



# SAVE OUR CAPITOL!

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## **Super Majority of Californians Oppose \$1.4B Capitol Annex Project as Planned**

*California voters support rehabilitating legislators' current office space, saving hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars and preserving the historic Capitol Annex*

**(SACRAMENTO, CA)** – More than three-quarters (76.6%) of Californians oppose the state Legislature's plan to spend \$1.4 billion in taxpayer dollars to demolish the historic Capitol Annex and build extravagant new legislative office spaces, a visitor center, and an underground parking garage. The December 2021 poll of likely voters, commissioned by **Save Our Capitol!**, found opposition to the plan includes a strong majority of Democrats, Decline-to-state, and Republican voters alike, spanning regions throughout the state.

"The results from this survey validate our major concerns with this project: the residents of California do not support the California Legislature spending \$1.4 billion to decimate Capitol Park and demolish the historic Capitol Annex to build expanded new office spaces, a visitor center, and an underground parking garage, particularly when rehabilitation is feasible and cost-effective," said Richard Cowan, former chair of the Historic State Capitol Commission.

The historic Capitol Annex, which is a recognized state and national landmark, is a 70-year-old addition to California's Capitol building. It has housed the Legislature and the Governor's office since its completion in 1952. Since then, the Annex, designed by architect Alfred Eichler, has been largely neglected by the Legislature and now needs major upgrades. The Governor recently directed his Department of General Services to rehabilitate instead of destroy three other historic state buildings. However, the decision to demolish the Annex was made before an analysis was done to determine whether it could be feasibly rehabilitated to meet the Legislature's needs and comply with historic building codes. Such analysis is mandated by law based on its status as a nationally registered historic building and a mid-century modern architectural icon. Multiple lawsuits have since been filed by several organizations challenging the Capitol Annex Project.

"There's no question the Annex needs to be modernized and upgraded," said Susan Brandt Hawley, an attorney for "Save the Capitol, Save the Trees." "Our lawsuits seek to enforce laws ensuring that the historic Capitol Annex will not be needlessly demolished to make it safe for state officials and their staff."

Rather than rehabilitating the historic Capitol Annex for approximately \$450 million, the Legislature intends to move forward with their \$1.4 billion plan to raze the existing Annex building and erect an

elaborate new one, surrounded by soaring glass walls that concern [some security experts](#). In the process, more than 100 historic trees in Capitol Park, some rare and more than a century old, would be uprooted. More than 76% percent of voters oppose the Legislature’s plan to destroy the Capitol Park lands that have been part of California’s history since 1874.

Voters also are unhappy that the Legislature kept details of their ostentatious plan not only from the public but also from California’s Historic State Capitol Commission—the body created in 1976 to ensure the historical and architectural integrity of the Capitol—as well as the fact that the Legislature secretly moved oversight of the project from the California Department of General Services to a legislative committee, [in an undisclosed 2018 MOU](#) (Memorandum of Understanding). More than 68% of voters oppose this shocking lack of transparency around the Legislature’s Capitol Annex plan.

#### **Poll Summary:**

- **76.6%** of California voters oppose the Legislature’s \$1.4 billion plan to destroy the historic Capitol Annex to build an elaborate new office space for themselves.
- **71.2%** of California voters oppose the Legislature uprooting 100 trees, many rare and historic, to make way for their more than billion-dollar office building.
- **68.8%** oppose the Legislature’s lack of transparency surrounding the Capitol Annex Project.
- **65.5%** oppose the Project knowing that the Legislature chose to neglect maintenance of the Capitol Annex and ignored the prospect of rehabilitating the historic building for half the cost.
- **More than 61%** said they support rehabilitating the historic Capitol Annex, saving taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

“These are some of the strongest opposition numbers I’ve ever seen in response to a state-funded project,” said Justin Wallin, CEO of J. Wallin Opinion Research. “For a multitude of reasons, it’s clear that California voters do not approve of the Capitol Annex Project as currently planned even after hearing arguments in support of the Project.”

Despite the overwhelming opposition to the Legislature’s extravagantly wasteful plan to demolish the historic Capitol Annex and instead construct a costly glass office space for themselves, legislators and their staff have already vacated the Annex in preparation for its proposed destruction in 2022. A diverse coalition of environmentalists, preservationists, taxpayer organizations, small businesses, current and former lawmakers, and good government advocates is calling for the Capitol Annex Project to be halted and for transparent and collaborative discussions about the fate of the historic Capitol to proceed.

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#### **Survey Methodology**

*From Friday, December 17 to Monday, December 20, 2021, J. Wallin Opinion Research conducted a telephone survey of likely November 2022 General Election voters throughout California. 800 respondents were interviewed using live, professional interviewers, speaking Spanish and English languages, and calling both mobile and landlines. 82% of this survey was completed on mobile phones. A survey of this size yields a margin of error of +/-3.5% (95% confidence interval). Our sample is stratified, meaning that the demographic composition of our results matches the demographic composition of the region that we surveyed.*

**About Save Our Capitol!**

*The purpose of **Save Our Capitol!** is to preserve the site of the historic Capitol and its surrounding historic Park as the center and symbol of Californians' right to truth, transparency, and trust in self-governance. Follow **Save Our Capitol!** on [Twitter](#) and act to #StopTheDemolition by visiting [www.saveourcapitol.org](http://www.saveourcapitol.org).*