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Contact: Furkan Yalcin
furkan.yalcin@asm.ca.gov
(310) 717-9681

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Assemblywoman Schiavo Introduces Bill to Improve Disaster Evacuations for At-Risk Communities

Today, Assemblywoman Pilar Schiavo announced the introduction of the Roads to Resilience Act, AB 1132, a critical piece of legislation designed to prioritize the needs of communities disproportionately impacted by climate disasters.

Southern California faced devastating wildfires that have claimed at least 25 lives, displaced tens of thousands, left nearly 90,000 households without electricity, and destroyed an estimated 12,000 homes and other structures. The need for climate-resilient infrastructure that not only withstands climate impacts, but also supports vulnerable populations during crises, has never been clearer.

The Community Roads to Resilience Act will ensure the state incorporates community resilience into state transportation planning, prioritizing the needs of underserved populations with the highest climate impact risk—such as those without access to personal vehicles, the elderly, and people with disabilities—during emergencies like wildfires. This will involve evaluating how climate disruptions to roads and bridges impact access to essential services like healthcare, education, and employment, and assessing evacuation strategies for people without personal vehicles.

“In the midst of life-threatening disasters like the wildfires that have devastated communities throughout Los Angeles County, transportation infrastructure is not just about roads and bridges; it is our connection to safety and life-saving essential services,” said Assemblywoman Schiavo. “The Roads to Resilience Act will better equip us to protect the lives of people disproportionately impacted by disasters, including our first responders, and the infrastructure we all rely on.”

The wildfire crisis underscores the urgent need for better evacuation planning. In both urban areas like Los Angeles and rural areas, people without access to cars are particularly vulnerable, such as low-income individuals, seniors, and those with disabilities. For example, in the Eaton Canyon fire, a father and son who both use wheelchairs [lost their lives](#), despite calling emergency services to be evacuated from their home. Even when residents were able to evacuate by car, road closures and gridlock left many trapped. During the Pacific Palisades fire, thousands were caught in gridlock, forced to abandon their cars, and many evacuees had to flee on foot, creating dangerous conditions that delayed emergency responses and put lives at risk.

“The tragic wildfires are a stark reminder that our transportation systems must do more than withstand climate impacts—they must ensure our communities can safely evacuate when life-threatening disaster strikes,” said Yesenia Perez, Program Manager at The Greenlining Institute. “Marginalized groups often face the greatest risks in times of crisis due to legacies of disinvestment that have left them with less reliable infrastructure. We cannot afford to leave our most vulnerable communities behind as we plan and rebuild for a more climate-resilient future. This bill ensures that transportation investments protect the physical infrastructure and the people who depend on it.”

“The ongoing wildfires in Southern California are a clear reminder of the need to invest in and plan for community resilience,” said Chloe Ames, Policy Advisor at NextGen California. “The Roads to Resilience Act provides a framework for California transportation agencies to plan for and build a more equitable and resilient system that Californians know they can rely on in the midst of climate crises.”

Co-sponsored by The Greenlining Institute and NextGen California, The Roads to Resilience Act addresses the urgent need for a more resilient approach to California’s transportation system and protects the communities that depend on it. By prioritizing resilience and thoughtfully approaching transportation planning, this bill is a vital step in safeguarding Californians against the growing threat of climate change.

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Assemblywoman Pilar Schiavo was elected to the California State Assembly in November of 2022 and re-elected in 2024 to represent the 40th Assembly District, representing the Northwest San Fernando Valley, Val Verde, Castaic and the Santa Clarita Valley. Upon her election, she was appointed as Assistant Majority Whip by the Speaker of the Assembly and now serves as Chair of the Assembly Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs. During her first term she brought back a record \$93 million district investment in school and community safety, seniors meal programs, veteran housing, domestic violence services and creating local jobs. Prior to her election, Assemblywoman Schiavo was a Nurse Advocate and Small Business Owner who worked in the labor movement for more than 20 years. Throughout her career, Assemblywoman Schiavo helped deliver healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, to more than one million people. In the Northwest San Fernando Valley, she co-founded an organization that helped secure housing for Veterans experiencing homelessness, has delivered more than 50,000 meals to people in need, and increased resources to help keep our communities safe. Assemblywoman Schiavo lives in Chatsworth with her creative kid where they love to hike in the Santa Susana Mountains.

The Greenlining Institute works towards a future where communities of color can build wealth, live in healthy places filled with economic opportunity, and are ready to meet the challenges posed by climate change. To learn more, visit greenlining.org.

NextGen Policy fights for progressive policies to address environmental, social, racial, gender, and economic inequities in California through justice-centered legislative advocacy, grassroots partnerships, and democratic civic engagement. To learn more, visit nextgenpolicy.org.