

**SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**  
**Senator Thomas Umberg, Chair**  
**2025-2026 Regular Session**

SB 673 (Ochoa Bogh)  
Version: March 26, 2025  
Hearing Date: April 22, 2025  
Fiscal: Yes  
Urgency: No  
ME

**SUBJECT**

Courthouse construction: filing fee surcharges

**DIGEST**

This bill continues, until January 1, 2039, the authorization of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors to impose a surcharge of up to \$35 on specified filing fees in order to fund their courthouse construction fund

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 1999, the Legislature authorized San Bernardino County to impose a \$35 surcharge on all civil filings in superior court to pay for the seismic retrofitting of the county's historic courthouse. Three years later, the Legislature authorized San Bernardino County to extend the filing fee surcharge to also fund the construction of a new wing adjacent to the courthouse. The surcharge is statutorily set to sunset on January 1, 2026. The bonds that were issued to finance these projects, however, will remain outstanding until at least 2037. SB 673 extends the sunset on the surcharge to allow the bonds to continue to be repaid. This bill is sponsored by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. The Committee has received no timely opposition to this bill.

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LAW**

Existing law:

1. Authorizes, until January 1, 2026, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors to impose a surcharge of up to \$35 on specified filing fees in order to fund their courthouse construction fund. (Gov. Code § 70624 (a)-(c).)
2. Provides that the collection of the surcharge shall terminate upon repayment of the amortized costs incurred, or 30 years from the sale of the bond, whichever occurs first. (*Id.*)
3. Specifies that the surcharge shall not apply in instances in which no filing fee is charged or the filing fee is waived. (*Id.*)

This bill extends the sunset until January 1, 2039.

### COMMENTS

#### 1. Author statement

According to the author:

Senate Bill 673 extends the sunset date for a civil filing fee from January 1, 2026, to January 1, 2039. This fee, authorized by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, funds the repayment of bonds used for the seismic retrofit and construction of the county's historic courthouse.

#### 2. Supporting the preservation of San Bernardino County's historic courthouse

In 1999, the Legislature authorized San Bernardino County to impose a \$35 surcharge on all civil filings in superior court to pay for the seismic retrofitting of the county's historic courthouse. Three years later the Legislature authorized San Bernardino County to extend the filing fee surcharge to also fund the construction of a new wing adjacent to the courthouse. The surcharge is statutorily set to sunset on January 1, 2026. The bonds that were issued to finance these projects, however, will remain outstanding until at least 2037. SB 673 extends the sunset on the surcharge to allow the bonds to continue to be repaid.

According to the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, sponsors of the bill:

[T]he \$35 civil filing fee surcharge has been instrumental in funding critical improvements to the historic courthouse, ensuring its structural integrity, safety, and continued service to the community. The courthouse, built in 1926, is a cornerstone of the County's justice system, and the funds generated by this surcharge have been essential to its preservation. However, while the surcharge is currently set to sunset on January 1, 2026, the bonds issued for these improvements will remain outstanding until at least 2037. Without an extension, a funding gap could emerge, impacting the County's ability to meet its financial obligations. SB 673 provides a straightforward solution by extending the surcharge collection period to align with the bond repayment schedule, ensuring financial stability and continuity in courthouse funding without imposing new financial burdens.

**SUPPORT**

San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors (sponsor)

**OPPOSITION**

None received

**RELATED LEGISLATION**

Pending Legislation: None known.

Prior Legislation:

AB 2022 (Longville, Ch. 367, Stats. 2002) allowed the \$35 surcharge authorized by SB 35 (Baca, Ch. 150, Stats. 1999) to also be used for the construction of a new wing adjacent to the historic courthouse.

SB 35 (Baca, Ch. 150, Stats. 1999) authorized San Bernardino County to impose a \$35 surcharge on all civil filings for unlimited cases to pay for seismic retrofitting of the county's historic courthouse.

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