



# NEWS...

## From the Desk of California State Treasurer Fiona Ma



Dear Friends,

MAY 2021

People with disabilities are using their CalABLE accounts to better their lives. They can place their money in a variety of mutual funds and save up to \$100,000 without worrying that they are jeopardizing their eligibility for critical government programs, including Supplemental Security Income and Medi-Cal.

But who are the people behind the accounts? This month we get to meet some of them through the new CalABLE Ambassadors' program, and find out how the program helps them. Among the Ambassadors a college student studying video production, another working on two separate certificates, and a "sit down" comedian.

To date, more than 5,000 CalABLE accounts have been opened and nearly \$50 million in assets have been deposited. But far more people could be benefitting. One reason some are not: the federal ABL Act only allow individuals whose disability began before their 26th birthday to open an account.

This is a great injustice. As chair of the ABL committee of the National Association of State Treasurers, I am working closely with U.S. Reps. Tony Cardenas and Judy Chu from California and U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers from Washington. Together, they have introduced the ABL Age Adjustment Act to expand eligibility to anyone whose disability occurred before the age of 46.

We have high hopes this year that the legislation will pass. But we need help. CalABLE has resources available on its [website](#) if you are interested in [writing to your congressional representatives](#) to support the legislation. The bill could change the lives of up to 8 million people with disabilities by helping them rise out of poverty, plan for their future, and achieve their dreams.

In Peace and Friendship,

Fiona Ma, CPA  
California State Treasurer

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*This newsletter is not intended to be and should not be used for making investment decisions about State of California bonds or notes. Potential investors should always obtain and read the Official Statement published by the State for each issue of bonds or notes.*



[HTTPS://WWW.TREASURER.CA.GOV](https://www.treasurer.ca.gov)



# Ask Fiona

If you have a question, please email me at [askfiona@treasurer.ca.gov](mailto:askfiona@treasurer.ca.gov)

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Dear Fiona,

I'm exploring various savings and investment options for my daughter who suffers from bipolar disorder.

Are individuals diagnosed with mental health conditions eligible to open a CalABLE account?

Sincerely,

Nora

Dear Nora,

CalABLE is a great savings and investment option for individuals with a disability. It provides tax-free earnings on qualified withdrawals, no impact on federal and California state benefits, and a flexible savings program.

A condition that results in marked and severe functional limitations will qualify an individual to open an CalABLE account so long as the disability began before the age of 26.

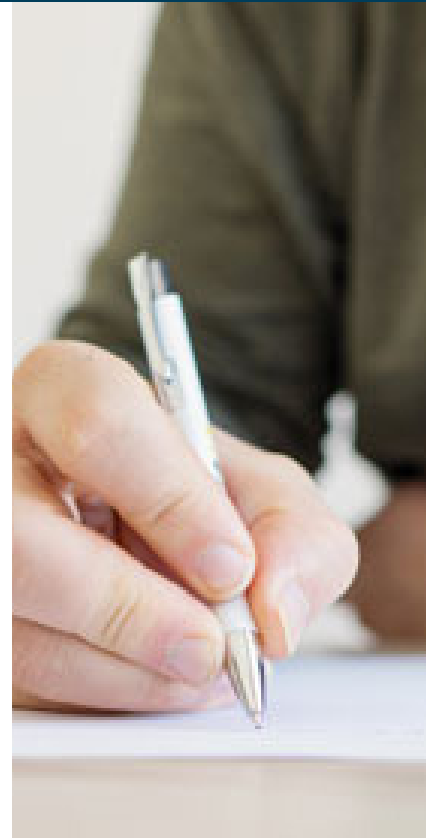
The conditions that qualify an individual for eligibility to open a CalABLE account include physical, developmental, and even mental health conditions. Examples of qualifying conditions can be found in the Social Security Administration's Blue Book (Parts A and B), as well as the SSA's List of Compassionate Allowances Conditions. It is important to note that in addition to meeting the age of onset requirement, individuals must also be entitled to receive a disability-based benefit (SSI or SSDI) or have blindness; or have a Disability Certification signed by a licensed physician indicating that their significant disability onset occurred prior to age 26.

For more information and to open an account, please visit the the following website: <https://www.calable.ca.gov/>.

