

An Introduction to California Counties



The basic provisions for the government of California counties are contained in the California Constitution and the California Government Code. A county is the largest political subdivision of the state having corporate powers. It is vested by the Legislature with the powers necessary to provide for the health and welfare of the people within its borders. The specific organizational structure of a county in California will vary from county to county.

County as Distinguished from a City

There is a fundamental distinction between a county and a city. Counties lack broad powers of self-government that California cities have (e.g., cities have broad revenue generating authority and counties do not). In addition, legislative control over counties is more complete than it is over cities. Unless restricted by a specific provision of the state Constitution, the Legislature may delegate to the counties any of the functions which belong to the state itself. Conversely, the state may take back to itself and resume the functions which it has delegated to counties (e.g., state funding of trial courts).

Types of Counties

The California Constitution recognizes two types of counties: general law counties and charter counties. General law counties adhere to state law as to the number and duties of county elected officials. Charter counties, on the other hand, have a limited degree of "home rule" authority that may provide for the election, compensation, terms, removal,

and salary of the governing board; for the election or appointment (except the sheriff, district attorney, and assessor who must be elected), compensation, terms, and removal of all county officers; for the powers and duties of all officers; and for consolidation and segregation of county offices. A charter does not give county officials extra authority over local regulations, revenue-raising abilities, budgetary decisions, or intergovernmental relations.

A county may adopt, amend, or repeal a charter with majority vote approval. A new charter or the amendment or repeal of an existing charter may be proposed by the Board of Supervisors, a charter commission, or an initiative petition. The provisions of a charter are the law of the state and have the force and effect of legislative enactments. There are currently 44 general law counties and 14 charter counties.

GENERAL LAW COUNTIES

Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Lake, Lassen, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Plumas, Riverside, San Benito, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, Ventura, Yolo, and Yuba

CHARTER COUNTIES

Alameda, Butte, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange, Placer, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tehama

County Powers

The California Constitution authorizes a county to make and enforce local ordinances that do not conflict with general laws. A county also has the power to sue and be sued, purchase and hold land, manage or dispose of its properties, and levy and collect taxes authorized by law.

Many additional powers have been granted to counties by the Legislature. The powers of a county can only be exercised by the Board of Supervisors or through officers acting under the authority of the Board or authority conferred by law. In addition, the Board must follow the procedural requirements in the statutes or its actions will not be valid. For example, if the Legislature has provided a method by which a county may abandon a road, that method must be followed. Also, where state law requires land use zoning by an ordinance, this statutorily prescribed method is binding on the county. On the other hand, where the law does not specifically prescribe a method for accomplishing a task, the county may adopt any reasonably suitable means.

The Board of Supervisors

Unlike the separation of powers that characterizes the federal and state governments, the Board of Supervisors is both the legislative and the executive authority of the county (except San Francisco County). It also has quasi-judicial authorities.

Board Structure

Government Code Section 25000 requires each county to have a Board of Supervisors consisting of five members. The section applies to general law counties and to charter counties, except where the charter provides otherwise

(e.g., San Francisco City and County has eleven members and one mayor). A board member must be a registered voter of, and reside in, the district from which the member is elected. A county charter can provide a local method for filling vacancies on the Board of Supervisors. In the absence of such a provision, the Governor appoints a successor.

A majority of the members of the Board constitutes a quorum for conducting business. A majority of all the members must concur on any act of the Board. A Board may enact rules governing how abstentions are counted. Some extraordinary actions, like passing emergency ordinances, require four votes.

An official act of the Board of Supervisors can only be performed in a regularly or specially convened meeting. The individual members have no power to act for the county merely because they are members of the Board of Supervisors.

Meetings of the Board of Supervisors are subject to the restrictions of the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code Section 54950 et. seq.). With limited exceptions, the Brown Act requires that all Board of Supervisors meetings be open and public. The county clerk, whose duty it is to record all proceedings of the Board of Supervisors, is the ex officio clerk of the Board, unless the Board appoints its own separate clerk. The Board must keep a record of its decisions and the proceedings of all regular and special meetings.

Board of Supervisor Powers

The Board of Supervisors exercises its power and authority by undertaking the

following roles: executive, legislative, and quasi-judicial.

Executive Role

The Board performs its executive role when it sets priorities for the county. The Board oversees most county departments and programs and annually approves their budgets; supervises the official conduct of county officers and employees; controls all county property; and appropriates and spends money on programs that meet county residents' needs.

Supervision of County Officials

The Board of Supervisors may supervise the official conduct of county officers and require them faithfully to discharge their duties, but the Board cannot add to those duties or relieve the officers from these obligations. The Board may not direct or control the day-to-day operations of a county department, or otherwise limit the exercise of discretion vested by law in a particular officer.

