

Climate Ready Schools Amendments to AB 247 School Infrastructure Bond
*Healthy, safe, & resilient school facilities now and into the future:
aligning the school infrastructure bond with our climate reality*

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March 18, 2024

The Honorable Al Muratsuchi

California State Assembly

1021 O Street, Suite 5310

Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 247 (Muratsuchi) – Support if Amended

Dear Assemblymember Muratsuchi,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in support of the following proposed amendment language to AB 247 (Muratsuchi, 2024) which aligns the school bond funding with California's overall state climate goals.

The undersigned organizations look forward to supporting AB 247 if amended.

Purpose and Overview

These amendments have been drafted by the California [Climate Ready Schools Coalition](#) with the intention of ensuring that the proposed School Infrastructure Bond (AB 247) aligns with state goals for climate mitigation, adaptation, extreme heat, and energy affordability. The inclusion of the ideas in this proposal will make the school bond stronger and more attractive to California voters.

If the bill is amended as follows, the organizations signed below will support AB 247.

Our Why

AB 247, the Transitional Kindergarten Through Community College Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 2024, will, if passed, bring billions of dollars in much-needed funding to modernize and upgrade school facilities across our state. As school officials make these critical, long-term investments in public infrastructure and learning environments, we need to ensure that the facility improvements support long-term cost effectiveness, student physical health, mental health, and learning, and are in alignment with our state-wide climate resilience and mitigation targets.

The state bond and additional local bonds should therefore encourage the installation of clean, efficient infrastructure that creates safer, more resilient spaces for our students to learn, work, and play. If the bond does not include such language and guidance, we fear that schools will be left behind in the clean energy transition, and our state and local communities will leave billions of currently available federal dollars on the table. This unfortunate scenario would be explicitly at odds with California's 2045 carbon neutrality goals, Climate Adaptation Strategy, Extreme Heat Action Plan, and economic development objectives.

Our Asks

California needs a state school bond to invest in the building and modernization of our facilities, and to do the following:

- 1) Equitably incentivize districts to transition to clean energy technologies and decarbonized schools.

The amended language uses the existing state match equity formula to provide higher-needs districts as defined in Section 6 with a higher state match for all-electric projects.

- 2) Deepen California's total funding pool and bolster local bonding capacity by encouraging uptake of new federal funding available to schools.

[The Inflation Reduction Act](#) (IRA) is poised to be the largest-ever federal investment in school infrastructure, and California schools should be incentivized to leverage this unlimited, noncompetitive opportunity to transition to clean energy technologies. As such, the school

bond should allow anticipated tax credits to be used towards a district's local match so that our state and local dollars go further. Initial calculations from UndauntedK12 suggest that if just 1% of California's schools install solar panels and battery storage each year over the next 9 years, those projects alone would bring more than \$50 million federal dollars to California's schools.

3) Effectively resource climate adaptation projects in our most vulnerable communities.

The authors of AB 247 understand the importance of ensuring our school buildings and grounds are adapted to the impacts of climate change, and have indicated that funds should be set aside for climate change impact projects [Chapter 2, Article 1]. We believe these funds should be used for three different project types to support climate change impacts at schools: 1) extreme heat and wildfire smoke resilience projects, 2) community resiliency or cooling centers projects, and 3) flood and fire mitigation projects.

4) Add and alter language throughout the bill, where appropriate, to remind district leaders and private sector partners of the opportunities and technologies needed to transition California schools to be sustainable and climate resilient.

We see opportunities to more explicitly mention specific clean energy technologies and adaptation strategies throughout the bond as a way to highlight and uplift eligible investments schools can make to transition to safe, healthy, climate-resilient school buildings and grounds.

Our Belief

We believe that these amendments will contribute to the equitable improvement of the health and wellbeing of our students, the safety and health of our schools, and the cost effectiveness of our local and state dollars. We believe these amendments will lead to a more impactful, more attractive school bond that garners more support from voters. We are excited to work together to get these amendments into the bill and are open to feedback and collaboration. We celebrate the commitment and investments that bond authors and Governor Newsom have made to both education and climate, and we see the link between the two as critical to the success of both—meeting our ambitious climate goals and providing equitable access to an excellent education for California's children.

Sincerely,

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UndauntedK12

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Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)

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