

NextGen California Highlights Several Big Wins at the End of 2025 State Legislative Session

Key NextGen California priorities are among the bills passed by State Legislature addressing climate change, food insecurity, and workforce development

SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES, September 18, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [NextGen](#)

“

California continues to showcase its global leadership and address issues related to energy affordability, access to healthy school meals, expanding workforce opportunities, and affordable housing.”

Arnold Sowell Jr., Executive Director for NextGen California.

[California](#) commends the State Legislature for its hard work during the final days of the legislative session – as it passed hundreds of bills, many of which were NextGen priorities in the climate, food insecurity, and workforce development areas. AB 1207 was among the NextGen priority bills that passed this session. This bill extends and strengthens the state’s landmark Cap-and-Invest program, advances California’s climate goals, and will ensure continued, long-term investments in clean energy and electricity affordability as well as projects in frontline communities.

“The bills passed by the Legislature represent hard fought victories as California continues to showcase its global leadership and address issues related to energy

affordability, access to [healthy school meals](#), expanding workforce opportunities, and affordable housing.” said Arnold Sowell Jr., Executive Director for NextGen California. “The NextGen team readily acknowledges that in the face of strong federal and fiscal headwinds the State Legislature remained steadfast and focused on improving the lives of vulnerable Californians, tackling climate change, strengthening school meal standards, and combating the state’s nursing shortage.”

NextGen legislative priorities that were passed by the State Legislature include:

Climate: AB 1207 (Irwin), which extends California’s landmark Cap-and-Invest program, better aligns the program with the state’s climate goals, provides increased opportunities for community investments, and promotes an affordable clean energy transition; SB 840 (Limón), which distributes revenue from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to specific categories, including affordable housing and public transportation, and mandates CARB to update offset compliance protocols; AB 1167 (Berman), which prohibits for-profit utilities from charging

ratepayers for political and promotional activities; and SB 24 (McNerney), which prohibits for-profit utilities from using ratepayer funds to oppose the municipalization of electrical or gas services.

Housing: SB 79 (Wiener), which enables the construction of multifamily housing near major transit stops statewide.

Food Insecurity: AB 1264, (Gabriel) which is first-in-the-nation legislation that would phase out ultra-processed foods from school meals in California and builds on NextGen's work in the healthy school meals arena; and SB 411 (Perez), which maximizes California's federal drawdown of SUN Bucks aid for summer school meals and streamlines the process for families and schools to access this type of aid.

Workforce: AB 1400 (Soria), which allows community colleges to offer a Baccalaureate in Nursing degree pilot program and will aid in reducing the state's nursing shortage.

An early victory for the NextGen team arrived when AB 470 (McKinnor) was held on the Senate Appropriations Suspense file. AB 470 was sponsored by AT&T and would have allowed telecommunication corporations to abandon their requirement to provide phone service for millions of individuals, businesses, and communities across California. Specifically, the bill terminated telecommunication corporations Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) obligations and eliminated the longstanding principle of universal service. NextGen and our large coalition of labor, consumer protection, local government, and community based organization partners were very pleased to learn of the bill's demise.

Now, the NextGen team must turn its attention to the last step in the process – the Governor's Office – and advocacy efforts to ensure that our legislative priorities get signed into law by Governor Newsom.

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NextGen California is a nonprofit advocacy organization that breaks down barriers and rebalances power in the State Capitol on behalf of all Californians.

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