Sincerely,

Fiona

FM



## Have a Question for the Treasurer?

**Send emails to:**

[AskFiona@treasurer.ca.gov](mailto:AskFiona@treasurer.ca.gov),  
with the subject line:  
Ask Fiona

**Address letters to:**

California State Treasurer  
Fiona Ma  
Post Office Box 942809  
Sacramento, CA 94209-0001

# Introducing our CalABLE Ambassadors



## Ambassadors spotlight CalABLE to help people with disabilities achieve their dreams

They come from all over the state and from all walks of life. But one thing the six CalABLE Ambassadors have in common is that all of them use and advocate for CalABLE, a savings and investment program for people with disabilities. Several Ambassadors regularly appear in CalABLE promotions to share how they use the program.

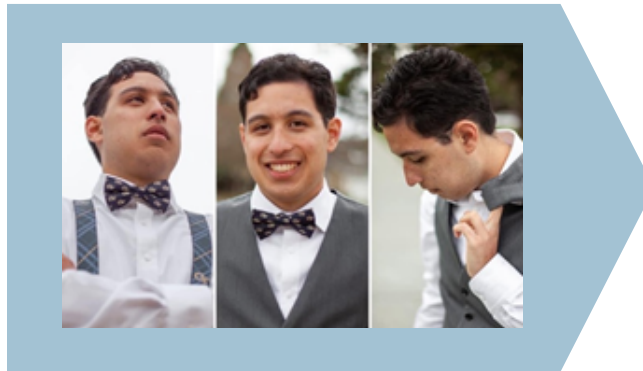
“Each Ambassador is a strong advocate for how the CalABLE program has enabled them or their loved ones to live independently,” said Treasurer Ma. “Their lives tell the story of how the program can help people with disabilities achieve their dreams.”

CalABLE gives eligible Californians and out-of-state residents the ability to save for disability-related expenses by putting money in tax-advantaged investments. At the same time, it protects their eligibility for means-tested public benefits programs. They can use money in their accounts to pay for housing, higher education, equipment, and many other things. Dante Allen, CalABLE Executive Director agrees.

*“The Ambassadors are an extension of the CalABLE team, helping to spread the word about CalABLE and sharing their personal experiences on how the program is helping each of them achieve a better life.”*



Dante Allen, Executive Director of CalABLE



**Antonio Contreras**, of Alameda County, attends Georgia Tech and is working toward acquiring two certificates—one in Academic Enrichment, Social Fluency and Career Exploration, and another in Social Growth, Leadership, and Career Development. Antonio resides in a student apartment with three other roommates, works part-time at L.A. Fitness and Decatur CoWorks and has an internship on campus at the Student Information desk. “My parents helped me open a CalABLE account so I can save money for college,” Antonio said.

Learn more about Antonio: <https://youtu.be/hfODVqkIJ9I>.



**Armand Bujanda**, of Los Angeles County, recently graduated from Arizona State University and wants to attend graduate school. In 2018-2019, he was on the Youth Advisory Council for YO! Disabled & Proud, a program of the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC). Armand supports the disabilities community by working with youth at his local Independent Living Center, helping young people transition from high school to college, apply for benefits, and become financially independent. “CalABLE has set me up to succeed in the life goals I have set out for myself,” said Armand.

Learn more about Armand: <https://youtu.be/lkWw17wCAmo>.

# Introducing our CalABLE Ambassadors

continued



**Sandra Smith** is the mother of Chad Smith, a CalABLE account holder. Sandra, a special education teacher, and Chad live in Sacramento County. A strong advocate for those with disabilities, Sandra is the former chair of the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) and Chair of Disability Rights California, a nonprofit that defends, advances, and strengthens the rights and opportunities of people with disabilities. "ABLE has given us a great opportunity to go beyond the limit of \$2,000 for folks to save if they want public assistance," Sandra said.

Learn more about Sandra and Chad: <https://youtu.be/4sAzRoXDqcs>.



Our hearts go out to **Alan Reid** and the Reid family on the passing of **Mason Reid** from a brain tumor earlier this year. Alan, of Marin County, has graciously agreed to continue serving as an Ambassador for the program. When Mason was diagnosed with a brain tumor, he had to relearn all the basic skills of talking, sitting up, eating, and standing. He was very excited and proud to attend the Pathways program and to be an artist at Cedars Life, where his work was featured in the Roller Coaster Online Art exhibit. "CalABLE fit a huge void. Up until now, there's really been nothing to help people save for what's a high likelihood - and that's disability. CalABLE gave us that bridge to migrate his money to allow him to have access to it for his disability benefits," Alan said.

