

Year in Review: 2023

CalMatters celebrated eight years of award-winning, change-inspiring journalism this year thanks to the support of our members, grantmakers, and sponsors. We continue to prove the value of nonprofit news, with high-quality journalism that holds the powerful to account and informs and engages the electorate.

Independent journalism and democracy are interdependent; you can't have one without the other, so we're proud of two key achievements in 2023 as we build toward a pivotal 2024 election year:

- Building our team of talented journalists – we now have 52 around the state. Most recently Andy Donahue joined as our investigative editor and Ryan Sabalow is a reporter for the Digital Democracy project.
- Investing in behind-the-scenes technology tools that give us new insight into our audience and what topics are most important to them in order to build loyalty and deeper engagement.

We've also expanded our audio and television partnerships so our stories are heard and seen by even more Californians. With your help, we're making California a better place to live. Thank you for making the work highlighted below and so much more possible.



Neil Chase, CEO



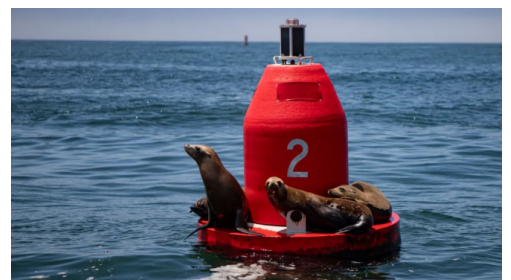
John Boland, Board Chair

TOXIC WASTE

[An investigation by Robert Lewis](#) tracks toxic trash to the communities in Arizona and Utah where California sends nearly half of its hazardous waste. NPR's Weekend Edition aired this story and The Arizona Republic published it as well.

OFFSHORE WIND

Massive wind farms off the northern and central coasts are some of California's most complex and audacious clean energy initiatives. [Julie Cart's series](#) goes deep into the future of offshore wind through the eyes of those excited about adding carbon-free energy to the grid and those who fear it carries too many risks and unknown impacts.



Sea lions in Morro Bay by Larry Valenzuela, CalMatters.

EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

This year-long, 4-part investigative series by Lauren Hepler takes readers inside the origins of EDD’s pandemic ineptitude, the con artists who exploited its failings to rip off California, the harrowing human toll paid by people wrongly denied essential jobless benefits, and whether the EDD is making the same mistakes all over again, leaving it unprepared for the next stress test.

TRACKING GOVERNOR NEWSOM’S BILL SIGNING AND VETOING

In the weeks leading up to October 14th, the final day for the governor to take action on bills passed by the legislature, our [political team tracked hundreds of bills](#) on his desk. In our unique, easy-to-follow “explainer” format, we covered what some of the most noteworthy bills would do, who supported and opposed them, and why they matter.

IMPACTING CALIFORNIA

Firefighters’ Mental Health. Following Julie Cart’s award-winning series [“Trial by Fire,”](#) Governor Newsom approved extending to 2029 an expansion of workers’ compensation coverage for firefighters struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder.

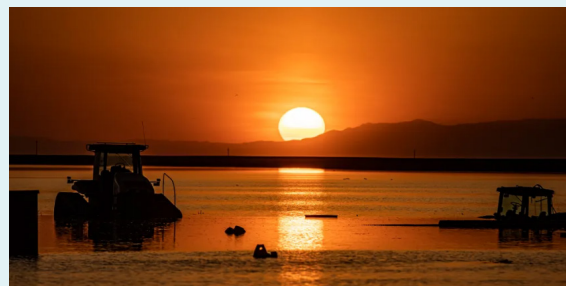
Rehab Reform. [A yearlong investigative reporting project by Byrhonda Lyons](#) prompted the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to make significant changes to its \$100 million-per-year parolee rehab program. Her reporting found that fewer than half the participants completed even one of the program’s services, with lax oversight of service providers and no measurement of whether the program was working. The changes include monitoring parolees’ job outcomes and re-incarceration rates, verifying providers’ licenses, and inspecting the 450 halfway houses and treatment centers funded by the state.



CA Health Care Facility in Stockton by Rahul Lal, CalMatters.

Lobbying Investigation. Sameea Kamal’s [investigation and analysis of local government lobbying](#) in Sacramento revealed that lobbying efforts, funded by taxpayers, aren’t always transparent to the public and that some local governments appear to be lobbying on bills that don’t align with the interests or priorities of the communities the lobbyists were hired to represent. The investigation illuminated a usually opaque source of 10% of all lobbying expenditures. Because of Sameea’s story, at least one water agency said it would make corrections to its current session lobbying reports.

Flood Recovery Funding. After the [governor announced in March](#) that Rapid Response funds would help farmworkers flooded out of their homes and jobs, victims waited months with no sign of the aid. Nicole Foy of our California Divide team covered the aftermath of the flooding and its impact on communities and stayed on the story for months until the state finally started to distribute the funds.



Submerged tractors south of Corcoran, CA by Larry Valenzuela, CalMatters.

NEW EDITOR

Kristen Go, EIC

2023 brought a change in editorial leadership as Dave Lesher transitioned to leading our Digital Democracy project and Kristen Go joined us as our new Editor in Chief. Kristen previously held leadership roles at USA TODAY and the San Francisco Chronicle and is a Stockton native.

“CalMatters is a growing, thriving newsroom with infinite potential to change California. I’m honored to be leading such a powerful and experienced team.”



Kristen Go
Editor-in-chief

EVENTS

Live Journalism Returns

We brought live journalism events back to engage more Californians in the topics that matter most to them. We produced:

- Six Sacramento Sessions in our CalMatters Studio with topics ranging from electric vehicle affordability to the dream of debt-free college.
- Four CalMatters Live events around the state with high-quality, live journalism on subjects that matter to that community. We focused on the cannabis industry in Arcata, affordable housing in Fresno, water in San Diego and housing in San Luis Obispo.

AWARDS

FIRST PLACE GENERAL EXCELLENCE & 7 OTHER AWARDS

California Journalism Awards

FIRST PLACE CONSUMER FEATURE REPORTING, KRISTEN HWANG

Association Of Health Care Journalists

BEST NONPROFIT NEWS SOURCE

American Journalism Online Awards

FIRST PLACE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT REPORTING & 2 OTHER AWARDS

Best of the West Awards

FIRST PLACE, TV BUSINESS AND CONSUMER REPORTING

National Headliner Awards



SAVE THE DATE

CalMatters Ideas Festival June 5-7, 2024

Join us in Sacramento for the inaugural CalMatters Ideas Festival. Three days of the smartest minds in education, technology, the environment, criminal justice reform, housing, homelessness and more will come together for interviews, lectures, debates, and panel discussions on the challenges California is facing and the solutions that are working. Don't miss it!

2023

By The Numbers

With your help, we're on track to meet our revenue budget of \$11.5 million.

1,234

Stories and commentaries published

5,870

Republication by partners

4,199

Total Members

1 Million +

Pageviews per month on our site and an estimated 8 million per month through our partners

2,369

Event attendees
(in person & virtual)

223

Radio stories
aired

Pass it forward. Leave a legacy and share your appreciation of an informed and engaged public by including us in your estate plans.

Other ways to support us include gifts of stock, donor advised funds, and IRA distributions. We're a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization so your gifts are tax deductible. Please consider making a contribution to support our work at calmatters.org/gifts or contact Kate Looby at kate@calmatters.org.