

Los Angeles Section

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OFFICERS'S MESSAGE

Daniel Cronquist, P.E., P.L.S
Los Angeles Section President

President's Message



Welcome to the end of fiscal year 2019-2020. This has been a challenging year for all of us, however, civil engineers are resilient and perseverant. As a year-end review, the state of the Los Angeles Section is strong. In October 2019 we hosted the Awards Luncheon at the Hyatt Regency in Long Beach, which was well attended and supported by the membership. That same month a large number of our members attended the ASCE National Conference in Miami, Florida. The Multi-Region Leadership Conference was held near the San Francisco Airport in January, which again drew record attendance from the Los Angeles Section. We hosted a dinner during the conference for the Section, which included 125 members and students. The Life Member Forum held their Brunch in March with ASCE President-Elect Jean-Louis Briaud as the speaker. The pandemic has not stopped ASCE, and all of our organizations are continuing to meet virtually. To facilitate this, the Section has a paid Zoom account to help groups that do not already have their own software license.

One of our major initiatives this year was the scanning of the Section's historical documents, which date to 1913. So far, we have 569 separate documents scanned, which includes all of 1927. These documents are word searchable PDFs and can be accessed from our new website: <http://www.ascelasection.org/>. Although the pandemic has slowed the scanning process, our volunteers continue to make progress. Please check back each month as additional documents are added. If you would like information regarding a specific year, please let us know and we can make it a priority.

The Los Angeles Section's new, modern website represents a complete replacement that is now mobile friendly. A revived website committee is being formed that will coordinate updates and add pages. A special thanks to our President-Elect Seema Shah-Fairbanks for all her help in completing the project. She coordinated with our vendor and prepared much of the layouts herself. It was a tremendous effort and we are grateful.

Speaking of Seema, her term as President of the Los Angeles Section starts on October 1st. We held the annual Leadership Retreat virtually on August 13, 2020. There are many great leaders at all levels of ASCE for this upcoming fiscal year and I am very excited for them.

VOL. LXI NO. 7

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Government Relations Committee Update ASCE Region 9

by Kenneth H. Rosenfield, P.E., F.ASCE, Chair, ASCE Region 9 Government Relations Committee



The Government Relations Committee (GRC) of Region 9 exists to monitor State legislative activity emanating from Sacramento with an interest in evaluating and acting upon legislation that will impact our profession, infrastructure, regulatory controls and other State initiatives. The GRC is also actively engaged in the annual ASCE advocacy day in Sacramento.

The legislative year begins each January and this year started true to typical form in that many legislative bills of interest were initiated. These bills ranged from efforts to enhance building seismic preparation requirements, setting up some additional infrastructure funding through bonds, and clarification of the definition of surveying, among many others. The GRC held monthly teleconference meetings with interested committee members and reviewed and monitored legislation in January, February and March, recommending positions on legislation for Board approval. During this time, however, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the State and the legislature adjourned without taking action on any but a few emergency legislative bills. While both houses of the Legislature held routine hearings early in March, it became apparent by the third week of that month that business as usual was no longer "business as usual." As of March 20th, both houses recognized that pursuant to the Governor's March 4th proclamation of a state-wide emergency related to Covid-19, and his subsequent orders to prohibit large public meetings, there was an urgent need to approve, and the Legislature passed, an emergency \$1.1 billion spending authorization for Covid-19 response. The legislature then recessed their sessions.