Learn more about Alan and Mason: <https://youtu.be/ln8ZDAvb-Qk>.



**CalABLE**, which stands for California Achieving a Better Life Experience, manages more than \$48 million in assets for more than 7,000 account holders. The CalABLE Savings Plan opened to the public on December 18, 2018.

CalABLE is involved in a nationwide effort to allow more people to take advantage of the financial benefits it offers. Right now, to be eligible for CalABLE, a person has to have their disability occur before age 26.

Federal legislation in both the House and the Senate would expand eligibility by allowing people whose disability occurred before the age of 46 to participate. This expansion would open the program to 8 million more people throughout the nation.

# Introducing our CalABLE Ambassadors

continued



The Ambassadors' stories are captured in a video here: <https://youtu.be/0lXhLHVExEc>



**Angelina Neglia** is the mother of Tyler Schutz, a CalABLE account holder. Both live in San Diego County. Tyler attends the San Diego City College and is majoring in Radio, Television, Video, and Film Production, and doing a paid internship with a video film production company with the help of the San Diego Regional Center. CalABLE, Angelina said, opens the door to life's possibilities for Tyler, allowing him to "lead a normal life like any person without living under a cloud" and worrying about whether earning money will cause his benefits to be cut.

Learn more about Tyler: <https://youtu.be/jjG1dloY8S8>.



**Miguel Lugo**, of Los Angeles County, is a motivational speaker and "sit down" comedian because his cerebral palsy limits his standing and walking. He has performed in a variety of venues. "The CalABLE program can and will have a positive effect on everyone who has an account," Miguel said. "It has revived many of the goals I had that at one point seemed nearly impossible. Now, I can see myself purchasing a home."

Learn more about Miguel: <https://youtu.be/Olebud4vHHY>.

# Calendar of Upcoming BCA Events

*Boards, Commissions and Authorities (BCAs) Within the State Treasurer's Office*

## MAY



- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 5  | <b>CalSavers Board Meeting</b>   |
| 18 | <b>CA Alternative Energy and Advanced Transportation Financing Authority (CAEATFA) Board Meeting</b> |
| 18 | <b>CA Pollution Control Financing Authority (CPCFA) Board Meeting</b>                                |
| 19 | <b>Pool Money Investment Banking (PMIB) Board Meeting</b>  |
| 27 | <b>CA Education Financing Authority (CEFA) Board Meeting</b>   |
| 27 | <b>CA Health Facilities Financing Authority (CHFFA) Board Meeting</b>                                |
| 27 | <b>CA School Financing Authority (CSFA) Board Meeting</b>  |

*Teleconference information, other scheduled BCA meetings, agendas, deadlines for grants, and more, may be accessed as the information is posted or updated on the Treasurer's website:*

**<https://www.treasurer.ca.gov/>**

*Meeting date and times may change; please check the BCA links included above for such notices, as well as for teleconference details.*

*Note: The State Treasurer's Office provides essential services for the citizens of California. In order to protect the health of our community in response to COVID-19, the BCAs have modified standard committee meeting procedures. Participants, interested parties, and non-essential staff are requested to join meetings via teleconference. Social distancing measures also have been adopted at meeting locations, which will limit the space available for in-person attendees. Public participation and comment periods will not be impacted.*



# The Vault

A calendar of recent and upcoming bond sales

## April 7

### California School Finance Authority State Aid Intercept Notes (Fiscal Year 2020-21 School and Community College District Deferrals) 2021 Series C (Federally Taxable) and 2021 Series D (Federally Taxable) – \$195.04 million

Proceeds of the notes will be used by public school districts to provide short-term financing needs brought on by the State's deferrals in education funding for fiscal year 2020-21. The Series C notes mature on December 30, 2021 and were initially reoffered to investors at a yield of 0.22 percent. The Series D notes mature on August 30, 2021 and were initially reoffered to investors at a yield of 0.18 percent. The all-in true interest cost was 0.66 percent.

