



California Alliance for Golf
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April 7, 2025

Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 3350
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairperson Becker and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: SB 51 – Permanent Standard Time [Oppose]

The California Alliance for Golf (CAG), a California nonprofit corporation, is a consortium of the state’s leading golf organizations/associations/businesses that speaks on behalf of the \$15.1 billion California golf community, its roughly 3.2 million devotees, thousands of workers, and roughly one thousand golf facilities. The following comments in opposition to SB 51 are filed in accordance with the Alliance’s procedures for issuing comments and taking positions on proposed legislation.

SB 51 asks the California Legislature to reverse a decision reached by 62% of the California electorate in 2018 per facts and evidence that at best present a picture insufficiently complete to allow for a fully informed decision. At worst, a picture contrary to what a full review of all relevant facts and evidence would yield. We urge the legislature to uphold the only reliable indicator of California public opinion on the subject (Prop. 7, 2018), and continue the current practice that has endured for more than a century, until ALL facts and evidence relevant to forming an informed decision on the subject be considered.

According to those who study sleep patterns and biological rhythms, the human diurnal clock is better attuned to the midday position of the sun under permanent standard time than permanent daylight saving time. How that has meaning let alone application within a Pacific Time Zone in which Seattle has 2 ½ more hours of daylight than San Diego during summer months strikes us a relevant question in need of answering.

There are other unanswered health questions that demand as much if not more attention, including the impact of the loss of the hour now available for after-school youth recreational programming during the “bridge” months of March/April/September/October, which would be dark hours under permanent standard time. Middle and high schools in California are precluded from starting earlier than 8:00 AM and 8:30 AM respectively, (SB 328, 2019) and therefore could not decide to begin their days one hour earlier. Without question, the impacts of lost outdoor recreation time deserve equal study and consideration prior to the legislature acting on SB 51, particularly to the degree to which

sedentary lifestyles may play a role in predictions about this generation living shorter lives than their parents.

Those who study sleep patterns are not likely as aware as the California golf community is of the harm caused by the loss of that hour during the bridge months of March/April/September/October, because the golf community understands how the loss of that hour would likely result in the loss of the months most key to successful girls and boys high school team golf programs and to the myriad after school junior golf programs dependent upon daylight to offer their services.

In terms of economic impact, while we can only speak definitively about the impact upon California's golf courses of hewing to permanent standard time, given that golf is but one of many pieces of California's greater tourism/travel sector, we would suggest that much of what applies to golf applies to many other of these pieces. We know just how much more productive that last hour of the day is than the first hour. League play, twilight play, and golf lessons are the province of those hours of the day between the end of the traditional workday and sunset. There are no equivalents at the dawn of the day. As for the food/beverage sales that are integral components of the daily fee and municipal golf courses that represent more than 70% of the California golf market, suffice it to say that those sales are almost entirely driven by the day's last hour.

While the industry has never surveyed to see just how many of its roughly 960 golf courses in the state operate in residential communities that maintain noise ordinances that restrict their opening until well after sunrise, we do know that there are many, particularly in the state's HOA communities, and they are on the rise, not the decline. Based on our experience, we do not expect those jurisdictions to amend their noise ordinances to allow their golf courses to open for business one hour earlier to accommodate permanent standard time, leading to a loss of revenue not only for privately held courses but for cities and counties that operate municipal golf courses. 22.3% of California's golf courses are owned by municipalities.

Again, while we can speak definitively about the economic consequences for golf of "ditching the switch" by moving to permanent standard time as opposed to the means overwhelmingly approved by the California electorate and for that matter the electorates of every other state (19 of them), we have to believe that the same economic consequences apply for the many other California recreation, entertainment, and tourism sectors similarly situated in terms of their inability to facily substitute the hour after dawn for the hour prior to dusk. The full economic consequences of the permanent standard time option compel consideration, particularly in light of the fact that no one, including the proponents of SB 51, suggest that "ditching a switch" Californians have been making for a century is an emergency.

In addition to a full study of all health/safety and economic consequences of moving immediately to permanent standard time, we suggest the need to study the full energy consequences as well. Twice in American history (World War II and the 1974-1975 energy crisis) the nation has gone to permanent daylight-saving time as a means of saving energy. While we are aware of credible studies that have indicated disappointment in the resultant savings, "disappointment" doesn't equate to nothing, nor does it indicate that 50 years later that same disappointment would prevail. This too ought to be part of any fully informed decision as to which means of "ditching the switch" would be preferable – permanent daylight-saving time or permanent standard time.

