

PARTICIPANTS

Mark Baldassare is president and CEO of the Public Policy Institute of California, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is a leading expert on public opinion and survey methodology, and has directed the [PPIC Statewide Survey](#) since 1998. He is an authority on elections, voter behavior, and political and fiscal reform, authoring ten books and numerous reports on these topics. He often provides testimony before legislative committees and state commissions, and regularly hosts PPIC's Speaker Series, a public forum featuring in-depth interviews with state and national leaders. Previously, he served as PPIC's director of research. Before joining PPIC, he was a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of California, Irvine, where he held the Johnson Chair in Civic Governance. He has conducted surveys for the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the California Business Roundtable. He holds a PhD in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Julie Cart is a projects and environment reporter at CalMatters. Previously, she had a long career at the *Los Angeles Times*, where she held many positions, including sportswriter, national correspondent, and environment reporter. In her work on the environment, she has reported on public lands and endangered species. In 2009, she and colleague Bettina Boxall won the Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Reporting for their series "Big Burn" exploring the cost and effectiveness of fighting wildfires in the western United States. She has received a number of other awards in recognition of her reporting, including the SEAL Environmental Journalism Award in 2018. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Arizona State University.

Bill Dodd represents Senate District 3, which includes portions of Sacramento, Yolo, Napa, Sonoma, Solano, and Contra Costa Counties. Prior to his election to the senate, he served one term in the assembly and 14 years on the Napa County Board of Supervisors. During his time in the water industry, he was active in state and national trade associations for water quality. In 1985, he was elected president of the Pacific Water Quality Association; in 1994, he was elected to the National Water Quality Association. During his tenure, the industry embraced third-party certification of water treatment products and lobbied in Sacramento on important legislation to protect consumers. Prior to his time in elected office, Dodd was president and CEO of Diversified Water Systems, Inc. He earned a degree in business management from California State University, Chico.

Ricardo Lara is California's fifth elected insurance commissioner. Since taking office in January 2019, he has acted to protect California consumers, fight climate change, and expand access to health care for all, while preserving a competitive insurance market. Following California's devastating wildfires, he protected more than 3.4 million policyholders from homeowners' insurance nonrenewal and has sponsored legislation to allow wildfire survivors to better access their benefits. To confront the threat of climate change, he created the nation's first Climate and Sustainability Branch within the Department of Insurance and launched the first subnational state-level partnership with the United Nations to create a "sustainable insurance roadmap." He currently co-chairs the first executive-level task force of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, dedicated to climate risk and resiliency. Previously, he served in the California State Legislature, representing Assembly District 50 from 2010 to 2012 and Senate District 33 from 2012 to 2018. He received the United Nations 2017 Climate and Clean Air Award with former Governor Jerry Brown and the California Air Resources Board for his work to reduce super

pollutants. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and Spanish with a minor in Chicano studies from San Diego State University.

Jessica Morse is the deputy secretary for Forest and Wildfire Resilience at the California Natural Resources Agency. In this role, she is working to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration and emergency fuel breaks throughout California. Prior to joining the Newsom administration, she spent nearly ten years working for the US Department of Defense, the State Department, and the US Agency for International Development. Her assignments included Iraq, India, Myanmar, and US Pacific Command in Hawaii. Throughout her career, she has designed and executed innovative strategies across agencies and governments, including a strategy using renewable energy technology transfer as a catalyst for improving US defense engagement with India. She holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Principia College and a master's of public affairs from Princeton University.

Kelly Seyarto represents Assembly District 67, which includes the cities of Canyon Lake, Lake Elsinore, Menifee, Murrieta, Wildomar, and a portion of the city of Hemet, along with numerous unincorporated communities in southwest Riverside County. Between 1997 and 2020, he served four terms as mayor of Murrieta and three terms on the city council. Prior to this, he was a public safety commissioner. Before his political career, he served as a reserve firefighter, a firefighter/paramedic, and a fire captain in cities throughout Southern California. He retired in 2015 at the rank of battalion chief after a 35-year career. He holds an associate degree in fire science from Mt. San Antonio College; a bachelor's degree in fire technology and administration from California State University, Los Angeles; and a master's degree in public administration from California State University, Long Beach.