INLAND EMPIRE REGION
A CALIFORNIA 100 REPORT

VISION & STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT CENTURY
ABOUT CALIFORNIA 100

The California 100 Initiative envisions a future that is innovative, sustainable, and equitable for all. Our mission is to strengthen California’s ability to collectively solve problems and shape our long-term future over the next 100 years.

California 100 is organized around 5 policy themes and 5 core values, and driven by interrelated stages of work: research, policy innovation, and engagement with Californians. California 100’s work is guided by an expert and intergenerational Commission.

Through various projects and activities, California 100 seeks to move California towards an aspirational vision—changing policies and practices, attitudes and mindsets, to inspire a more vibrant future. This Regional Analysis was produced as part of California 100’s research stream of work.

The California 100 initiative is incubated through the University of California and Stanford.

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The largest cities within each of the counties in the Inland Empire Region include:

- Riverside (Riverside County, 314,998)
- San Bernardino (San Bernardino County, 222,101)
- Moreno Valley (Riverside County, 208,634)
- Fontana (San Bernardino County, 208,393)
- Ontario (San Bernardino County, 175,265)
- Rancho Cucamonga (San Bernardino County, 174,453)
- Corona (Riverside County, 157,136)
BOUND BY DESERT AND MOUNTAIN ranges, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties comprise the “Inland Empire.” Traveling due east from Los Angeles, the San Gabriel and then the San Bernardino Mountains form an imposing range of 10,000-foot mountains just to the north. The cities of this region, with histories of citrus-growing, include Ontario, Fontana, Redlands, and San Bernardino. Continuing east through the mountains is the Morongo Valley that leads to the Mojave Desert oasis at the city of Twentynine Palms. Traveling directly northeast from Los Angeles through the mountains leads to the high desert at Victorville, then through the Mojave Desert, and out to Needles at the border with Arizona and Nevada. Traveling southeast leads through Riverside, Moreno Valley, Banning, and eventually through the San Gorgonio/Banning pass to the desert cities of Palm Springs, Cathedral City, and Coachella ending at the Salton Sea.

The counties span more than 27,000 square miles, covering more than 16 percent of California’s total land area and providing a home to more than 11 percent of the state’s total population or about 4.6 million people. The region is also growing quickly – as of 2022, the Inland Empire was the country’s 12th most populous metropolitan area. The region is also one of the most diverse in the state. Roughly 20 percent of the region’s population is immigrants, and more than half of the population in each County is people of color.

Although Riverside County was carved out from San Bernardino and San Diego Counties in 1893, it is now more populated than San Bernardino and continues to claim residents moving inland from Los Angeles and San Diego in search of more affordable housing. The region’s dependence on the logistics industry, however, has strained many cities that once offered such housing, as construction of warehousing facilities has congested suburbs and worsened air quality and congested residential neighborhoods. The economy, which is now bolstered by these industries, was once supported by agriculture – largely lemon and orange groves – and, later by industries related to local military bases.
The Inland Empire Has A Large Population of Hispanic/Latino Residents and Its Population Skews Younger Than the Rest of the State

**Female**

**Male**

**Under 5 Years**

**5 to 9 Years**

**10 to 14 Years**

**15 to 19 Years**

**20 to 24 Years**

**25 to 29 Years**

**30 to 34 Years**

**35 to 39 Years**

**40 to 44 Years**

**45 to 49 Years**

**50 to 54 Years**

**55 to 59 Years**

**60 to 64 Years**

**65 to 69 Years**

**70 to 74 Years**

**75 to 79 Years**

**80 to 84 Years**

**85 Years and Over**

**White, Not Hispanic or Latino**

**Hispanic or Latino**

**Black or African American**

**American Indian and Alaska Native**

**Asian**

**Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander**

**Other Race**

**Two or More Races**

**SOURCE:** U.S. Census Data, 2020
The Inland Empire has More Latino/Hispanic Residents Than the Rest of the State

**Figure 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>Black or African American</th>
<th>Asian or Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</th>
<th>American Indian and Alaska Native</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
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<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>35%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** U.S. Census Data, 2020

