

**Bureau of Household Goods and Services (Bureau or BHGS)
Advisory Council Meeting Minutes
In-Person and Teleconference Meeting
May 8, 2025**

Department of Consumer Affairs
1747 North Market Blvd. – 1st Floor
HQ2 Hearing Room #186
Sacramento, CA 95834

Attendees:

Advisory Council Members: Pascal Benyamini, Public
Burt Grimes, Industry
Tom Keepers, Industry
Sara Oakley, Industry
Dan Rhodes, Industry
Toby Taylor, Industry
Steve Weitekamp, Industry

Bureau Staff: Claire Goldstene, Deputy Bureau Chief
Jacqueline Castro, Licensing Manager
Kelli Williams, Administration Manager
Jacob Egger, Lab Manager
Alda Aguirre, Enforcement Chief
Eileen Yap, Policy Manager
Joanne Van, Content Manager
Laveenia Peavy, Licensing Analyst
Tina Bilodeau, Special Investigator

Others: Susan Kilcrease, DCA Board and Bureau Relations
Suzanne Balkis, DCA Budgets
Ryan Harrington, DCA Budgets
Helen Geoffrey, DCA Legal Affairs

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Roll Call

Bureau Deputy Chief Claire Goldstene began the meeting at 10:00 a.m. and took roll call. All council members were in attendance.

Ms. Goldstene provided several updates on the Bureau's response to the Southern California fires earlier this year, her attendance at the California Storage and Moving Association (CSMA) annual conference, Jacob Egger and Alda Aguirre's

presentation at the International Association of Bedding and Furniture Law Officials conference, and the Bureau's recent hiring of Elizabeth Peden as the new Compliance Unit Manager.

2. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

Council Member Comment: Steve Weitekamp said that restoration companies are set up on the perimeter of the Los Angeles Palisades and Altadena Fires and suggested this was a great opportunity for BHGS outreach efforts to educate these non-compliant companies.

3. Update from Board and Bureau Relations, Department of Consumer Affairs

Susan Kilcrease from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Board and Bureau Relations provided an update from DCA.

In January, Governor Newsom's proposed 2025-26 state budget included splitting the Business Consumer Services and Housing Agency into two agencies: the California Housing and Homelessness Agency and the Business and Consumer Service Agency. The Governor's reorganization plan has been submitted to the Little Hoover Commission for review. If approved, the Business and Consumers Service Agency will be created in July 2025 and become operative on July 1, 2026.

Ms. Kilcrease also discussed Governor Newsom's executive order requiring all state agencies and departments to modify hybrid telework schedules to include four in-office days per week. She said that the California Department of Human Resources issued guidance on implementing the order and exceptions to the requirement.

Ms. Kilcrease announced that Levi Hull began as DCA's new Compliance and Equity Officer in April and is responsible for leading and coordinating department-wide quality improvement efforts to ensure consistency and regulatory compliance. The position will enhance the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies training and activity through the department's programs.

4. Fiscal Update

DCA Budget Analyst Ryan Harrington provided a fiscal update and reviewed the 2024-25 fiscal month 8 fund condition. He said that the Bureau projects \$10.9 million in revenue and \$12.9 million in expenditures for the current 2024-25 fiscal year. The fund balance is currently \$10.4 million, which equates to about 8.9 months in reserve. One of the main factors driving expenditure increases in future

years is personnel service adjustments, which includes general salary increases, employee compensation and retirement rate adjustments. He said that increased enforcement expenditures, future legislation, and unanticipated events could increase cost pressure on the Bureau's fund.

Deputy Chief Claire Goldstene added that there would be an additional transfer from the Bureau's three separate funds in the next fiscal year that is not reflected in the current numbers. She also said increased personnel costs, enforcement referrals to the Attorney General's office, and expenses such as rent will increase the Bureau's expenditures. Ms. Goldstene said the Bureau will undergo an audit and fee study as part of the Sunset Report next year and that fee increases will be evaluated to address the declining reserve funds.