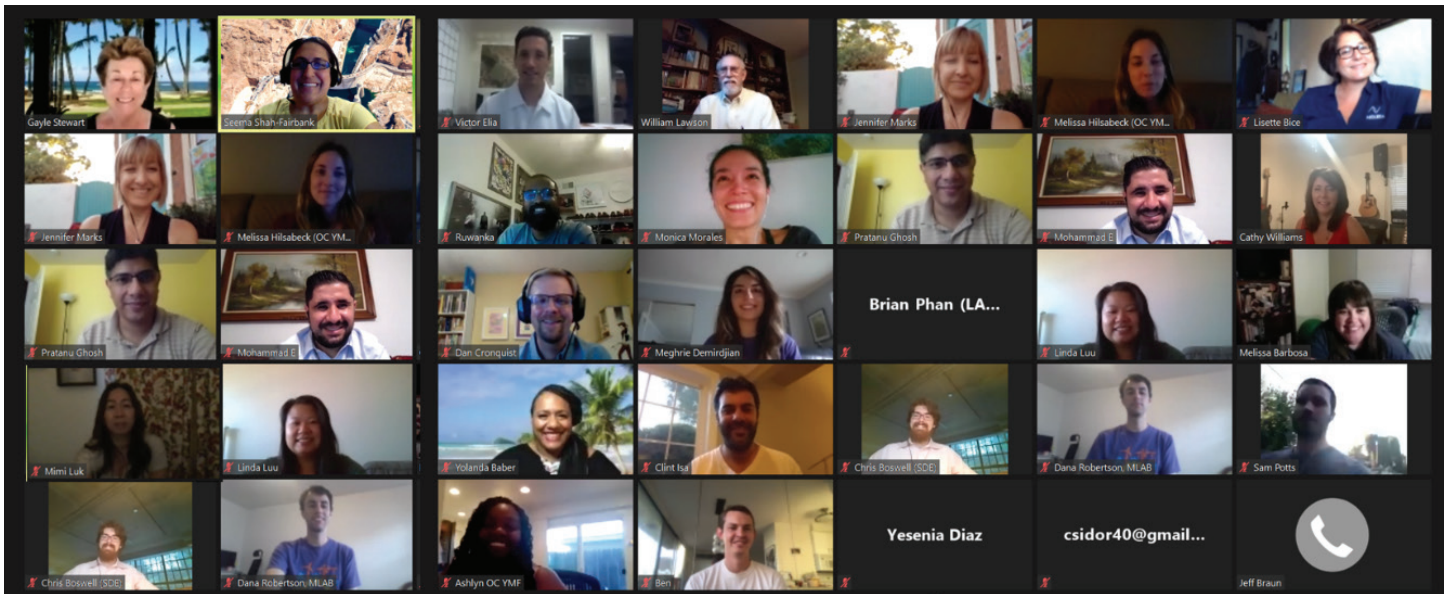
By mid-May, with the June 15th State constitutional requirement to pass a budget in mind, the Assembly briefly returned to sessions to hold budget hearings. In large part, this was in response to the Governor's "May budget revision" that called for significant cuts to state spending based upon projections of major reductions in state revenue, exacerbated by the decision to delay most April 15th tax payments until July. The Senate also returned to sessions and both legislative houses eventually passed a perfunctory budget by the deadline that was "balanced" upon a number of assumptions of Federal support and drawdowns of the State's reserve funds. Later in June, the Assembly passed a handful of budget cleanups and headed back home until the middle of July, the Senate soon followed suit. The legislative houses returned to sessions in Sacramento as of July 27th. No significant legislation on infrastructure or civil engineering is expected to move forward by the legislative deadline of August 31st. The Governor has until September 30th to approve or veto legislation. The GRC, comprising about a dozen active members, continued to meet monthly and have diligently volunteered their time to assist the process of legislation review. I thank them for their commitments and efforts.

Our signature advocacy event is our Sacramento fly-in, our advocacy day. This is typically held during the second week of May. The committee is responsible for coordinating the annual Region 9 Legislative Fly-In and the follow up local visits, which are intended to encourage an ongoing dialogue between ASCE members and their legislators on issues of importance to ASCE. This year, following a year in the planning and coordination, we were scheduled to have a joint advocacy day with members of ACEC and members of APWA. This collaborative effort was conceived and planned to break down barriers between our groups and to strengthen the impact engineers would have when calling upon their elected officials to make infrastructure funding and other issues a priority. ACEC was kind enough to spend significant staff time to set up the event for the benefit of all. Unfortunately, this event had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. We will seek to set up this important event again as soon as it is safe to do so and will also plan to open it up to participation by other like-minded professional organizations.