The supervision of elected officers by the Board of Supervisors is somewhat more limited. The district attorney, as public prosecutor, is a state or quasi-state officer and is under the direct supervision of the attorney general. Consequently, the Board of Supervisors does not have supervisory authority over the district attorney's prosecutorial duties. On the other hand, the Board has general supervisory authority over the district attorney to the extent that the district attorney functions as a county officer.

The Board of Supervisors may supervise the sheriff to the extent that the sheriff acts as a county officer, and may investigate the officer's performance of county duties. However, in enforcing state law, the sheriff is acting as a peace officer of the state and is under

the direct supervision of the attorney general. In addition to being an officer of the county, the sheriff is also an officer of the courts. While acting in that capacity, the sheriff is not under the supervision of the Board, and the Board may not investigate the sheriff in connection with such duties. The assessor is also under state control in many respects, but not to the same degree as are the district attorney and sheriff.

County Litigation

The Board of Supervisors also has the power to direct and control the conduct of litigation in which the county or any public entity which the Board governs is a party, and by a two-thirds vote, it may employ outside attorneys to assist the county counsel in conducting such litigation. The decision to hire special counsel is up to the supervisors.

Relationship of the Board of Supervisors to the Civil Grand Jury

The Civil Grand Jury, when working in concert with the Board of Supervisors and the county executive, can prove to be a valuable tool to audit county programs and provide constructive recommendations for the improved operation of local government. Basically, the Civil Grand Jury in California serves two basic purposes: "(1) to weigh the allegations of misconduct against public officials and determine whether to present formal accusations requesting their removal from office and (2) to act as the public's watchdog by investigating and reporting upon the affairs of local government. Of these functions, the watchdog role is by far the one most often played by the modern grand jury in California." (McClatchy Newspapers v. Superior Court (1988) 44 Cal.3d 1162, 1170.) Statutory authority of the grand jury:

- ◆ To investigate all branches of county, city and special district governments to ensure they are being run in an efficient and honest manner, in the best interest of citizens it serves. Reports may be issued anytime during the year.
- ◆ To investigate and report on the operational and financial aspects of all offices within its jurisdiction, including an audit. This authorization extends to any incorporated city or joint powers agency. The grand jury may also report on county officials' records and accounts as ex-officio officers of any district.
- ◆ To investigate, at its option, any case of an inmate in the county jail on a criminal charge and not indicted. To investigate the condition and management of detention facilities within its jurisdiction.
- ◆ To investigate the willful or corrupt misconduct of public officers within its jurisdiction.
- ◆ To investigate all sales and transfers of land and matters of land ownership.
- ◆ To address the need for salary increases or decreases for county elected officials.
- ◆ The respondent agrees with the finding.
- ◆ The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reason(s).
- ◆ The respondent is taking the following action(s) to address the findings and recommendations of the grand jury report.

Joint Powers Agreement/Joint Powers Agency-Authority

A Board of Supervisors may establish a joint powers agreement and/or joint powers agency with another public agency.

A joint powers agreement (JPA) is created where two or more local governments enter into a cooperative agreement to provide any service which either of them could provide on their own. A joint powers agreement involves mutually agreeing to specific conditions and terms which may limit each agency's ability to act independently, but it does not alter the basic structure of each agency's decision-making processes. These JPA's are fairly common; a sheriff's department may provide police services to a city, or a county and a city may form a JPA to jointly run an emergency dispatching center.

A joint powers agency takes the concept of agreement and cooperation to a new level. Under California Government Code Section 6500, counties, cities, special districts, and other public agencies are allowed to enter into agreements which create new and distinct authorities. The new authorities have a separate operating board of directors which has the powers inherent in all of the participating agencies.

Responsibility of the Board of Supervisors: No later than 90 days after the report is submitted, the Board of Supervisors must comment to the presiding judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations. An elected official or agency head with responsibility pertaining to an area addressed in the report shall respond in writing to the presiding judge, with a copy sent to the Board of Supervisors within 60 days. The subject of the grand jury report must respond to the findings in the following ways:

The powers of the authority can be general or specific, the term of the authority must be established, and other administrative decisions must be made (e.g., how the board meets and conducts its business). For example, two parties may agree to create a joint transit authority, where both parties contribute the necessary resources and the capital assets. Personnel may become employees of the new authority, and with a new operating board, policies may be independently set to create transportation services for both jurisdictions.

Legislative Role

As the legislative body of the county, the Board of Supervisors may act by resolution, by board order, or by ordinance. A resolution of a Board is ordinarily not equivalent to an ordinance; it is usually a declaration about future purposes or proceedings of the Board or a policy statement by the Board. Resolutions are often used when specific findings are made by the Board of Supervisors. A board order is usually a directive from the Board of Supervisors to its subordinate county officers.

An ordinance is a local law adopted with all the legal formality of a statute. The California Constitution allows a county or city to make and enforce within its limits all local, police, sanitary, and other ordinances and regulations that do

not conflict with the state's own general laws. Most legislative acts, including using the police power, are adopted by ordinance. There are, however, numerous exceptions and specific state laws sometimes indicate whether the action requires an ordinance or resolution.