**NOTE:** Many parts of the Inland Empire, particularly in San Bernardino County, fall under the category of very hard-to-count on the U.S. Census, leaving open the possibility of undercounting the population.7
The Inland Empire is Generally More Conservative Than the Rest of California

**Figure 3**

**SOURCE:** California Secretary of State, September 9, 2022 Report of Registration.
EARLY ERA: ARRIVAL OF THE SPANISH

The Inland Empire region has supported native populations for thousands of years due to water sources like the Mojave and Santa Ana Rivers. Among these populations are the Allil-iik, Chumash, Cahuilla, Gabrielino, Kitanemuk, Serrano, Luiseño, Chemehuevi, Kumeyaay, and Mojave. The Serrano, whose name comes from the Spanish word “mountain dweller,” originally lived in the San Bernardino Mountains, subsisting as hunter gatherers. Likewise, the Cahuilla also occupied the region, but were spread largely along the desert plains, concentrating along water sources.

The Spanish, who exploited the labor of native peoples across California to construct the missions as a means of religious and political conversion, turned their attention to the San Bernardino Valley in 1810. The Valley had been crossed frequently by Spanish missionaries and explorers traveling to and from colonies held in the Southwest, like Arizona and New Mexico, towards the missions along the California coast. Within the mission system, outposts or asistencias were common in regions that held smaller populations of native peoples – as was the case in
the San Bernardino region—yet still offered mass service and financially supported the larger mission system, commonly through ranching or agriculture. In present-day Redlands, one such asistencia, the Guachama Rancheria served the region until it was secularized under Mexican rule, and later dismantled by local native tribes in 1834.

While the Spanish controlled the asistencia, the native people in the region were coerced into the work of developing the region’s first irrigation ditch, a 12-mile system, or zanja, running from Mill Creek to support local agriculture. Decades later, this zanja would help support a burgeoning agricultural economy in the region and today supplies the City of Redlands with drinking water. At the time, however, the development of the irrigation system coincided with Mexican independence from Spain. Although Mexico declared independence in 1821, disbursement of the lands previously held by the Spanish and mission systems occurred gradually until the mid-19th century. Land previously held by missions was divided through the process of secularization, with the stated goal of the Mexican government of returning land to the native populations and selling the remaining as private land. However, the majority of the Inland Empire ended up as grants to private, often white, citizens.

By 1848, Mexico had been at war with the U.S. for two years. With the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico surrendered California to the U.S. In 1851, when Mormon communities migrated into the region to establish colonies in California, local landowners in the Inland Empire sold much of this land to Mormon leaders. Although the colony was short-lived, as Brigham Young called upon the majority of the colony to return to Utah in 1857, the settlement changed the landscape.
of the San Bernardino Valley as the Mormons developed irrigation networks and fostered an agricultural economy by leveraging the existing zanja for water. Establishing this network, however, relied upon both the labor of the native people in the region, as well as enslaved African American people brought with the settlers from Utah.

Just as the missions had encroached upon the territory of the native peoples’ tribes, so too did the settlements of explorers migrating west. In 1853, San Bernardino County was incorporated, and the 1860 census provides the first information on the ethnic make-up of the region showing that the Native American population outnumbered the white populations by 50 percent. However, a smallpox epidemic in 1862 killed many Native Americans, so that in future census counts, the white populations would vastly outnumber that of the native peoples.

**U.S. COLONIZATION**

Although the California Gold Rush of the mid-19th century was concentrated near Sacramento 500 miles to the north, gold was also discovered in 1860 in the San Bernardino Mountains, with mining colonies forming around Lytle Creek. In 1866, a group of American settlers moved into lands near Lake Arrowhead in the San Bernardino mountains that the Serrano tribe traditionally used for hunting and foraging. Tensions between the groups led to the deaths of three Americans, followed by a retaliatory massacre of Serrano
people at Chimney Rock, who were forced to retreat down the mountains into the desert. Santos Manuel, the leader of the retreat, was ultimately honored by the U.S. in 1891 with the establishment of the San Manuel Reservation in San Bernardino for the Serrano tribe.