In the meantime, in the short term, as face to face visits are not recommended for health reasons, it is important for all of us to become virtual advocates for our profession and infrastructure. I recommend that you maintain contact with your elected officials through their websites and any virtual town halls they may hold. And, very importantly, I recommend you become a key contact of ASCE. This helps the Society to advocate at the Federal level and it is simple to do. Volunteer to become a Key Contact at <https://www.asce.org/keycontacts/>

The ASCE Region 9 Government Relations Committee actively monitors and recommends positions on statewide legislative and regulatory proposals that affect civil engineers and support the standing policies of ASCE. If you would like to learn more about the activities of the Region 9 Government Relations Committee or join this committee, please contact me at KRosenfield@lagunahillsca.gov.





Lastly, thank you for allowing me to serve this year as President. I would like to thank you all of you for your support, including Seema Shah-Fairbanks, Steven King, Jerry Burke, Yaz Emrani, John Rogers, and Ken Rosenfield. And I would also like to add a special thanks

to my home branch in Bakersfield, Southern San Joaquin. We have the best Section in all ASCE and I have every confidence that it will continue to be so.

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State Investments and Legislative Update

by Richard Markuson, CA Region 9 Legislative Advocate



Governor Gavin Newsom released a final version of his Water Resilience Portfolio. The Administration's blueprint is intended to ensure California can cope with more extreme droughts and floods, rising temperatures, declining fish populations, over-reliance on groundwater and other challenges. The portfolio outlines 142 state actions to help build a climate-resilient water system in the face of climate change. The actions tie directly to Administration efforts to carry out recent

laws regarding safe and affordable drinking water, groundwater sustainability and water-use efficiency. State agencies are expected to track and share progress on portfolio implementation with an annual report and stakeholder gathering. For more information, visit www.waterresilience.ca.gov.

Legislation. Update on bills that are moving

AB 310 (Santiago D-Los Angeles) [Gut and amend] Would, among other things, establish the Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank Commission and place the I-Bank under the supervision of the commission. The bill would require that the commission be comprised of the Governor, the Treasurer, the Controller, or their designees. The bill would require the commission to appoint members of the bank board, as specified. The bill would eliminate the I-Bank Fund spending limit with respect to educational facilities, environmental mitigation measures, and parks and recreational facilities. Senate Governance and Finance Committee

AB 2285 (Committee on Transportation) Transportation. Makes various non-controversial changes to transportation-related statutes. Specifically, this bill: 1) Extends the requirement for a person driving a vehicle to slow down and move over for certain stationary vehicles displaying flashing amber or emergency lights on the freeway to also apply on local streets and roads; 2) Extends the pilot program for alternative license plates and vehicle registrations issued by the DMV until January 1, 2023; 3) Continuously appropriates interest earnings derived from revenues deposited in the RMRA to Caltrans for maintenance of the state highway system or purposes of the SHOPP; 4) Extends by one year, until January 1, 2022, the requirement that CARB dedicates 20% of California Clean Truck, Bus, and Off-Road Vehicle and Equipment Technology Program (Clean Truck Program) to support early commercial deployment of existing zero- and near-zero-emission heavy-duty trucks. Senate Transportation Committee

AB 2800 (Quirk D-Hayward) Climate change: infrastructure planning. Existing law requires the Natural Resources Agency to update its climate adaptation strategy, known as the Safeguarding California Plan by July 1, 2017, and every three years after that, by coordinating adaptation activities among lead state agencies in each sector. This

bill eliminates the sunset on the Climate-Safe Infrastructure Working Group. Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee. ASCE position: **Support**

AB 2932 (O'Donnell D-Long Beach) Allows the City of Long Beach to use the design-build contracting process to award contracts for curb ramps that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Senate Consent Calendar.