California Government Code Section 25120 et seq. specifies the form, content, and adoption process for county ordinances. For example, there are urgency ordinances (i.e., those required for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety) and ordinances which are statutorily required to have a noticed public hearing in order to be adopted (e.g., land use zoning or new fees).

County Revenue Authority

Boards of Supervisors can raise local revenue by imposing or increasing a tax, an assessment, or a fee. Each of these local revenue sources has its own constitutional and statutory authority and unique laws governing its use. A county can only impose those taxes, assessments, and fees which the Legislature or the Constitution allow the county to impose and which are approved by either a simple or two-thirds majority of local voters per Propositions 13 and 62.

There are important differences between taxes, assessments, and fees. A tax is an involuntary charge against an individual or landowner which pays for public services regardless of the taxpayer's benefit. An assessment is an involuntary charge on land which pays for public improvements or services which directly benefits the taxpayer. All revenue generated by an assessment must be used for the improvements or services specified. A fee is a voluntary charge on an individual which cannot



exceed the reasonable cost of providing the service.

After the California Supreme Court ruled in *Guardino* (12/95), a Board of Supervisors may not impose new taxes without a vote of the people. Subject to a vote, a Board may impose a utility users tax, a business license tax, and a transient occupancy tax (hotel or bed tax). If the proceeds from these taxes are designated for general purposes, majority voter approval is required. If the tax proceeds are restricted to special purposes, two-thirds voter approval is required. The Board has authority to impose taxes only within the unincorporated area. Proposition 218, passed in November, 1996, applies additional constraints to county taxing authority, as well as fees and assessments.

If a Board of Supervisors decides to impose or increase a specific tax, assessment, or fee, it must follow proper notice and hearing requirements. There are different posting and disclosure requirements for each of these types of local revenue sources. The Board asks both the clerk of the Board and the county counsel at the beginning of the process to ensure that it follows all public hearing and disclosure requirements.

Quasi-Judicial Role

In its quasi-judicial role, the Board of Supervisors may settle claims made against the county and may examine and audit the accounts of all county officers as they relate to the management and disbursement of funds. The latter authority may be exercised with a subpoena to the county officer to bring all requested files to the Board. The Board may delegate the subpoena power to a committee of its own members, but pursuant to state

law, the Board may not otherwise delegate that power.

The Board of Supervisors also sits as a quasi-judicial body in the case of appeals of land use decisions and tax issues (i.e., may sit as assessment appeals board to decide questions regarding the value of property).

Intergovernmental Relations

A county supervisor may serve in other capacities on various boards, commissions, or special districts.

State statute authorizes, and in some cases mandates, various services or functions be carried out by entities other than the Board of Supervisors. These entities, in addition to including locally elected officials, seek public participation and technical expertise:

- ◆ Councils of Government (COG)
- ◆ Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCo)
- ◆ Special Districts
- ◆ Air Quality Management Districts (AQMD)
- ◆ Airport Land Use Commissions (ALUC)
- ◆ Joint Powers Authorities (JPA)

The roles and functions of these entities primarily relate to planning for future development and the associated service needs (e.g., water, sewer) and impacts (e.g., air quality, airport safety). Board members serving on one of these entities may find themselves making decisions on a variety of issues from regional planning to establishing spheres of influence for new cities or special districts within the county.

Note: *Portions of this material was excerpted, with permission, from Powers and Duties of Boards of Supervisors and County Officers. Prepared by the Los Angeles County Counsel Office. Los Angeles, California. January 1991*

California 2011 County Population Estimates

Information from U.S. Census Bureau

April 2012

By County

Alphabetical Order

Alameda	1,529,875
Alpine	1,102
Amador	37,953
Butte	220,266
Calaveras	45,052
Colusa	21,549
Contra Costa	1,066,096
Del Norte	28,659
El Dorado	180,938
Fresno	942,904
Glenn	28,128
Humboldt	134,761
Imperial	177,057
Inyo	18,478
Kern	851,710
Kings	153,765
Lake	64,323
Lassen	34,200
Los Angeles	9,889,056
Madera	152,925
Marin	255,031
Mariposa	18,191
Mendocino	87,553
Merced	259,898
Modoc	9,517
Mono	14,309
Monterey	421,898
Napa	138,088
Nevada	98,612
Orange	3,055,745
Placer	357,138
Plumas	19,765
Riverside	2,239,620
Sacramento	1,436,105
San Benito	56,072
San Bernardino	2,065,377
San Diego	3,140,069
San Francisco	812,826
San Joaquin	696,214

