

2023 Bay Area Policy Priorities



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Industry Impact

According to Biocom California's 2022 Life Science Economic Impact Report¹, Bay Area companies in the life science industry directly employed 146,131 people in 2022, with average annual earnings exceeding \$148,000 per year. The region's life science employees support an additional 201,709 jobs for a total region-wide impact of 347,840 jobs. The industry generated \$150.9 billion in economic activity in economic activity. Biocom California represents more than 1,700 members in California; we focus on initiatives that positively influence the region's life science community in the development and delivery of innovative products that improve health and quality of life.

LAND USE

One of the most important factors impacting life science development is where our facilities are allowed to locate, and the activities allowed within facilities. Preserving industrial land for manufacturing, research and development (R&D), and distribution is vital to long-term industry stability and growth. We also encourage local governments to identify and incentivize physical areas for life science establishments where appropriate.

We have been working with city staff on the Keep Innovation in Berkeley package, which seeks to pursue zoning amendments and other actions to encourage the growth and retention of R&D in Berkeley. We are also assisting the City of San Francisco with possible upcoming changes to land use regulations making it easier for life science companies to locate within the city.

PERMITS & INSPECTION

Biocom California supports efforts to make city and county permitting processes predictable, transparent, and efficient. We appreciate efforts to ensure inspections are done consistently and in collaboration with businesses.

BIOSAFETY LEVELS

Biosafety levels (BSL) are individual safeguards designed to protect laboratory personnel, as well as the surrounding environment and community. Each level, or BSL 1-4, requires escalating building and safety measures.

There have been some community misconceptions around the regulation of these labs, which are required to comply with upwards of 20 agencies and permits. We have been meeting with cities in San Mateo County to help them understand what biosafety levels are, the regulations associated with each level, and answering any questions they may have. While the use of BSL 3 labs is rare, they are necessary in some research processes. We support proposals that allow continuing use of BSL 1-3 labs.

¹ Deloitte, 2022. Biocom California's 2022 Life Science Economic Impact Report.



HOUSING

It is common knowledge that there is a housing shortage in the Bay Area—the median price of a home is \$1.05 million². Biocom California supports incentivizing the building of additional middle-income housing units via a variety of approaches, including:

- exemption of middle-income housing from new/existing construction fees as appropriate
- increased density around transit hubs
- relaxation of parking and related requirements

BUILDING ELECTRIFICATION MANDATES

Cities throughout California have been considering “reach codes” over the past few years. These proposals seek to reach beyond state building code related to energy efficiency and often include an all-electric requirement for new buildings and retrofits for existing buildings.

Certain laboratory uses such as backup power and boilers will continue to require access to natural gas, as these technologies do not exist in other forms. There are no existing batteries that can power a laboratory facility in case of a power outage, nor electric boilers with temperature control necessary for research processes.

We also have concerns about electric grid capacity for all-electric developments. Fourteen of the California cities that passed a building electrification ordinance in 2022 had at least some kind of exemption for laboratories. We advocate for cities to consider alternative compliance measures and/or exemptions for research buildings.

²
Santarelli, Marco. "Bay Area Housing Market: Prices, Trends, Forecasts 2023." Norada Real Estate Investments, 8 April, 2023, <https://www.noradarealestate.com/blog/san-francisco-real-estate-market/>

Since its founding in 1995, Biocom California has emerged as the most respected association voice for the state's life science industry in regional government, the State Capitol, and Washington, D.C.

Please direct any questions to:

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ACCESS TO WATER & OTHER UTILITIES

Since its inception, Biocom California has communicated with legislators and regulators about how the life science industry uses water, and why reliable, constant access to water is necessary for our member companies to conduct daily business activities. Biocom California supports practical ways to diversify water supply, such as indirect potable reuse and desalination.

Similarly, natural gas, electricity, telecommunications, and other utilities are critical to research operations, and we advocate for reliability and transparent pricing.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a key element in the quality of life in the Bay Area, impacting the ability of employees to commute in a reasonable time as well as the ability of companies to attract the necessary workforce and transport goods and products. Investment in transportation infrastructure is critical for the Bay Area's future growth and population needs. We are closely watching post-pandemic transit ridership and budget issues at BART and Caltrain, and will be advocating for smart solutions.