The Inland Empire continued to experience growth among American settlers in the following years. Construction on the Southern Pacific Railroad ran throughout the region and passed through some of the most populous Inland Empire cities today, including Riverside, Temecula, and San Bernardino. Farmers in the region, capitalizing upon the existing irrigation networks developed by the native peoples for the mission systems, started planting citrus trees. With the advent of the railroad lines, the farmers prospered, selling navel and Valencia oranges across the country. Along irrigation settlements, the 70-mile stretch between Pasadena and Redlands became known as the “Citrus Belt,” where more than 1 million orange trees grew by 1880. Relative to the other Southern California counties that also supported a citrus economy, land in Riverside and San Bernardino was significantly less expensive, drawing interest from commercial owners who increasingly depended on immigrant labor. Decades later, in the 1970s, Cesar Chavez joined local
farm workers and the Union Farm Workers’ Union in the Coachella Valley to fight for better wages for these laborers.

The population continued to grow within the two counties, and in 1893, voters living in parts of San Bernardino and San Diego counties voted to incorporate the County of Riverside. By the end of the 19th century, citrus had made Riverside the wealthiest city per capita in the U.S. Meanwhile, in San Bernardino, steel production grew, particularly during World War II under Kaiser Steel, a company based in Fontana. Plagued by high shipping costs for shipbuilding materials to the coast and increasingly poor margins, Kaiser Steel closed in 1983, and with its closure, the region lost 9,000 union jobs but it removed a major source of pollution for the area.

Growth leading into the mid-19th century was driven in part because of the population boom in nearby Los Angeles and also following the establishment of new industries. Initially formed as a municipal airport, the Norton Air Force Base became a pilot training site following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. In 1941, the region also saw the opening of the Twentynine Palms Base, which initially served as a training facility for the Air Force, but was later assumed by the Marine Corps as an extension of Camp Pendleton in 1952.
During World War II, the San Bernardino Depot – initially constructed as a storage facility serving the needs of the military along the West Coast of California – also became known as Camp Ono, where more than 60,000 Japanese were interned during 1942. Similarly, the March Air Force Base (MAFB) in Riverside served as an airfield in World War I, and later as a training site during World War II.

In the 1990s, the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission reduced the presence and capabilities of the local military bases. BRAC closed Norton Air Force Base in 1994. It also reduced the size and scale of the MAFB. Between the closure and reduction of the two military bases, 32,000 jobs were lost.

Today, the MAFB is managed by the March Joint Powers Commission – locally elected officials from Riverside, Moreno Valley, Perris, and Riverside County.

As jobs disappeared from the region following the closure of the bases in the late 20th century, local elected officials increasingly approved warehousing projects to transform the vast amount of land from raising livestock and undertaking agriculture. As this transformation occurred, local officials were often the beneficiaries of campaign contributions from warehousing developers.
THE 2000S: INNOVATION TO SUPPORT EXISTING INDUSTRY

As California emerged as a hub for trade, particularly with the Asia-Pacific Region, the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach grew rapidly. With its proximity to the coast and abundant land following the closure of military bases and the availability of former agricultural land, the Inland Empire provided a natural corridor for transporting goods across the United States. Moreover, the region also provided a strong transportation network because of the Southern Pacific Railroad and interstate highways like the I-10, and labor was also relatively cheap because of the loss of jobs in the region with the closure of Kaiser Steel and later, the closure of Norton Air Base, eliminating nearly 40,000 jobs in the area. Today, the warehousing and logistics industries dominate the economy of the Inland Empire, with roughly 40 percent of U.S. consumer goods passing through the region. Their explosion, however, can be traced more recently to the Great Recession.
Figure 4  Warehouses Occupy More than 1 Billion Square Feet of the Inland Empire

Estimated Warehouse Distribution in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties

Distribution in 2021
Area Occupied by Warehouses: 1,041,229,079 ft²
Total Number of Warehouses: 4,299

Legend
- Interstate Highways
- Cities
- Counties
- Warehouses

In recent decades, land use has continued to shift within the Inland Empire to accommodate the growing logistics industry. In Victorville, the decommissioned George Air Force Base site became the Southern California Logistics Airport. In addition to servicing the local distribution network, the site is also home to a federal prison and immigrant detention center. In 2020, the land on which the former Norton Air Force Base stood was also repurposed, now used as an air cargo facility, used heavily by Amazon.

**HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND THE GREAT RECESSION**

The Great Recession had a particularly outsized impact on the Inland Empire, a region that had experienced population growth of 3.4 percent between 2000 and 2007. In part, an influx of first-time home buyers attracted to the area for its affordability helped drive this growth. By some accounts, however, the...
Inland Empire—and San Bernardino County, specifically—served as the epicenter for the housing crisis in Southern California. During the crisis, roughly one in five borrowers was behind on home loan payments.48

Between 2000 and 2010, the population of the Inland Empire grew by 30 percent, with growth driven largely by an influx of Hispanic residents.49 At the time, home values soared from increasing demand, up 130 percent between 2000 and 2006.50 Meanwhile, the inflated house prices stood in contrast to a declining median income for families in the Inland Empire, who witnessed a drop of more than 10 percent between 2007 and 2010.51

As of 2011, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties ranked among the top 10 counties in the country based on the number of mortgages 90 or more days delinquent or in foreclosure.52 Poverty rates jumped 31 percent between 2007 and 2009 in the region – with 15 percent living in poverty in Riverside and 22 percent in San Bernardino County.53 In an effort to create jobs and spur economic recovery, local governments in the region began to invest in warehousing.54 Between 2010 and 2020, more than 150 million square feet of industrial space was built in the Inland Empire and continues to climb.55
Also clustered in the Inland Empire are several higher education institutions, including University of California, Riverside (UCR) and Cal State University, San Bernardino, and private institutions, such as the University of Redlands and Loma Linda University. However, the College Futures Foundation estimates that for every 1,000 high school freshmen in the Inland Empire, only 151 will complete a four-year bachelor’s degree.

Highly-ranked universities in the region like UCR draw their student population from the local region, with roughly 74 percent of undergraduates commuting to the campus during the fall of 2021. In spite of the large local student population, most graduates at UCR move outside of the region after graduation, with only about a quarter remaining local. Within the Inland Empire, less than 25 percent of the population has achieved a bachelor’s degree or higher.
The Majority of Jobs Available to Residents in the Inland Empire Do Not Allow for Economic Mobility Due to the Region’s Dependency on the Logistics and Manufacturing Industries

Median earnings, regardless of education level, have declined for Inland Empire workers since 2006. Since the Great Recession, job growth has come primarily from the logistics and healthcare industries, which supply lower-than-average wages. With the passage of the 2010 Affordable Care Act, more residents of the Inland Empire have access to medical insurance—and consequently, there has been a greater demand for healthcare, leading to 85,000 new jobs in the sector between 2010 and 2017.

In spite of this, employment is steadily diversifying in the Inland Empire, particularly in the tech industry. As of 2021, the Inland Empire employed 25,000 in the tech industry, a nearly 40 percent increase from 2016, with average wages hovering around $95,000. Although the number of degrees conferred by local universities in tech-related fields still surpasses the number of jobs in the region, the Inland Empire is expected to continue to add jobs to this sector. In recent years, employers like Esri, the GIS mapping software company based in Redlands, have partnered with the University of Redlands School of Business to launch educational initiatives to train future technology professionals in using and applying geographic information systems. Moreover, Riverside and San Bernardino counties have developed a Regional Workforce Development Plan designed to leverage local business and industry to identify high-skill jobs, and educate and train local residents for such positions.
For some residents, the commute out of the Inland Empire can be considered a part-time job. As of the 2020 census, more than 30 percent of residents in both San Bernardino and Riverside counties commute elsewhere for work. As a result, residents regularly have longer median commute times, often traveling to the urbanized areas of Los Angeles to the west, Orange County to the southwest, or San Diego to the south. A survey by Cal State University, San Bernardino indicated that the median cumulative commute time was 48 minutes in 2019, with more than 50 percent of residents commuting greater than an hour. Further, 2016 research indicated that more than 7 percent of Inland Empire residents commuted more than 90 minutes each day. The effects of commuting are not just psychological, correlated with elevated risks of psychosomatic disorders, but are also physiological, with research indicating those with long commutes suffer from a greater risk of headaches, and high blood pressure, among other ailments.