San Luis Obispo	271,969
San Mateo	727,209
Santa Barbara	426,878
Santa Clara	1,809,378
Santa Cruz	264,298
Shasta	177,774
Sierra	3,113
Siskiyou	44,507
Solano	416,471
Sonoma	488,116
Stanislaus	518,522
Sutter	94,919
Tehama	63,601
Trinity	13,723
Tulare	449,253
Tuolumne	54,953
Ventura	831,771
Yolo	202,054
Yuba	72,578
Total	37,691,912

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Los Angeles	9,889,056
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Lassen	34,200
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Glenn	28,128
Colusa	21,549
Plumas	19,765
Inyo	18,478
Mariposa	18,191
Mono	14,309
Trinity	13,723
Modoc	9,517
Sierra	3,113
Alpine	1,102

A SAMPLING OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO ALL COUNTY RESIDENTS

Sheriff:

- Coroner
- County Jail
- Search & Rescue Services

Welfare:

- Employment & Financial Services
- Child Protective Services
- Adult Protective Services
- Food Stamps
- Medi-Cal
- In-Home Supportive Services
- Adoption Assistance

District Attorney

- Attorney & Prosecutors
- Criminal Child Support Investigations
- Child Abduction
- Welfare Fraud

Agriculture Department

- Agriculture Law & Regulatory Enforcement
- Weights & Measures Enforcement
- Predatory Animal Control
- Pesticide Use Regulation

Behavioral Health

- Alcohol & Drug Abuse Program
- Mental Health Services for Medi-Cal Recipients
- School Based Services
- Prevention Programs
- Homeless Assistance
- Senior Citizen Services

Public Health

- WIC Food Voucher & Nutrition Education
- Environmental Health & Management
- Hazardous Materials Monitoring
- Clinics (i.e. well baby, pregnancy)
- Health Education Programs
- Birth Records

County Administrative Office

- Emergency & Disaster Management
- Economic Development

Farm, Home & 4H Advisor

- Coordinate 4H Program
- Provide Advice to Farmers & Gardeners

County Clerk/Recorder

- General & Special Elections
- Marriage Licenses
- Death Records
- Passport Applications
- Voter Registration
- Recording of Official Records (deeds, liens, etc.)

Public Works Department

- County Transit
- County Landfill
- Recycling Information
- Household Hazardous Waste Facility

Libraries

- Public Library Branches
- Literacy Program

Assessor/Auditor/Treasurer

- Property Tax Calculation/Collection/Distribution

Veterans Services

- Benefit Assistance
- Veteran Memorial Halls

Public Defender

- Legal Assistance to Indigent Citizens

Water & Resource Conservation

- Manage and Conserve Water and Other Resources for All County Residents

Treasurer – Tax Collector

- Safekeeping & Investment of Public Funds

Probation

- Probation-Parole
- Juvenile Hall
- Victim Witness Assistance
- Youth Authority Placement payments

Fire

- Fire Suppression & Control
- First Response to Medical Emergencies

Child Supportive Services

- Enforcement/Collection of Child Support Payments

What Happened to Branciforte County?

A History of California Counties

By John Taylor

One hundred and fifty years ago, the first gathering of the California Legislature divided the state into 27 counties. Over the next 57 years, the state's territory was further subdivided and county boundaries were changed to create the names and places we recognize today.

It could be said that the history of California's counties began when the "Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits, and Settlement between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic" was signed on Feb. 2, 1848. The treaty ended the Mexican War and placed California under jurisdiction of the United States. Better known as the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, it was named after the city, near Mexico City, where it was signed. Treaty copies were subsequently exchanged and ratified in the Mexican city of Queretaro on May 30, 1848, and the treaty was proclaimed by President James K. Polk on July 4, 1848.

California's first constitutional convention was held in Monterey, starting in September 1849. Delegates came from ten districts: San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, San Jose, Sonoma, San Francisco, San Joaquin, and Sacramento.

This constitutional convention established a committee, chaired by General Mariano Vallejo, that considered the creation of California's first counties. On Jan. 4, 1850, the committee recommended the formation of 18 counties. They were Benicia, Butte, Fremont, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Monterey, Mount Diablo, Oro, Redding, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Jose, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Sonoma, and Sutter.

First Counties Formed

The first session of the California Legislature was held from Dec. 15, 1849, to April 22, 1850, at the City of Pueblo de San Jose. Based, in part, on further recommendations from General Vallejo's committee, the Legislature made additions and changes to the list of 18 counties.

Nine more counties were added to the proposal-Branciforte, Calaveras, Coloma, Colusi, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Trinity, and Yuba-bringing the total number of original counties to 27.

Before it finally adopted a statute, the state Legislature approved several name changes. Benicia was renamed Solano, Coloma became El Dorado, Fremont transformed into Yola, Mt. Diablo became Contra Costa, San Jose was renamed Santa Clara, Oro shifted to Tuolumne, and Redding became Shasta.

Following these additions and name changes, the state's first counties were created by an Act signed Feb. 18, 1850. In summary, the first 27 counties were Butte, Branciforte, Calaveras, Colusi, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Los Angeles, Marin, Mariposa, Mendocino, Monterey, Napa, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Shasta, Solano, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yola, and Yuba.