Council Member Comment: Steve Weitekamp commented that he does not expect a robust year for movers in 2025 due to high interest rates for housing, which may affect Bureau revenue.

Council Member Comment: Burt Grimes said the regulatory fee numbers seemed high and asked if it mostly consisted of uncollectible citation fees. Deputy Chief Claire Goldstene answered that the numbers included enforcement citations and fines, thermal installation directory fees, and other smaller amounts. Mr. Grimes asked if a collection agency is working to obtain the uncollectible funds. Ms. Goldstene answered that the Bureau has started a program to refer uncollected citations to the collections department which Enforcement Chief Alda Aguirre would discuss during her update.

Council Member Comment: Tom Keepers asked if the estimated adjustments included permanent vacancies in the Bureau. Mr. Harrington said the Department of Finance issued Budget Letter 24-20 Vacancy Savings and Position Elimination to reduce the State workforce and that it becomes effective in 2025-26 and will be ongoing. Mr. Keepers asked if the reduction in positions would affect the Bureau's operations or if it was just a budget strategy that could change in the near future. Ms. Goldstene responded that the reduction equated to four positions that were already vacant, and she emphasized that nobody lost or is at risk of losing their job. She said the reduction of these positions allowed the Bureau a cost savings with the least amount of operational disruption.

5. Business Modernization Update

Deputy Chief Claire Goldstene started her update by announcing that Chris Sanchez was hired to work fulltime on the Bureau's transition to the Connect system. She noted that he already has an understanding of Bureau operations

from his prior position with the Bureau and brings a wealth of IT experience, which will help accelerate the Bureau's progress with the Connect project.

Ms. Goldstene said that new functionality allows licensees to update their contact information and add or remove a Doing Business As (DBA). She also noted that Connect communications have been refined to reduce confusion for licensees and calls to the Bureau. Ms. Goldstene said that the new Interstate Movers application is now up and running and that improvements to the transfer application have been incorporated into the general application to make it easier for applicants. She also said certificates of insurance can now be uploaded directly to Connect and that a number of additional Connect improvements will be coming soon, including automatic account notifications.

Ms. Goldstene added that the Bureau will begin using the new online complaint form which integrates with the Connect system. She said the next big priority is online Electronic and Appliance Repair (EAR) and Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation (HFTI) license renewals and that Chris Sanchez has been working with Licensing and DCA staff to move this forward.

Ms. Goldstene said that Household Movers Connect updates are being addressed through maintenance and operations. She said the Bureau will go through a similar process for the online EAR/HFTI applications, enforcement pieces, and thermal insulation directories and will enter into a new contract for these elements of the project.

Council Member Comment: Steve Weitekamp thanked staff for their work on Connect and said that most movers are very satisfied with the online features. He then asked for an update on removing non-active permits from the DCA license look-up feature because it can confuse consumers.

Ms. Goldstene answered that the Bureau had requested that change but, unfortunately, it was not possible to make a universal update. Instead, the Bureau is making those changes on a case-by-case basis and recommended that licensees contact the Bureau to rectify the issue. Licensing Manager Jacqueline Castro added that a change was made to the license search to improve the wording for transfer licenses so it is less confusing for consumers.

6. Review November 14, 2024, Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

There were no comments.

7. Administrative Program Update

Administration Manager Kelli Williams focused her presentation on Bureau staffing, one of the Bureau's top priorities.

Ms. Williams reported that the Chief of Licensing and Administration position is currently being advertised, and that the Bureau hopes to fill it by June 30. She announced that lead compliance analyst Chris Sanchez recently filled the full-time Connect development analyst position after the previous part-time analyst retired in December. Ms. Williams continued that Compliance Unit (CU) Manager Shelby Nordman retired on May 1, and that Elizabeth Peden was promoted from within the CU to fill the position. Ms. Williams explained that attrition is expected and that Ms. Peden is in the process of filling two vacant lead analyst positions.