## April 8

### State of California Federally Taxable Various Purpose General Obligation (GO) Bonds and Federally Taxable Various Purpose General Obligation Refunding Bonds (April 2021) – \$633.2 million

The April 2021 Federally Taxable GO bonds were sold via two separate competitive bids. The first bid was for the \$392.2 million in federally taxable bonds to provide funding for the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Bond Act of 2004, the Safe Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century, and to pay down certain outstanding GO commercial paper notes that were issued under 16 different bond acts. The bonds attracted bids from 12 broker-dealers with Morgan Stanley & Co. LLC submitting the winning bid with a true interest cost of 1.61 percent. The second bid was for \$180.6 million in federally taxable bonds for the California Stem Cell Research, Treatments, and Cures Bond Act of 2020 and for \$60.3 million of federally taxable refunding bonds to refinance previously issued GO bonds for debt service savings. The bonds attracted bids from 11 broker-dealers with Wells Fargo Bank, NA submitting the winning bid with a true interest cost of 1.99 percent. The refinancing will save taxpayers \$17.6 million in debt service costs over the next 10 years (or \$15.9 million on a present value basis).



More information about the upcoming bond sales can be found at:

[BuyCaliforniaBonds.com](https://www.buycaliforniabonds.com)



*Note: The bond issuances described (including the amounts and timing thereof) are preliminary and subject to change or cancellation based on market conditions or other factors as determined by the State Treasurer.*

# The Vault

continued



More information about the upcoming bond sales can be found at:

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*Note: The bond issuances described (including the amounts and timing thereof) are preliminary and subject to change or cancellation based on market conditions or other factors as determined by the State Treasurer.*

## April 14

### State Public Works Board of the State of California Lease Revenue Bonds, 2021 Series B - \$350.9 million

Proceeds of the bonds will be used to finance certain projects for the State Public Works Board for the following departments: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFIRE), Department of General Services (DGS), and Judicial Council of California (JC). The bonds were initially reoffered to investors at yields ranging from 0.06 percent in 2022 to 1.89 percent in 2046. The all-in true interest cost on the bonds was 2.32 percent.

## April 20

### State of California Various Purpose GO Refunding Bonds (Forward Delivery) - \$1.07 billion

Proceeds of the bond sale will be used to refund \$1.3 billion of outstanding GO bonds for debt service savings. The bonds were sold on a forward delivery basis and are expected to settle in September 2021. Once settled, the bonds are expected to save taxpayers \$415.5 million in debt service costs over the next 20 years (or \$369.2 million on a present value basis). The bonds will refinance bonds originally issued in 2011 and 2016 which provided funding under 19 different bond acts. The bonds will mature on dates ranging from 2022 to 2041. Final yields to investors ranged from 0.26 percent for a 2022 maturity to 1.71 percent for a 2041 maturity. The all-in true interest cost was 2.072 percent.

## Week of May 3

### Department of Water Resources Central Valley Project Water System Revenue Bonds, Series BD, BE (Federally Taxable) - Amount To Be Determined

Proceeds of the upcoming sale will be used to finance and refinance certain State Water Project capital improvements and refund certain of DWR's outstanding Water System Revenue Bonds.





# Top Billing

A Monthly Update on Key Legislation for Treasurer Ma

## SECURE Act Tax Conformity

*Assembly Bill 340, Christopher Ward (D-San Diego)*

<https://a78.asmdc.org/>

This bill will conform to federal law to allow Californians with ScholarShare 529 savings accounts to utilize those funds to pay student loan debt and expenses related to qualified apprenticeship programs, in addition to the other qualified education expenses already allowed under state law.

## California Educational Facilities Authority (CEFA) Act Technical Fix

*Assembly Bill 635, Evan Low (D-Campbell)*

<https://a28.asmdc.org/>

This bill would amend the California Educational Facilities Financing Authority (CEFA) Act as it pertains to the use of its conduit bond financing authority to finance projects for nonprofit entities for the benefit of a public or private university or college.

## Office of Racial Equity

*Senate Bill 17, Richard Pan (D-Sacramento)*

<http://sd06.senate.ca.gov/>

This bill declares racism a public health crisis and establishes the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) and the Racial Equity Advisory and Accountability Council, in order to address systemic and institutional racism that has resulted in poorer health outcomes and disparities in Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

## Updated Time Deposit Collateral Requirements and Pooled Money

*Senate Bill 239, Senate Committee on Banking and Financial Institutions*

<https://sbnk.senate.ca.gov/>

This bill would codify California statute to lower the collateral requirements, from 110% of the amount deposited, to 100% of the amount deposited, the required value of a Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) letter of credit that a credit union or a savings and loan association may use as security, matching the collateral requirements banks currently have, for a deposit of state funds made by the State Treasurer. In addition, this bill authorizes the State Treasurer to invest surplus state funds in money market mutual funds that meet certain specifications and requirements.