Not long after the Legislature adopted its first statute creating counties, subsequent statutes changed additional county names to those now familiar to us: Branciforte to Santa Cruz, Colusi to Colusa, and Yola to Yolo.

County Seat Struggles

On Sept. 9, 1850, California became one of 31 states in the union at that time. Proposals for many more counties were soon presented.

Particularly in the northern part of the state, fights arose within counties between mining districts and agricultural districts. Conflicts also developed in many counties over what community should be the county seat. Without paved roads, automobiles, and telephones, the distance from a home or business to a county seat was more important than it is now.

Some of these issues could often be partly resolved by dividing counties. In every one of the first seven years after 1850, at least one new county was created. Eighteen of the original 27 counties helped give birth to another county.

Boundaries Continue to Shift

The California Legislature also created counties that are not found on today's maps.

- ◆ **Klamath County** was created in 1851 from the northern half of Trinity County's mostly mountainous mining country. In 1857 Klamath County, in turn, lost significant territory to the newly formed Del Norte County. In 1875, as charges of corruption in the county increased, Klamath County was abolished. Its territory was divided between Humboldt and Siskiyou counties. Territory that at one time was in Klamath County is now in Del Norte, Humboldt, Siskiyou, and Trinity counties.
- ◆ **Pautah County** was created in 1852 by an act that was to become effective when the United States Congress ceded to California territory in what is now Nevada. The county seat was to have been Carsonville. California never acquired the territory, and the act creating the county was repealed in 1859.

- ◆ **Los Angeles County** transformed from a small county along the coast to a large county extending to the Nevada border and then back again to being a relatively small county in area, although now it has about 29 percent of the state's population.
- ◆ In 1850, **Mariposa County** was the largest in area of the original counties: It covered about a sixth of the state. It was larger than the present San Bernardino County, which is now the largest county in the country. Today's Mariposa County is the parent or grandparent of all or parts of 12 other counties, more than produced by any other California county. Territory that at one time was in Mariposa County is now part or all of Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Merced, Mono, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, and Tulare Counties.

An Almost Impossible Task

In California's early history it was relatively easy to create a new county. You simply had to convince the state Legislature. As a result, to the original 27 counties, 33 more were added, one of which (Klamath) died and one of which (Pautah) was never in California.

Today it is much more difficult to establish a new county. In 1894 the state constitution was amended to require uniform laws concerning county creation. In Sections 23320 through 23374, the California Government Code specifies the procedure: A favorable majority vote is needed both in the entire county affected and in the territory of the new county, an almost impossible task. As a result of the tougher laws with constitutional foundation, no new county has been formed since 1907, when Imperial County was created from eastern San Diego County, although it is still theoretically possible.

Additions to and Subtraction from Counties During Birth Events

In the following table, the left column shows the source of the territory when each county, listed in the middle column, was created. The right column shows the destination of the territory moved from one county to another at the time of the birth of a new county.