AB 3005 (Rivas, Robert D-Hollister) Expedites permitting and contracting requirements in order to facilitate the replacement of the Leroy Anderson Dam and Reservoir (Anderson Dam). Senate Natural Resources and Wildlife Committee

SB 995 (Atkins D-San Diego) Extends for four years the Jobs and Economic Improvement Through Environmental Leadership Act of 2011 (AB 900) until 2025; and makes housing projects that meet certain requirements, including specified affordable housing requirements, eligible for certification under the Act. Assembly Natural Resources

CEQA Statutory Exemptions

Three bills were "gutted and amended" to create new CEQA statutory exemptions.

SB 55 (Jackson D-Santa Barbara) until January 1, 2025, would exempt from the requirements of CEQA emergency shelters or supportive housing projects meeting certain requirements. The bill would require an agency that determines that an emergency shelter or supportive housing project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to these provisions to file a notice of exemption with the Office of Planning and Research.

SB 288 (Wiener D-San Francisco) would provide a CEQA exemption to sustainable transportation projects — public transportation, bike safety, and pedestrian projects.

SB 974 (Hurtado D-Sanger) Exempts from CEQA projects that primarily benefit a small disadvantaged community water system by improving the water system's water quality, water supply, or water supply reliability; by encouraging water conservation; or by providing drinking water service to existing residences within a disadvantaged community where there is evidence of contaminated or depleted drinking water wells.

New Reports of Interest

CALPIRG Education Fund released an updated "interactive map" of results reported by schools from tests of lead found in their drinking fountains, finds "more than 2,100 school drinking fountains tested positive for lead at 1,300 schools in the state over the past three years," also finds "nearly 18 percent of all California schools required to test have still not reported results."

The California Transit Assn. has released "Transit is Essential: Recommendations for the Future of Transit," finds transit agencies "are facing an existential threat that jeopardizes the economic, social and physical well-being of the communities in which they operate," recommendations include: "direct riders to wear face coverings; support installation of protective barriers for operators where feasible... provide emergency funding to transit agencies."

Legislative Analyst's Office has released its "Supplemental Report of the 2020-21 Budget Act," which outlines "statements of legislative intent that were adopted during deliberations on the 2020-21 budget package," including California Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation's "Prison Infrastructure Improvement Strategy," in which by January 10, 2022, the department "shall submit to the budget committees

of each house and the Legislative Analyst's Office a report containing an assessment of all special repair/deferred maintenance projects estimated to cost over \$5 million and all major capital outlay projects that are likely to be needed over the next ten years or more."

Appointments of Interest

By Governor:

To North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board: Shaunna McCovey, McKinleyville, director of natural resources and governmental affairs for Resighini Rancheria since 2020.

Award Winners



Thomas L. Brandon, Ph.D., P.E., M.ASCE



Binod Tiwari, Ph.D., P.E., F.ASCE

The Geo-Institute has selected Thomas L. Brandon, Ph.D., P.E., M.ASCE, and Binod Tiwari, Ph.D., P.E., F.ASCE to receive the 2020 Thomas A. Middlebrooks Award for the paper "Characterization of the Reduction in Undrained Shear Strength in Fine-Grained Soils due to Cyclic Loading," published in the May 2019 issue of Journal of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Engineering. Dr. Tiwari is an Associate Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at California State University, Fullerton. Dr. Brandon is the Director of the W.C. English Geotechnical Research Laboratory at Virginia Tech. Please join us in congratulating them on this honor.



Outgoing Region Governor's Perspective

by Yazdan T. Emrani, P.E., M.ASCE, ASCE Region 9 Governor from the Los Angeles Section



This will be my last official communique as the outgoing Region 9 Governor from the Los Angeles Section. It has been an honor and privilege serving members of ASCE Region 9 and especially the Los Angeles Section, and all I can say is wow, how time flies!

Region 9 has a very strong Board consisting of Governors representing the four sections of Region 9, which include Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and Sacramento, as well as two At-Large Governors and a Director. Additionally, serving on the Board are the presidents of the four sections and chairs of the various Region 9 committees that provide invaluable updates and input.