Ms. Williams briefly mentioned telework, noting the Bureau recognizes its importance and that office-based staff will begin working from the office four days per week starting July 1, per Governor Newsom's executive order. She also reported recent staff engagement events at the Bureau, including an all staff meeting and potluck in January and themed potlucks in February, March, and May.

Lastly, Ms. Williams touched on contracts and procurement, extending her appreciation to Contract and Procurement Analyst Sue Robinson for meeting all purchasing deadlines and collaborating with the Lab staff to execute several complicated contracts.

8. Licensing Program Update

a. Implementation of Interstate Household Mover Application

Licensing Manager Jacqueline Castro announced that Laveenia Peavy, a Household Mover (HHM) Analyst, would present the Licensing update.

Ms. Peavy reviewed licensing statistics and reported a small decrease in the 3rd quarter service contract seller licenses, attributable to business closures; an overall increase in HFTI licensees; and a small decrease in the number of new HHM licenses, as March 31, 2025, due to outstanding application deficiencies.

Ms. Peavy reported that 45 HHM exams were administered between October and December 2024, with a 73 percent pass rate, and noted that the pass rate increased to 86 percent for January to March 2025. She also reported that 101 HHM licenses have been issued between July 2024 and March 2025.

Ms. Peavy noted a decrease in HHM quarterly revenue due to outstanding 2024 fourth quarter reports and said that the Bureau has been making multiple efforts to contact licensees to remind them to submit their reports.

Ms. Peavy announced that the new HHM Interstate application was launched in Connect in January 2025. She said the Bureau has also transitioned to an updated General Application, which was developed using the improvements to the Transfer

application, making the process easier for applicants. The Bureau also launched several online maintenance applications, which licensees can access via their Connect dashboards to update contact information, change/remove a DBA, and update insurance and/or bond certificates.

Ms. Peavy said automated insurance notifications regarding license suspensions will be implemented mid-May 2025; the Bureau is currently testing the notification process to prevent possible issues in the system. She added that automated quarterly report notifications regarding license suspensions and cancellations are projected to launch Summer of 2025.

Lastly, Ms. Peavy said the Bureau's next priority with Connect will be adding EAR/HFTI renewals and that Chris Sanchez is currently building the prototype for the online renewal process.

Council Member Comment: Steve Weitekamp asked if Transfer permits were reflected in the table on page 30 of the meeting packet. Licensing Manager Jacqueline Castro confirmed that they are included. Mr. Weitekamp also asked if statistics for Interstate only permits will be included in future meeting material. Ms. Castro answered that the Bureau will include that information going forward.

Council Member Comment: Burt Grimes asked if there was an estimated time for adding EAR/HFTI to the Connect system. Deputy Chief Claire Goldstene explained that though there is not an exact date set she was hopeful the Bureau would begin writing the language for the new contract within the next 1-2 months. She said she would let Mr. Grimes know when that is underway and that she would have a better understanding of the timetable at that point.

Council Member Comment: Tom Keepers asked if the increase in first quarter service contract statistics referred to registrations and/or renewals. Ms. Castro confirmed that the increase was regarding service contract administrator renewals.

9. Laboratory Update

Laboratory Manager Jacob Egger announced that the Lab's Thermal Insulation and Home Furnishings Laboratory Accreditation programs were combined into the same contract starting July 1, and thanked Sue Robinson and DCA for their efforts in helping consolidate the accreditation process.

Mr. Egger reported that the Bureau participated in 2025's International Association of Bedding and Furniture Labeling Officials (IABFLO) conference in San Diego, which consists of other state furniture and bedding regulators and industry members coming together to create uniformity through the industry and across the states.

Mr. Egger continued that the Bureau's Policy, Enforcement, Compliance, and Lab units have updated the Bureau's enforcement and compliance efforts for laboratory failures, which will help with industry compliance and consumer safety.

Mr. Egger said that the Home Furnishing and Thermal Insulation regulations have been completely overhauled and thanked Policy Manager Eileen Yap for her work in improving the regulations' flow and legibility.

Mr. Egger said that the Bureau is exploring options to purchase samples for testing online instead of only picking-up samples in person and that the Bureau will do compliance testing with different online retailers such as Wayfair and Amazon.