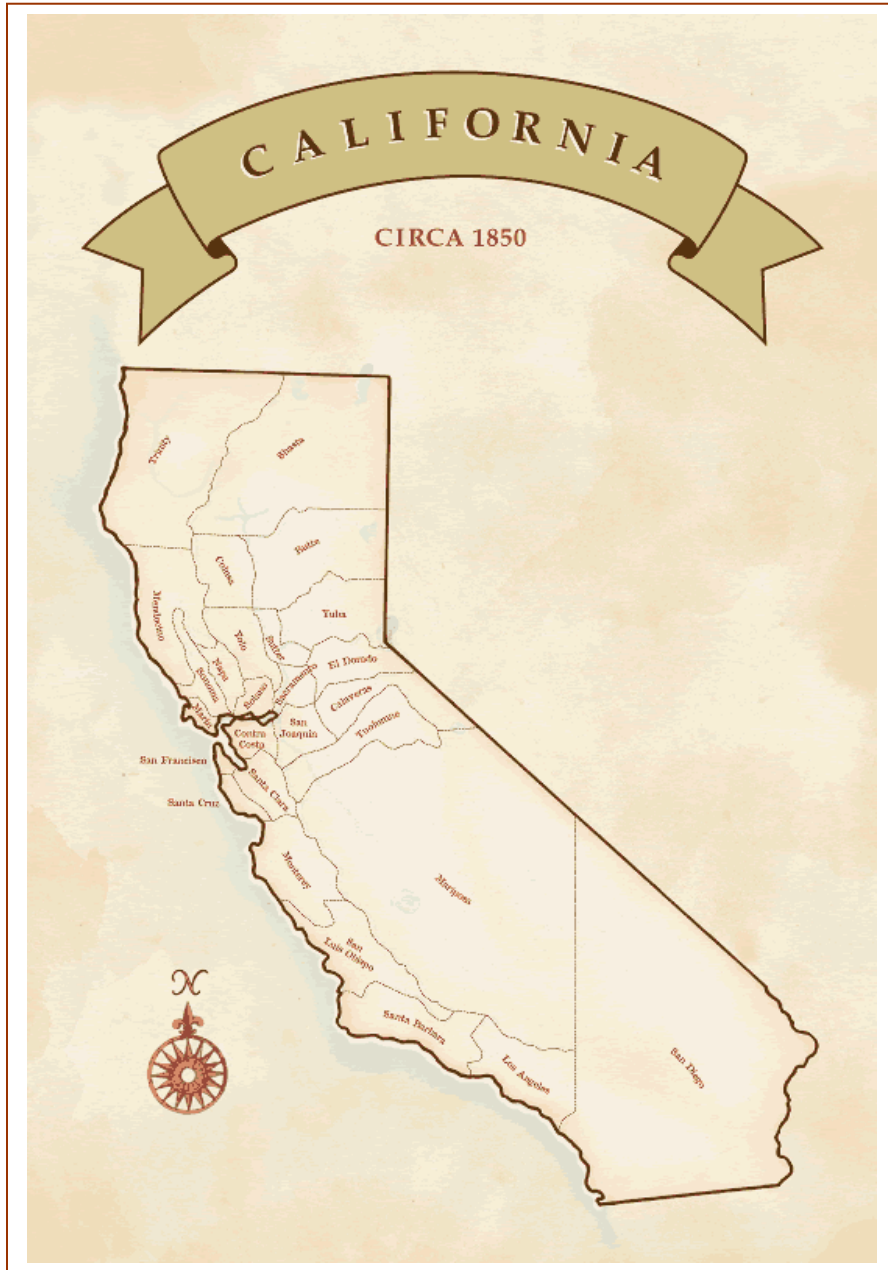
John Taylor is a retired clerk of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and a past president of the California Clerk of the Board of Supervisors Association.

Source of Territory	County	Territory Later Given to New Counties
Contra Costa, Santa Clara 1853	Alameda	
Amador, El Dorado, Calaveras, Tuolumne 1864	Alpine	
Calaveras, El Dorado 1854	Amador	Alpine 1864
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Butte	Plumas 1854; Tehama 1856
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Calaveras	Amador 1854; Alpine 1864
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Colusa	Tehama 1856; Glenn 1891
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Contra Costa	Alameda 1853
Klamath 1857	Del Norte	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	El Dorado	Amador 1854; Alpine 1864
Mariposa, Merced, Tulare 1856	Fresno	Mono 1861; Madera 1893
Colusa 1891	Glenn	
Trinity 1853	Humboldt	
San Diego 1907	Imperial	
Mono, Tulare 1866	Inyo	
Los Angeles, Tulare 1866	Kern	
Tulare 1893	Kings	
Trinity 1851	Klamath	Del Norte 1857
Napa 1861	Lake	
Plumas, Shasta 1864	Lassen	

