety and a higher quality of life for Californians. They routinely push engineering technology to boundaries never before reached and they do it better than anywhere else in the nation.”

After praising the work on “dozens of amazing projects”, she concluded:

“I am thankful for the men and women who plan, build, and operate our transportation systems. Many of them could easily leave government positions for more lucrative careers in the private sector but they don’t because they believe in the value of public service.”

PECG has had the pleasure of working closely with Assemblymember Lowenthal for many years. We thank her for her comments and wish her well in her future endeavors.

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