Each year, the American Lung Association reviews the “State of the Air” – an indication of local air quality: in 2021, San Bernardino and Riverside were among the 14 counties in the
U.S. that received a failing grade for their high levels of particulate matter (PM) and ozone (or smog). These pollutants often are byproducts from factories, power plants, and motor vehicles.\textsuperscript{70} For those constantly breathing polluted air, the risk may be deadly: long-term exposure to ozone, which is itself correlated with elevated levels of PM, results in a positive association with early mortality.\textsuperscript{71}

Pollution from commutes within the region certainly contributes to poorer air quality. However, the commutes, compounded with the effects of the logistics industry and the geography of the Inland Empire relative to other heavily trafficked regions, like Los Angeles and Long Beach, exacerbate the problem. The pollutant ozone forms during a chemical reaction with sunlight; it is particularly prevalent in Southern California, where more than 75 percent of the year is sunny. Moreover, the nearby mountain ranges surrounding the Inland Empire help create an inversion layer, a layer of warm air that traps pollution in the cold air beneath it.\textsuperscript{72} Because of the higher risks of cancer and asthma associated with this pollution, some physicians have labeled these areas around warehousing “diesel death zones.”\textsuperscript{73}

As with much of California, the Inland Empire is also particularly at risk from the threat of wildfires. In Riverside County, more than 77 percent of properties are at risk of damage from wildfires, while the figure in San Bernardino County stands at greater than 57 percent.\textsuperscript{74} The region’s climate—arid and dry—leads to vulnerability in the region: the Fairview Fire in 2022 burned nearly 30,000 acres near Hemet in Riverside County, destroying 21 structures along its path.\textsuperscript{75} Fires not only cause physical destruction, but also lead to further air pollution, releasing significant amounts of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and particulate matter.\textsuperscript{76}
Residents of the Inland Empire are, therefore, disproportionately affected by poor air quality relative to neighboring counties. Roughly 70 percent of the region is people of color, who are 61 percent more likely to live in counties with failing air quality ratings.77, 78

**SOURCE:** Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). “CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Results Tool.” October 2021.
The logistics industry now accounts for roughly 15 percent of all jobs in the Inland Empire, and the promise of added jobs within this sector is not necessarily welcome. In 2017, turnover – calculated as the number of workers starting warehouse jobs as compared to the number of workers leaving these jobs – surpassed 100 percent in California. In other words, more workers left their positions than those coming in to replace them, which some studies have pegged to the poor working conditions within warehouses. Turnover rates doubled in San Bernardino County between 2012 and 2017, concurrent with Amazon’s investments of $4.6 billion to develop more fulfillment centers across the region. Although roughly 20 percent of Inland Empire workers belong to unions, a proportion that has been steadily growing in the past decade, the workers belonging to these unions are primarily within healthcare, education, and social services. Meanwhile, non-union workers in the logistics industry continue to face low wages and poor working conditions.

Moreover, average weekly wages for residents in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties were $1,156 and $1,095, respectively, in the fourth quarter of 2021, which are far below the U.S. average of $1,418. According to 2019 research, nearly 90 percent of workers in the Inland Empire’s warehousing and logistics industries do not make a livable wage.
According to the 2020 census, households in San Bernardino County have a median income of about $66,000 and households in Riverside County about $71,000, compared with a statewide average of $79,000. Although the Inland Empire remains more affordable than other Southern California metro areas, the gap is narrowing: in the past two years, home prices have jumped nearly 44 percent, while rents have increased by 31 percent.