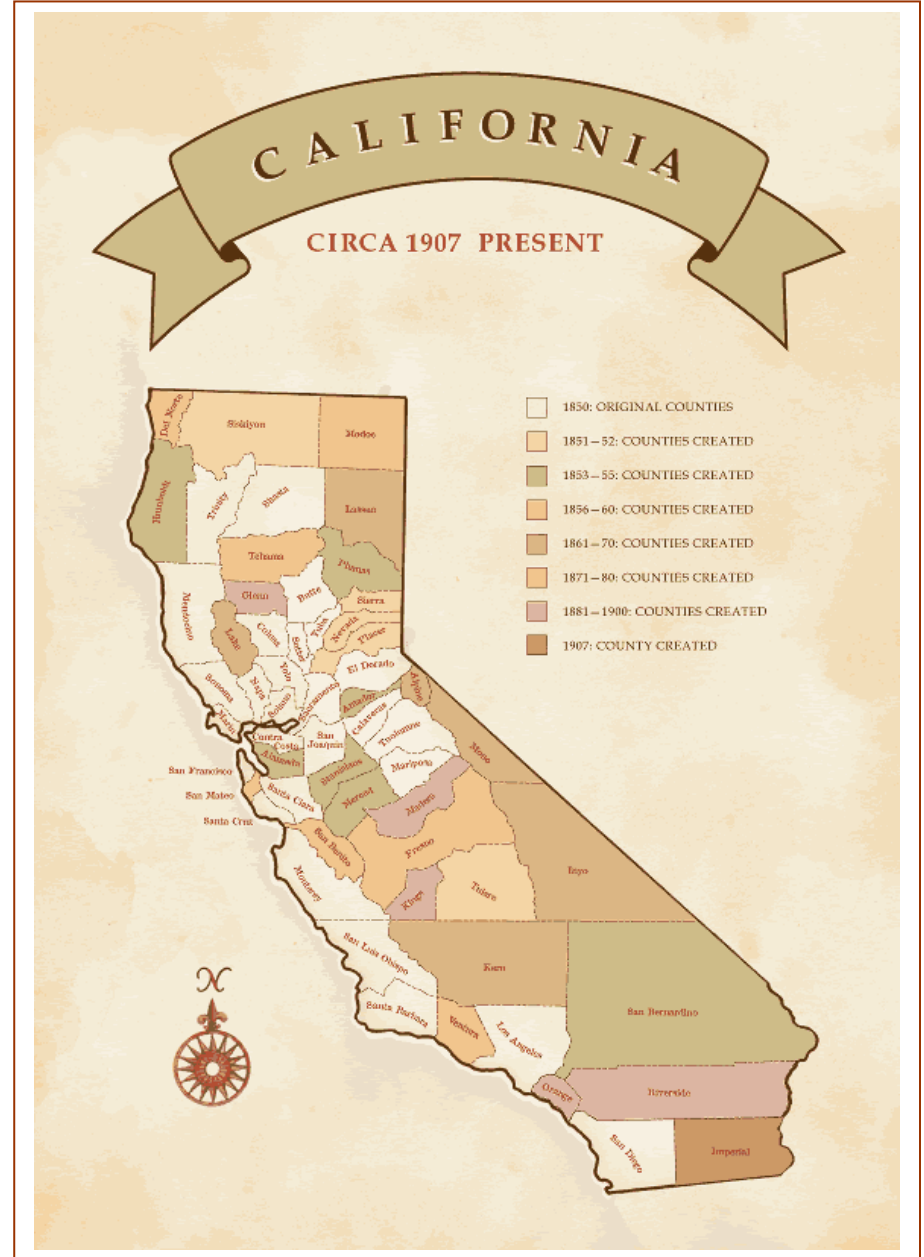
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Los Angeles	San Bernardino 1853; Kern 1866; Orange 1889
	"	1889
Fresno 1893	Madera	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Marin	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Mariposa	Tulare 1852; Merced 1855;
	"	Fresno 1856; Mono 1861
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Mendocino	
Mariposa 1855	Merced	Fresno 1856
Siskiyou 1855	Modoc	
Calaveras, Fresno, Mariposa 1861	Mono	Inyo 1866
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Monterey	San Benito 1874
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Napa	Lake 1861
Yuba 1851	Nevada	
Los Angeles 1889	Orange	
Sutter and Yuba 1851	Placer	
Butte 1854	Plumas	Lassen 1864
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Sacramento	
Monterey 1874	San Benito	
Los Angeles 1853	San Bernardino	Riverside 1893
One of the original 27 counties 1850	San Diego	Riverside 1893; Imperial 1907
One of the original 27 counties 1850	San Francisco	San Mateo 1856
One of the original 27 counties 1850	San Joaquin	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	San Luis Obispo	
San Francisco 1856	San Mateo	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Santa Barbara	Ventura 1872

One of the original 27 counties 1850	Santa Clara	Alameda 1853
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Santa Cruz	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Shasta	Siskiyou 1852; Tehama 1856;
	"	Lassen 1864
Yuba 1852	Sierra	
Shasta and Klamath 1852	Siskiyou	Modoc 1855
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Solano	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Sonoma	
Tuolumne 1854	Stanislaus	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Sutter	Placer 1851
Butte, Colusa, and Shasta 1856	Tehama	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Trinity	Klamath 1852; Humboldt 1853
Mariposa 1852	Tulare	Fresno 1856; Kern 1866;
	"	Inyo 1866; Kings 1893
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Tuolumne	Stanislaus 1854; Alpine 1864
Santa Barbara 1872	Ventura	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Yolo	
One of the original 27 counties 1850	Yuba	Placer 1851; Nevada 1851; Sierra 1852

County History 1850 to Present



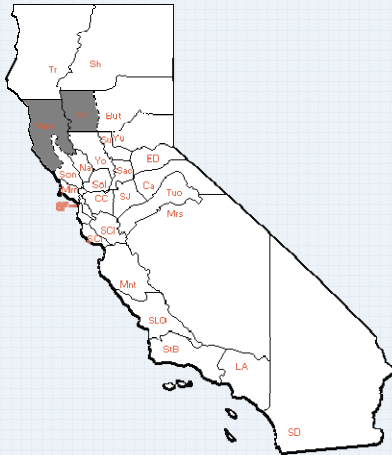
County History 1850 to Present



Counties in California

Creation and Changes Over 160 Years

1850



Original 27 Counties 1850
Butte
Calaveras
Colusa
Contra Costa
El Dorado
Los Angeles
Marin
Mariposa
Mendocino
Monterey
Napa
Sacramento
San Diego
San Francisco
San Joaquin
San Luis Obispo
Santa Barbara
Santa Clara
Santa Cruz
Shasta
Solano
Sonoma
Sutter
Trinity
Tuolumne
Yolo
Yuba