## Constitutional Officers Gender Neutrality

*Assembly Bill 378, Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D-Orinda)*

<https://a16.asmdc.org/>

This bill will update California law to reflect reality and equality by eliminating gendered pronouns in reference to constitutional officers.



# Top Billing

continued

## International Bonds

Assembly Bill 869, Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica)

<http://asmdc.org/members/a50/>

This bill would expand the Treasurer's office's authorized investment options to include dollar-denominated sovereign debt of countries with strong credit ratings and qualifications of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

## Hepatitis Screening

Assembly Bill 789, Evan Low (D-Campbell)

<https://a28.asmdc.org/>

This bill will require health facilities and clinics that provide outpatient primary care services in California to offer voluntary screening for hepatitis B and C, and provide persons tested positive with follow-up health care and treatment.

## Diversity Film Tax Credits

Assembly Bill 986, Mike Gipson (D-Carson)

<http://asmdc.org/members/a64/>

This bill seeks to create a tax credit specific to the independent film industry to promote diversity.

## Equity in Lending and Fair Recovery Act

Senate Bill 754, Bob Hertzberg (D-Van-Nuys)

<http://www.sen.ca.gov/hertzberg>

This bill seeks to preserve and increase responsible and affordable credit access to historically underserved consumers, while simultaneously creating a fund to provide grants to qualifying historically disadvantaged small business owners.

## California Jumpstart Act

Senate Bill 777, Steven Bradford (D-Gardena)

<http://sd35.senate.ca.gov/>

This bill builds on the state's existing small business COVID recovery initiatives without placing demands on the current budget by incentivizing \$375M of flexible private capital at below market rates for immediate investment into under-resourced small businesses with 250 or fewer employees, located in communities grappling with geographic, racial, and economic disparities.

## Cannabis Tax Penalty

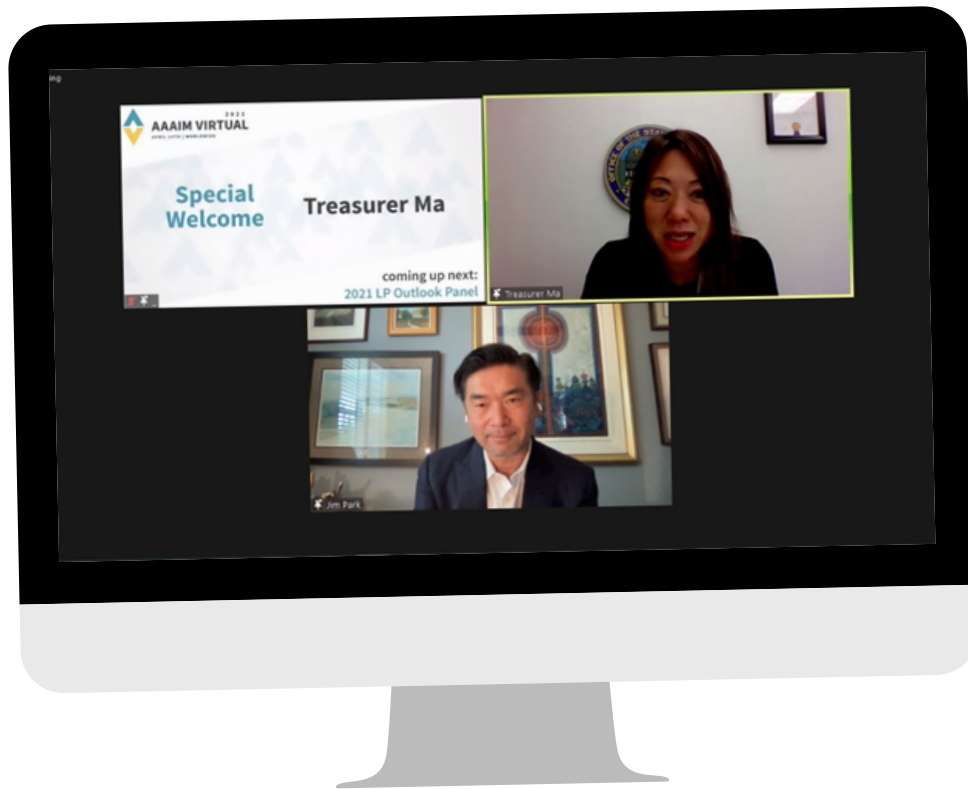
Assembly Bill 725, Christopher Ward (D-San Diego)