Mr. Egger continued that the deadline for changes to Thermal Insulation Directory listings is July 1, and that all directory fee and licensing fees are due June 15. Manufacturers that are out of compliance will be removed from the directory and will be unable to legally sell in California.

10. Enforcement Program Update

Enforcement Chief Alda Aguirre began with a brief overview of the Special Investigations, Compliance, and Case Management units and then discussed several referrals the Bureau made to the Attorney General's office for license revocations in February and March of this year.

Ms. Aguirre reported that special investigators have attended multiple task force meetings and that the Northern California Special Investigations Unit conducted their first task force meeting in April, led by Supervising Special Investigator Travis Cooke. She noted that the Bureau has also continued cooperating with multiple agencies and partners to share information and strategies.

Ms. Aguirre continued that the Bureau and Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) signed a memorandum of agreement that gives Bureau staff access to various FMCSA systems and assists with taking enforcement action. She said the meetings with FMCSA have helped the Bureau develop policies and procedures for issuing citations for interstate mover violations, and she noted that the Bureau issued its first federal HHM citation in November 2024 for \$37,400.

Ms. Aguirre introduced Special Investigator Tina Bilodeau to present the next portion of investigation highlights. Ms. Bilodeau announced that the Bureau had participated in several sweep and sting operations focusing on unlicensed and delinquent EAR/HFTI/HHM businesses, which resulted in over 30 citations being

issued for a total of \$13,500, as well as three cases being referred to the Ventura County District Attorney.

Ms. Bilodeau said 61 cease letters were sent to unlicensed or non-compliant businesses between October 2024 and March 2025, to notify businesses about required Bureau licenses and to provide information about how to obtain the license.

Ms. Bilodeau announced that the Bureau launched its Collections Program in October 2024 to collect unpaid citation fines from businesses. As of March 2025, 102 collection notices have been sent and seven cases were referred for further collection action.

Ms. Bilodeau reported on consumer/business assistance and announced that in the past six months, the Bureau's work resulted in \$218,352 savings to the public.

Ms. Aguirre reviewed statistics regarding complaints, investigations, and citations. She announced that the Citation and Disciplinary Actions and License Search pages of the BHGS website have been streamlined to make it easier for consumers to use and find information. Ms. Aguirre also said that the Bureau is regularly updating the citations webpage for all three programs.

Council Member Comment: Steve Weitekamp thanked Ms. Aguirre and Ms. Bilodeau for their efforts and commented that the CMSA has been helping people with the interstate license process and is ready to assist applicants if they need additional information.

Mr. Weitekamp asked about the amount of fines being assessed on the cases referred to the Attorney General. He also suggested press releases related to sweeps and stings would be valuable for other organizations like CMSA to share information about bad actors in the industry.

Mr. Weitekamp then expressed concern about Bureau staff engaging in claims mediation because he believes it falls outside the authority and scope of the Bureau and that movers shouldn't be responsible for unlimited liability. Ms. Aguirre said the Bureau is not determining claim values when mediating cases and that most of these cases involve unlicensed movers. She added that complaints are often a result of a communication breakdown between consumers and movers, and that often simply having the Bureau participate in a meeting or staff having a conversation with both sides is all it takes for resolution. Deputy Chief Claire Goldstene also said that the cases forwarded to the Attorney General's office are

the most egregious and where the Bureau is also seeking a license revocation in addition to the fines.

11. Communications and Education Update

Content Manager Joanne Van provided an update on the Bureau's publications, social media activity, website improvements, outreach events, and overall communications.

Ms. Van announced that several new videos were posted on the Bureau's website and social media accounts in recent months and provided view counts for several other videos mentioned at the previous advisory council meeting.

She discussed two FAQ publications that were created for Household Movers in both English and Spanish, as well as a publication about home restoration companies that was distributed at disaster recovery centers throughout the Los Angeles area during the wildfires earlier this year.