I was fortunate to have served in various roles during my tenure on the Region 9 Board including serving as the Vice Chair of the Board last year. Additionally, my role has included serving as the Chair of the Infrastructure Policy Committee (IPC). I have also served as the Chair of the Nominating Committee, where I am happy to report that we were able to nominate a very good candidate, Tapas Dutta, who was recently voted in by the membership, and whom will be replacing me as the incoming Los Angeles Section Governor, starting on October 1, 2020. I wish Tapas the best and am confident that he will do a great job.

In reflecting on my ASCE service, although I had been involved with ASCE since college, this involvement became much more pronounced after I moved from Texas to California over 20 years ago. I found my local Orange County Branch to be a vibrant and active community and decided to transition into a much more active role; first through my involvement with the Orange County Infrastructure Report Card and then joining the Orange County Branch Board and eventually becoming the President of the Branch in 2007.

My first involvement with Region 9, however, came in January 2006, when I was asked by the great Carl Blum, the first Director of the newly formed Region 9 Board, to take on the role of Co-Chair for a first ever state-wide infrastructure report card. This was a daunting task and something that had never been done before in California. There had been a handful of other statewide report cards done at that time, but California is unique and we wanted to make sure that our final product is comprehensive, accurate and can withstand any arrows that are thrown at it. To add to the pressure, earlier, in May of that year, California lawmakers approved a series of bills that would place a record \$42 billion public works spending plan before voters in November. Our goal was to educate the voters on the condition of the infrastructure in California in a credible, comprehensive, and defensible manner, so they could have all the facts at their disposal to help with their voting decision.

I appreciated the confidence placed in me by Carl, and together with my other Co-Chair, Mike Kincaid, was able to put together a great team of almost 100 volunteers to get this done and release the first ever California Infrastructure Report Card (CAIRC) in September 2006. The report card generated a lot of publicity on the condition of the infrastructure in our state, especially since the grades were not what people expected. The report card release was a great experience but it was made much sweeter a few weeks later, when California voters approved the infrastructure bond package.

My involvement with Region 9 continued as the Co-Chair of the Infrastructure Report Card Committee and in 2012 Mike Kincaid and I were able to bring a lot of the veterans of the original CAIRC back plus we added new volunteers to update the 2006 CAIRC. The 2012 update of the CAIRC was released in September 2012, almost six years to the date of the original report card. I continued my service on the Region 9 Board as the President of the Los Angeles Section in 2014 and eventually was elected to my current position in 2017.

Speaking of the Region 9 Board, we have accomplished a lot over the last three years. These have included releasing the 2019 California Infrastructure Report Card, which was an update to the 2012 CAIRC, thanks to the efforts of John Hogan and Tony Akel, and their great team of volunteers. We hosted the annual Legislative Day events at the Capitol Mall in Sacramento. The Region Board also continued holding its annual main event, the California Infrastructure Symposium & Region 9 Awards Dinner, each year, partnering with the local Sections including San Francisco in 2018, and San Diego in 2019. Our 2020 event was scheduled to be held in Sacramento earlier this year, however, it had to be postponed unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. But fear not; where there is a will, there is a way, and as engineers we always find a solution to any challenge. In this case, we will be holding a virtual symposium on September 25, 2020. The 2020 Symposium Chair, Mike Konieczki and the entire Symposium Committee have done a great job putting together an excellent program. This year's symposium is packed with great speakers from across the state and promises to be a very informative program that you can participate in, from the comfort of your own office or home!