1851-1852



Original 27 Counties 1850	First Wave Additions 1851-1852
Butte	Klamath (1851 to 1874)
Calaveras	Nevada
Colusa	Putuiah (1852-59)
Contra Costa	Sierra
El Dorado	Siskiyou
Los Angeles	Tehama
Marin	
Mariposa	
Mendocino	
Monterey	
Napa	
Sacramento	
San Diego	
San Francisco	
San Joaquin	
San Luis Obispo	
Santa Barbara	
Santa Clara	
Santa Cruz	
Shasta	
Solano	
Sonoma	
Sutter	
Trinity	
Tuolumne	
Yolo	
Yuba	

Counties in California

Creation and Changes Over 160 Years

1853-1857



Original 27 Counties 1850	First Wave Additions 1851-1852	Second Wave Additions 1853-57
Butte Calaveras Colusa Contra Costa El Dorado Los Angeles Marin Mariposa Mendocino Monterey Napa Sacramento San Diego San Francisco San Joaquin San Luis Obispo Santa Barbara Santa Clara Santa Cruz Shasta Solano Sonoma Sutter Trinity Tuolumne Yolo Yuba	Klamath (1851 to 1874) Nevada Putuah (1852-59) Sierra Siskiyou Tehama	1853 Alameda Amador Humboldt San Bernardino 1854 Amador Plumas Stanislaus 1855 Merced 1856: Fresno San Mateo Tehama 1857: Del Norte

1860-1880



Original 27 Counties 1850	First Wave Additions 1851-1852	Second Wave Additions 1853-57	Adjustments 1860-1880
Butte Calaveras Colusa Contra Costa El Dorado Los Angeles Marin Mariposa Mendocino Monterey Napa Sacramento San Diego San Francisco San Joaquin San Luis Obispo Santa Barbara Santa Clara Santa Cruz Shasta Solano Sonoma Sutter Trinity Tuolumne Yolo Yuba	Klamath (1851 to 1874) Nevada Putuah (1852-59) Sierra Siskiyou Tehama	1853 Alameda Amador Humboldt San Bernardino 1854 Amador Plumas Stanislaus 1855 Merced 1856: Fresno San Mateo Tehama 1857: Del Norte 1859: Putuah dissolved	1861 Lake Mono 1864 Alpine Lassen 1866 Inyo Kern 1872 Ventura 1874 Modoc Klamath dissolved

Counties in California

Creation and Changes Over 160 Years

1881-1907



Original 27 Counties 1850	First Wave Additions 1851-1852	Second Wave Additions 1853-57	Adjustments 1860-1880	Growth & Depression 1881-1907
Butte	Klamath (1851 to 1874)	1853	1861	1889
Calaveras		Alameda	Lake	Orange
Colusa	Nevada	Amador	Mono	1891
Contra Costa	Putuah (1852-59)	Humboldt	1864	Glen
El Dorado		San Bernardino	Alpine	1893
Los Angeles	Sierra	1854	Lassen	Kings
Marin	Siskiyou	Amador	1866	Madera
Mariposa	Tehama	Plumas	Inyo	Riverside
Mendocino		Stanislaus	Kern	1907
Monterey		1855	1872	Imperial
Napa		Merced	Ventura	
Sacramento		1856:	1874	
San Diego		Fresno	Modoc	
San Francisco		San Mateo	Klamath dissolved	
San Joaquin		Tehama		
San Luis Obispo		1857:		
Santa Barbara		Del Norte		
Santa Clara		1859:		
Santa Cruz		Putuah dissolved		
Shasta				
Solano				
Sonoma				
Sutter				
Trinity				
Tuolumne				
Yolo				
Yuba				

2010



Original 27 Counties 1850	First Wave Additions 1851-1852	Second Wave Additions 1853-57	Adjustments 1860-1880	Growth & Depression 1881-1907
Butte	Klamath (1851 to 1874)	1853	1861	1889
Calaveras		Alameda	Lake	Orange
Colusa	Nevada	Amador	Mono	1891
Contra Costa	Putuah (1852-59)	Humboldt	1864	Glen
El Dorado		San Bernardino	Alpine	1893
Los Angeles	Sierra	1854	Lassen	Kings
Marin	Siskiyou	Amador	1866	Madera
Mariposa	Tehama	Plumas	Inyo	Riverside
Mendocino		Stanislaus	Kern	1907
Monterey		1855	1872	Imperial
Napa		Merced	Ventura	
Sacramento		1856:	1874	
San Diego		Fresno	Modoc	
San Francisco		San Mateo	Klamath dissolved	
San Joaquin		Tehama		
San Luis Obispo		1857:		
Santa Barbara		Del Norte		
Santa Clara		1859:		
Santa Cruz		Putuah dissolved		
Shasta				
Solano				
Sonoma				
Sutter				
Trinity				
Tuolumne				
Yolo				
Yuba				