

AB 2046 (Medina & Gray)

Inland Rising Fund

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Summary

AB 2046 establishes the Inland Rising Fund for the Schools of Medicine at UC Riverside and UC Merced. Both the ongoing and one-time funds will be used to increase enrollment, tackle climate change and create health equity in the Central Valley and Inland Empire.

Background

UC Merced and UC Riverside are anchor institutions in the San Joaquin Valley and Inland Empire and are on the cusp of becoming RI and AAU institutions.

California's Governor and State Legislature agreed on a historic investment for Humboldt State University to become Northern California's first polytechnic institution. They noted this funding would have "a major impact on the North Coast economy, potentially revitalizing it for years to come" through "new construction jobs, creation of a broader talent pool, and new businesses likely wanting to take advantage of being located near a polytechnic."

Problem

California is the fifth largest economy, but these economic benefits are not shared by all regions of the state. For example, 70 percent of job growth has been in coastal cities, with greater disparities for California citizens in northern and inland areas (e.g., lower wages and educational attainment). These communities were hit hard by COVID-19, confronting some of the worst health outcomes and disproportionate hardship from increased unemployment and widening income gaps. Opportunities on the coast result

in long, energy-consuming commutes for those inland. Revitalizing the California dream for everyone and for the state's future sustainable success relies on reversing these growing disparities.

A timely, transformational investment in UC Riverside and UC Merced is key to spurring economic opportunity in areas where California's population growth is concentrated, specifically the Inland Empire and San Joaquin Valley. The investment will result in the first Association of American Universities (AAU) and only the second Research I institutions in the inland valley regions, inclusively benefitting UC's most diverse student populations.

Strategically advancing the stature of these two universities will accelerate economic growth and inland regional development.

Solution

AB 2046 establishes the Inland Rising Fund, allotting \$1.46 billion one-time funds of the 2022-2023 state budget at UC Riverside and UC Merced. This investment would expand campus capacity more rapidly to respond to the critical needs of the state and local regions, specifically by addressing:

- **Educational Equity**: Both campuses are actively working with local educational partners to increase educational attainment with planned enrollment growth and pathways from local institutions to UC campuses.

- **Climate Change:** Both campuses look to expand climate change research, including UC Riverside's clean technology and air pollution research and UC Merced's research on the future of agriculture.
- **Health Care & Research:** Both campuses plan to advance medical education with intentional programs to produce health care providers who understand, reflect and stay in the local area and through research that addresses distinctive health care challenges (e.g., valley fever and respiratory diseases).

Both campuses are focused on advancing regional equity and diversity through increasing educational attainment and producing groundbreaking research by broadening areas of inquiry and approach to seek solutions that can better society

Support

- California State Treasurer Fiona Ma
- City of Riverside
- Eastern Municipal Water District
- Greater Riverside Chambers Of Commerce
- Monday Morning Group Of Western Riverside County

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