Region 9 has also continued to advocate for infrastructure related bills that are of interest and value to our membership and to that end the Government Relations Committee has continued to do a great job leading this charge. I would like to thank Richard Markuson of Pacific Advocacy Group, the Region Board's legislative advocate. Richard has done a great job in his legislative liaison work, outreach, and reports. One of the great benefits of serving on the Region 9 Board is that you get to meet a lot of different ASCE members from across the state. I have especially enjoyed meeting a lot of students and YMF members over these past few years and I am very excited to see the continued level of enthusiasm and involvement across Region 9.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity and thank my fellow Governors and Board members for their dedicated service, friendship and comradery. There are couple of folks that I would like to specifically thank; first being Kwame Agyare, our outgoing Director, for his leadership, especially in the active role he took on the ASCE National Board of Direction policies and initiatives. Next would be Anne Ettley, our Region 9 coordinator extraordinaire! She has been great at making sure we are all on task with all things Region 9 and to top it off, she has spoiled us with her fantastic cupcake baking skills! Last but not least, I would like to welcome our incoming Director, Kenneth Rosenfield who will be taking office on October 1st. I have

no doubts that Ken will do a great job and will continue the tradition of excellent leadership for Region 9.

In closing, although my role as Region 9 Governor is ending, my involvement will not. I am looking forward to continuing my service to Region 9 as the Chair of the IPC and to help promote Region 9's message on policy issues especially in support of the need for continued infrastructure investment. If you would like to help or volunteer with any of our efforts, please feel free to contact me at yazemrani@gmail.com.

ARTICLE

ASCE Members in Lebanon Lift Beirut in Aftermath of Explosion

by Staff

ASCE members in Lebanon have helped lead the recovery effort in the aftermath of an explosion that shook the Port of Beirut at 6:08 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 4, in the center of the densely populated capital.

The destruction extended across a four-mile radius, with casualties reported at 220 dead, 6,000 injured and 300,000 left homeless.

"What motivated all of us is passion for our beloved country of Lebanon and the sense of serving we acquired when we lived abroad," said ASCE Lebanon Section President Antoine "Tony" Gergess, P.E., F.ASCE, a professor at the University of Balamand.

Members of the ASCE Lebanon Section, as well as local ASCE student members, volunteered to assess damage. A team headed by Section President-Elect Michel Bouchédid, A.M.ASCE, performed visual inspections of 66 lots, which included residential, commercial and office buildings, with the objective of checking the structural integrity and safety of the skeleton structure. Structures ranged from high-rise and multistory buildings to historical houses constructed two centuries ago.

The team comprised ASCE members skilled in structural assessment and experts in electromechanical systems and exterior and interior architecture. Damage caused by the pressure wave that the blast generated included the destruction of façade walls, glass, furniture, electrical, sanitary and water systems, as well as complete building collapse in many cases.

"In hard times like this – the worst I have ever seen, although I survived the civil war in Lebanon and Hurricane Andrew in Miami – engineers must share not only their skill and knowledge but also provide support and relief to the people who were devastated," Gergess said. "Here I salute the young volunteers, specifically university students, taking immediate action to help those in need without fear."

Volunteers from student chapters – including Lebanese American University, the American University of Beirut and Beirut Arab

University, among others – helped to clean debris and provided assistance to residents. The ASCE AUB Student Chapter, led by its advisor Dr. Georges Saad, is also helping to renovate one of the ancient schools, Collège des Freres du Sacré Coeur, which was severely affected by the explosion.

Additionally, Region 10 Director Elias Sayah is working with the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik to make a donation to help repair two houses damaged by the explosion. The ASCE Student Chapter at the university is assisting with the repairs.

Sayah also has volunteered to pay the tuition of two students affected by the explosion.

ASCE President K.N. Gunalan and Region 10 Director Elias Sayah visited Saint Joseph University in Beirut during the annual presidential trip this February.

The overall reconstruction process will be further complicated by the fact that the obliterated Port of Beirut previously accommodated 80 percent of the country's imports and exports. But Gergess remains steadfast.

"Beirut will always rise, and knowing the sheer will of the Lebanese people, we are more optimistic and determined than ever," Gergess said. "I am not sure the country is on the path yet toward recovery, but by combining efforts, Beirut will heal, and Lebanon will not fall."

Learn more about how you can donate to <https://rmfusa.org/>



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