Ms. Van reported that the Bureau continues to post on social media at least once a week in both English and Spanish and noted the increased percentage changes in social media followers over the past four quarters.

Ms. Van discussed updates that were made to improve the license search page of the Bureau's website as well as updates to the contact form which streamlined the backend process. She added that there are now six technical bulletins posted on the Bureau's site. Ms. Van also announced that the Bureau is currently working with DCA to fully redevelop the BHGS website with updated information and easier navigation.

Ms. Van reported on a handful of outreach events that Bureau staff recently participated in, including several events not listed in the advisory council packet. She thanked the staff who attended and represented the Bureau at these events. Ms. Van added that the Bureau also has new outreach equipment and thanked Sue Robinson for her help in obtaining these materials.

Lastly, Ms. Van said the Bureau continues to prioritize transparent communication with staff, which includes distribution of the monthly Bureau newsletter as well as three personnel fact sheets to help inform staff about rights and benefits. She thanked Marie Gouthier for her help with the personnel sheets content.

Council Member Comment: Tom Keepers complimented Ms. Van on the design of the new website. Deputy Chief Claire Goldstene added that she's very excited about Ms. Van's ideas for the new website and about the website redesign overall since it is most people's first encounter with the Bureau.

12. Legislative and Policy Updates

- a. Household Movers Enforcement Regulations Update**
- b. Upholstered Furniture and Bedding Law Label Regulatory Proposal Update**
- c. Household Movers Permit Requirements Regulatory Proposal Update**
- d. Assembly Bill 366 (2025): Petrie-Norris and Ransom: Ignition Interlock Devices**

Policy Manager Eileen Yap reported that the Household Movers enforcement regulations were approved and became effective on April 1, 2025. These regulations establish the following: definitions for terms such as "household goods" and "personal effects"; the Bureau's citation system, including how citations will be issued, how to contest or comply with citations, and how fines will be assessed; the substantial relationship and rehabilitation criteria that the Bureau must use when deciding whether to deny, suspend, or revoke a license based on a crime, professional misconduct, or an act that resulted in disciplinary action; and advertising requirements, including that Household Movers must include their license numbers in all advertisements.

Ms. Yap said that the Bureau received feedback on the original Upholstered Furniture and Bedding Law Label Regulatory Proposal, made changes to it, and resubmitted it to the Bureau's DCA regulatory counsel in September 2024 for further review. The DCA regulatory counsel advised that the proposal should be split into two proposals: a "Section 100" proposal containing all technical amendments and a separate proposal for all substantive changes. The Bureau submitted the "Section 100" proposal in April 2025, which allows for a shortened rulemaking process, and it is in the final stages for approval. The Bureau will be revising the second proposal, which will update labeling requirements such as terminology, label content, and label templates, after the "Section 100" proposal is approved.

Ms. Yap reported that the Bureau has begun drafting the Household Movers Permit Requirements Regulatory Proposal and hopes to have a draft ready for review by the end of summer. These regulations will clarify the permit requirements for Household Movers.

Lastly, Ms. Yap discussed AB 366, which is a bill that would make changes to existing law regarding ignition interlock devices (IID). Existing law authorizes a court to order a person convicted of driving under the influence (DUI) to install an IID device on their vehicle. Currently, it is within a court's discretion to issue this order. AB 366 would remove the court's discretion and make the order to install an IID mandatory, including for a first DUI conviction. AB 366 would thus impose a state-mandated local program. AB 366 would also extend the law regarding IID indefinitely by removing its expiration date of January 1, 2026. Ms. Yap said AB 366 was heard in the Assembly in April, and the committee voted to pass it and refer it to Appropriations.

Council Member Comment: Steve Weitekamp asked if a booklet with the new regulations is available yet. Ms. Yap responded that the updates are available on the Bureau's website as a supplement and that she would send him the link.

Council Member Comment: Toby Taylor expressed his support for AB 366 and in making the program permanent.

13. Next Advisory Council Meeting: October 16, 2025

14. Adjournment

Deputy Chief Claire Goldstene thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 12:16 p.m.