Notwithstanding the quality of these jobs, the promise of job permanence is also hollow. In 2019, Amazon introduced automated machines to pack customer orders in a pilot program at selected warehousing sites across the country. Through this pilot, Amazon estimated that installing two of these machines in a warehouse could eliminate 24 jobs. Moreover, by some accounts, automation could rapidly increase the number of jobs lost: a 2018 study by the University of Redlands estimates that by 2035, 63 percent of jobs available in the Inland Empire will be automatable.

LEVERAGING EDUCATION TO IMPROVE FUTURE JOB OPPORTUNITIES AMIDST WORKFORCE AUTOMATION

One of the methods of combating future job loss is improving educational attainment. Research from the University of Redlands indicates that jobs requiring only a high school diploma are 70 percent more likely to be automated within the next two decades.
Although a confluence of factors determines whether a student will attend college, researchers within the Inland Empire argue that cultural beliefs about the affordability and availability of education must change. Efforts to do so are ongoing – organizations like Growing Inland Achievement have partnered with local universities and school districts to improve educational attainment within the Inland Empire. For example, in September 2022, the Inland Empire was awarded $18 million to establish K-16 Education Collaboratives, a statewide initiative to enhance partnerships between universities, school districts, and local businesses and nonprofits to support students through every level of their education. In addition to providing clearer professional pathways for students, the program also intends to disperse funding to schools across the Inland Empire to better address gaps in educational equity. Recent research has indicated that increased school spending is correlated with higher test scores, college attendance rates, earning potential, and economic mobility.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Historically, the Inland Empire has fallen toward the center of the political spectrum. Although voter registrations in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties slightly favor the Democratic party, those who turn out to vote tend to be more evenly divided. A 2020 survey by PPIC found that Latinos, Asian Americans, and African Americans are less likely to vote than whites in California elections; specifically, just 47 percent of Latinos are likely to vote, compared with 65 percent of whites. In the Inland Empire, about 70 percent of the population is people of color: in San Bernardino County, 55.8 percent of the population is Hispanic or Latino, and in Riverside County, 51.6 percent of the population is Hispanic or Latino.

Given that fewer than 50 percent of eligible voters have turned out in the most recent general elections, decisions ranging from distribution of resources, taxes, and secession are decided by a relative minority of residents. The issue of taxes is particularly important for the region. Roughly 40 percent of the nation’s goods pass through the Inland Empire via the warehousing and logistics industry, which represent a significant portion of the local economy. However, because the point of sale of these goods primarily occurs further down the supply chain from their distribution, the cities occupied by warehousing are unable to collect on the sales tax of these goods. The consequence is a weak tax base, providing little funding for social services and schools. Moreover, the allure of a larger workforce led many local elected officials to incentivize warehouse developers with tax rebates, further exacerbating the weakness of the tax base.
In Recent Elections, Residents in the Inland Empire have had Lower Participation Rates Compared to the Rest of the State

![Graph showing voter participation in San Bernardino, Riverside, and the State from 2016 to 2022.](#)

**SOURCE:** CA Secretary of State, [Voter Participation Statistics by County](#)

In response to the millions of dollars worth of tax incentives offered to corporations like Amazon, Assemblyman Jose Medina of Riverside County drafted a bill, which took effect in January of 2020, that requires local governments to disclose tax breaks of $100,000 or greater offered to warehouse project developers, as well as the extent to which jobs created by such developments will be automated. Following the bill’s passage, Bloomberg Tax reported that roughly 10 percent of California cities use an incentive system, in which the cities give companies a share of their locally collected sales tax on e-commerce goods. A study by the California League of Cities indicated that these tax breaks top more than $1 billion each
year.\textsuperscript{105} Ontario, for example, paid more than $28 million between 2013-2019 as part of such an incentive program.\textsuperscript{106} In November 2022, Ontario residents approved a vote to increase their sales tax up to 8.75 percent in an effort to address the $1.2 billion gap identified by the city for infrastructure and city improvement.\textsuperscript{107,108}

Participation in local government affects not only residents’ finances, but also the status of their neighborhoods. Earlier this year, the San Bernardino City Council failed to impose a moratorium on new warehouse construction by one vote.\textsuperscript{109} Since 2015, the city of San Bernardino has approved 26 warehouse projects totaling 9.6 million square feet.\textsuperscript{110} The consequence has been a narrowing of the distance between warehousing projects and residential neighborhoods.

