



BlueGreen Alliance California Newsletter September 2024

Welcome to the September [BlueGreen Alliance California](#) (BGA CA) newsletter! This month, we're sharing an executive order from President Biden as well as, a roundup of where our coalition-supported bills landed, and a spotlight on Process Safety Management (PSM) in refineries.

ICYMI

President Biden signed an [Executive Order on Investing in America and Investing in American Workers \(“Good Jobs EO”\)](#) that creates a new Investing in Good Jobs Task Force in the Executive Office of the President. For the past few years, BGA has advocated for a centralized, consistent application of labor standards, and we are excited to see the Biden-Harris administration move this forward. The Task Force will coordinate policy development that drives the creation of high-quality jobs and ensures project delivery. It will be co-chaired by the Secretary of Labor and the Director of the National Economic Council and include Senior Advisors to the President and members of the President's Cabinet. To learn more, go [here](#).

Legislative Update

Governor Newsom has officially signed the following bills supported by the coalition. Congratulations to our partners and allies who worked so hard to get these passed!

[AB 3190 \(Haney\)](#) will mandate prevailing wages for the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program affordable housing projects.

[AB 3258 \(Bryan\)](#) sponsored by BGA labor partner, USW, that will close a loophole to ensure renewable fuel refineries are included in the state's Process Safety Management (PSM) regulations for refineries.

[SB 1321 \(Wahab\)](#) sponsored by BGA labor partners, SMART and the California Labor Federation, will make necessary updates to the Employment Training Panel to increase transparency and ensure public funding creates high road jobs.

Unfortunately, the following bills were vetoed:

[SB 984 \(Wahab\)](#) would have authorized a state agency to undertake a major state construction project only if that project is governed by a project labor agreement.

SB 1182 (Gonzalez) sponsored by BGA labor partner, CFT, was a study bill to determine the most effective ways to update school facilities and make them more climate resilient.

SB 1337 (Gonzalez) sponsored by BGA labor partner, SEIU, to make changes in the referendum process that would have increased transparency for voters.

SB 1375 (Durazo) would have created the Equity, Climate Resilience, and Quality Jobs Fund to finance workforce training and standards to meet our climate resiliency workforce needs.

Spotlight: Process Safety Management in Refineries

Following the Chevron Richmond fire in 2012, USW, BGA, and a broad labor and environmental coalition successfully advocated for improved oil refinery safety regulations called Process Safety Management. These rules ensure worker safety in petroleum refineries by outlining clear safety processes and ensuring workers have a voice in quickly addressing safety issues. However, refineries that have converted to renewable fuel feedstocks in recent years, have claimed that the PSM regulation does not apply to them and are reverting to outdated safety regulations that do not adequately protect workers or communities. This was horrifically highlighted in November 2023, when a worker at the Marathon Martinez renewable fuel refinery in Contra Costa County, Jerome Serrano, was critically injured by a fire at the facility, which has prompted efforts by the United Steelworkers to swiftly petition for emergency action to close this loophole and therefore reduce the risk of future catastrophes such as this.

“The broadening of the scope of this PSM standard is critical in preventing another devastating workplace incident, like the loss of containment of flammable liquids that occurred at the Marathon Martinez Renewable Fuels facility in November 2023, gravely injuring USW member Jerome Serrano,” said **Gaylan Prescott, USW District 12 director**. “While Jerome Serrano survived the accident, his quality of life will never be the same, and we must not leave other workers to face this risk when there is a viable solution within reach.”

AB 3258 (Byran), recently signed by Governor Newsom, applies PSM to all refineries regardless of feedstock (oil or renewable fuels) to ensure workers are protected.

"The California rule takes the principles of Process Safety Management and turns them into daily practices that union workers enforce," explained the **BlueGreen Alliance's Charlotte Brody**, who was part of the stakeholder process that negotiated the language of the state OSHA rule. "Getting the oil industry managers to move from PSM on their office's bookshelf to PSM among the maze of pipes and control rooms was a major safety and health victory for the workers in and the neighborhoods around California's refineries."

AB 3258 passing into law is a win for workers and ensures renewable fuel facilities cannot skirt hard-fought and critically important safety regulations. As California transitions to a cleaner economy, workplace safety cannot be sacrificed.

Thanks for reading! If you have any questions, comments, or feedback on what you want us to cover, please let us know: tchowdhury@bluegreenalliance.org.

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The BlueGreen Alliance (BGA) unifies labor unions and environmental organizations into a powerful force working for an economy that fights climate change, protects the health of people and the environment, stands against economic and racial inequality, and creates and maintains good-paying, union jobs in communities across the country.

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