<https://a78.asmdc.org/>

*This bill eliminates the 50 percent penalty on late filings or payment for cannabis excise and cultivation taxes, which provides much needed relief to the cannabis industry, while maintaining the State of California's ability to ensure tax and regulatory compliance amongst legal cannabis operators.*



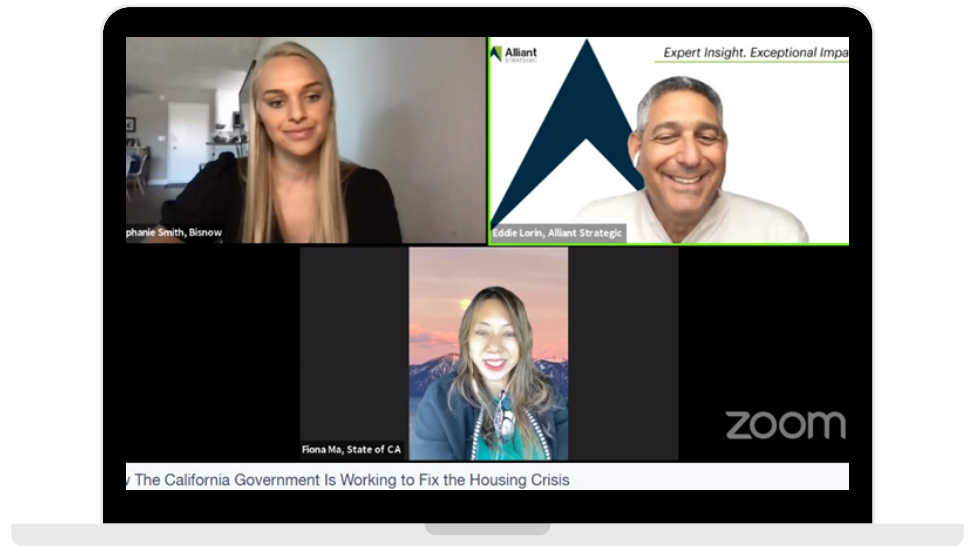
# In the Community



**April 14, 2021** – Treasurer Fiona Ma delivered a Special Welcome at the 2021 Association of Asian American Investment Managers’ virtual series, after she was introduced by Jim Park, *Chief Executive Officer*.

**April 15, 2021** – Treasurer Ma at Bisnow's California Opportunity Zones Update virtual conference for a keynote interview format with Alliant Strategic Investments' CEO Eddie Lorin. She answered questions surrounding the intersection between affordable housing and Opportunity Zone policy.

Pictured with Treasurer Ma are Eddie Lorin and Stephanie Smith, *Director, West Coast, Bisnow*.



# In the Community

continued

**April 15, 2021** – Treasurer Ma along with the California School Finance Authority, led a roundtable discussion on Affordable Housing Strategies for California Community Colleges. The Virtual Roundtable covered innovative strategies for increasing affordable student and workforce housing for California's community colleges.

Pictured with Treasurer Ma: Honorable Steve Veres, *Trustee, Los Angeles Community College District & District Director for Senator María Elena Durazo* and Nancy Chaires Espinoza, *Community College Facility Coalition*.



**April 16, 2021** – Treasurer Ma visited Paradise Community Village, a 36-unit Tax Credit project that was destroyed in the Camp Fire, but will be rebuilt this August.

Pictured with Treasurer Ma: Kevin Phillips, *Town Manager, Town of Paradise*; Katie Simmons, *Disaster Recovery Coordinator, Town of Paradise*; Kris Zappettini, *Director of Rental Housing, Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP)*; Seana O'Shaughnessy, *President/CEO, Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP)* and Jason Hodge, *Board President, Oxnard Harbor District Commission*.