In 2022, Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gómez Reyes proposed a bill requiring a 1,000-foot buffer between new logistics construction of 100,000 square feet or greater and homes, schools, and other residential areas, in order to mitigate the effects of diesel pollution on local residents.\textsuperscript{111} In one of Reyes’ districts—the unincorporated community of Bloomington—most schools are or would be located next to a warehousing development. Such develop-
ments in Bloomington would also require the demolition of 200 homes to accommodate a 3-million-square-foot business park next to three schools.\textsuperscript{112}

One such school in Bloomington, Walter Zimmerman Elementary School, will soon have a warehouse 260 feet from its campus. The environmental report for the warehouse found that the planned development will not exceed the South Coast Air Quality Management District’s threshold for “significant pollution.”\textsuperscript{113} However, studies indicate that our current policies may inadequately assess air pollution, leaving many children susceptible to higher risks of illnesses like asthma from current pollution levels.\textsuperscript{114} Opponents of the bill proposed by Assembly Majority Leader Reyes argue a restriction on logistics construction will exacerbate supply chain issues in California. Moreover, they argue it will harm employment prospects for local residents. Proponents of the bill, however, indicate that they are not against the development of warehousing, but would rather change the means by which these warehousing projects are developed to better meet the needs of local residents.\textsuperscript{115} \textsuperscript{116}

Previous attempts to impose similar buffers between residents and warehousing facilities have had mixed results. A 2019 bill approved in Riverside County, called the \textit{Good Neighbor Policy}, required a buffer of 300 feet. However, the final draft of the bill allowed for the Board of Supervisors to determine whether they wish to impose the buffer in their own districts. Out of five County Supervisors, two have implemented it, two have not, and one has not made a conclusive decision.\textsuperscript{117} In this case, the determination of how land can and will be used – and its potential consequences on local residents – will be decided by locally elected officials within Riverside County.

Therefore, for residents living in these regions, participation in local elections can have a direct impact on their neighborhoods. However, representation of these municipalities often does not align with their demographics.
Although Racial Representation of Elected Officials in the Inland Empire is Becoming More Diverse, the Region's Workforce Does Not Match Its Representatives

**Figure 8**

Racial Representation, State Legislative and Congressional Winners in the Inland Empire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White Candidates</th>
<th>Latino Candidates</th>
<th>Asian Candidates</th>
<th>Black Candidates</th>
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<td>2018</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In recent years, however, UCR analysis has indicated that civic engagement among communities of color and youth has been on the rise. Nonetheless, voter participation among communities of color, particularly in local elections, remains low—according to the Current Population Survey (2017), only 26 percent of Latino residents in the Inland Empire participated in local elections. In Riverside County, a recent lawsuit brought by the ACLU and local organizations against the County alleges that the recent redistricting following the 2020 Census has led to further dilution of Latino votes within the region. As support, they have noted that although Riverside’s population is nearly 50 percent Latino, only one supervisor in County history has been of Latino descent. Similarly, in San Bernardino, residents have gathered to protest decisions made by their locally elected officials about adding additional warehousing space in their neighborhoods.

As of 2021, roughly 40 percent of San Bernardino County registered as Democratic, and 30 percent Republican. However, despite this political makeup, the Board of Supervisors for the County is made up of four Republican members and one Democrat.
The Inland Empire is among the fastest-growing regions in California, comprising Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Today, the Inland Empire is known for its logistics industry, which serves as an economic driver for the region supporting many local jobs; however, its dominance in the region has also shifted land use away from agriculture to warehousing and added trucks to the roads, congesting freeways and contributing to worsening pollution. Moreover, high turnover rates and automation in the logistics industry make these jobs precarious. The region faces challenges with its high growth rates, burgeoning logistics facilities, and need to incorporate new groups into its political system.
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