Also meriting study is the relationship between crime and daylight-saving time. The Brookings Institution issued a detailed study in 2015* which found a 7% drop in robberies during Daylight Saving time that results in roughly \$59 million in annual social cost savings from avoided robberies. The study doesn't dismiss those studies that find the same negative effects cited by the proponents of SB 51 but does attribute most of them to the "switch" as opposed to the later sunset and does boldly conclude that the benefits of the reduced crime far outweigh those negative effects ostensibly cured by permanent standard as opposed to permanent daylight saving time:

The growing literature on the effect of early school start times on academic performance suggests extending DST could have a negative effect on students by making classes earlier relative to sunrise (Wong, 2012). Medical research on circadian rhythms suggests shifts in the sleep cycle can have negative impacts on response time and cognition, and on the Monday following DST, there is higher observed rate of traffic accidents, workplace injuries, and heart attacks (Coren, 1996; Varughese & Allen, 2001; Barnes & Wagner, 2009). Janszky and Ljung (2008) note that changing one's clocks "can disrupt chronobiologic rhythms and influence the duration and quality of sleep" for several days, and also hypothesize negative physical effects as a result of the policy. **However, most of these costs are due to the switch from standard time to DST rather than the impact of a later sunset per se and are likely small in comparison to the benefits of the substantial drop in violent crime.***

[Emphasis/bolding added]

With the respect to the finding SB 51 asks you to make about "neighboring states considering moving to permanent standard time so coordination with those states regarding timekeeping is essential for consistency," here is where things stand in terms of "neighboring states," other American states, and the United States Congress.

In recent years nineteen (19) states have adopted legislation, passed resolutions, or passed voter initiatives to adopt permanent daylight saving time pending Congressional approval, California and Washington among them. Other than Hawaii and Arizona, which have for decades been the two states that have remained on permanent standard time, no state has adopted legislation or passed a resolution to adopt permanent standard time, albeit ten (10) states are in the process of joining California in considering legislation that would do just that, including Washington and Nevada. So, yes, it is accurate to say that there are "neighboring states considering moving to permanent standard time" just as California is now contemplating with SB 51. But there is a big difference between "considered" and considering. The Legislature "considers" thousands of matters that do not become law. And in this case, no state, apart from Hawaii and Arizona, has yet taken final action to move to permanent standard time, but 19 have taken action to move to permanent daylight time. In addition, sixteen (16) additional states are currently considering bills that would move their residents to permanent daylight-saving time. Just as it was clear in 2018 in California which option is Californians' preference, it's clear that the same preference is the overwhelming preference of the residents of other states.

It is also the clear preference at the federal level. On January 8 of this year, Washington Senator Patty Murray (D) and Florida Senator Rick Scott (R) reintroduced the "Sunshine Protection Act," which would mandate that all 50 states hew to permanent daylight-saving time – a bill bipartisan in its introduction and bipartisan in its current list of supporters, a list that includes the Senior Senators from the three states in the Pacific Time Zone, California (Alex Padilla), Oregon (Ron Wyden), and Washington (Patty Murray). The identical bill passed the Senate unanimously in 2022

but was not taken up by the House of Representatives. Given all the activity in the states around this issue and the reality that states may come to opposite conclusions with respect to selection of one or the other option, particularly in those parts of the nation where one can drive through multiple states in very few hours, it is highly likely that Congress will be compelled to resolve the confusion by preempting the states' discretion in the matter. And given that the only bills filed in either House of Congress (there is a parallel bill now in the House of Representatives) propose permanent daylight time as the salve, were California to adopt SB 51 and move its residents to permanent standard time, its residents may find that they soon thereafter will be whipsawed the other way to permanent daylight saving time.

Conclusion

There are so many unknowns in addition to the usual unintended consequences of moving to permanent standard time that when complemented by the likelihood of federal preemption, makes it the much better part of wisdom to secure answers to the questions and a clearer understanding of potential unintended consequences before adopting an unpopular solution to a "problem" that doesn't come close to rising to the level of the kind of emergency that merits immediate action. We have been flipping our clocks for generations. We can wait the short time required to see whether we are preempted by Congressional action and failing that, to secure all the health, safety, economic, and crime information attendant to issuing a fully informed decision.

For these reasons we OPPOSE SB 51 as written but would support the comprehensive study of ALL the issues relevant to any final decision regarding which option is to be preferred for "ditching a switch" that we do agree is likely merited.

Respectfully Submitted,



Craig Kessler
Executive Director

* Jennifer L. Doleac and Nicholas J. Sanders, Under the Cover of Darkness: How Ambient Light Influences Criminal Activity, *"The Review of Economics and Statistics"* (2015). P. 1102.