

**CHART K-6**  
**HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA**  
**GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND RATINGS**  
**(1980 TO PRESENT)**

The following reflects the years in which the State of California's bond ratings were changed, including a summary of the rating agency rationale for the changes:

- 1980**      **Moody's** downgraded from Aaa to Aa, and **S&P** from AAA to AA+. Actions were attributed to uncertainty over impact of Proposition 13 and the Gann spending limit on state finances in light of the national economic slowdown.
- 1983**      **S&P** downgraded to AA. Action coincided with California's first issuance of revenue anticipation notes (RANs) in January 1983, which were issued to, in part, redeem \$400 million in warrants issued in November 1982. California had been placed on CreditWatch by **S&P** in October 1982, as a result of cash shortages which led to the issuance of the warrants.
- 1985**      **S&P** upgraded to AA+ due to improved financial performance and cash position.
- 1986**      **S&P** upgraded to AAA due to "strong outlook for economic base, strong financial management, commitments to addressing pension liabilities, and a strong financial base with good prospects for maintenance of prudent reserves."
- 1989**      **Moody's** upgraded to Aaa, citing restoration of adequate fund balance in the reserve for economic uncertainty and the state's economic strength and diversity.
- 1991/92**   Ratings lowered by **all three agencies** due to state's fiscal condition and heavy reliance on external borrowing.
- 1994**      **S&P** lowered to A, citing the state's continuing deferral of substantial portions of its estimated \$3.8 billion accumulated deficit, including off-book "loans" to schools; continuing structural budgetary constraints including Proposition 98's funding guarantee for K-14 education; overly optimistic expectations of federal aid to balance the 1994-95 budget and the 1995-96 cash flow projections; and its reliance upon a blunt trigger mechanism to reduce spending if the assumptions prove to be inflated.
- Moody's** lowered to A1, citing the state's heavy reliance on the short-term note market to finance its cash imbalances, and the likelihood that this exposure will persist for at least two years. Moreover, the constraints imposed by voter initiative and the political environment are likely to cause fiscal stress to persist after the accumulated deficit is finally extinguished, given an expected backdrop of only moderate economic growth and growing

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demographic pressures. **Fitch** lowered rating to A.

**1996** **Fitch** upgraded to A+, citing the elimination of the deficit, an improved cash position, and good prospects for growth. Still there are long-term problems from the restrictions imposed by restructuring initiatives, including mandating of strict property tax limits and the share of the budget which must be devoted to education as well as uncertainties which necessarily accompany an economy in transition.

**S&P** upgraded to A+, citing broad economic improvement, the stabilization of aerospace employment, improved liquidity position, including the end of borrowing across fiscal years, and more realistic budget assumptions. S&P also cites structural budget impediments, such as mandated school funding levels, tough new mandatory sentencing laws, and a two-thirds legislative vote for budget passage, as contributors to the single A+ rating. S&P indicated that absent significant structural change in budgetary constraints, it is unlikely to further raise the state rating.

**1997** **Fitch** upgraded to AA-, citing California's improving economy and favorable outlook.

**1998** **Moody's** upgraded to Aa3. The upgrade reflects the state's continuing economic recovery, coupled with a number of actions taken in the recent legislative budget session to improve the state's credit condition, including the rebuilding of cash and budget reserves. In addition, five-year financial projections indicate long-term budget balance can be maintained even under assumptions of slowing economic growth.

**1999** **S&P** upgraded to AA-. The upgrade reflects California's strong economic performance and a return to structural fiscal balance as demonstrated by: a positive GAAP General Fund balance for fiscal year 1997-98, a continued positive budgetary basis fund balance at the end of fiscal year 1998-99 and conservative budgeting in the adoption of the 1999-00 Budget.

**2000** **Fitch** upgraded to AA. The upgrade takes into account the fundamental strengths of California, buttressed by the sustained favorable economy and financial operations. The General Fund had a substantial balance at June 30, 1999, and revenues to date this year are well above estimates, pointing to another successful year. The proposed budget for 2000-01 is based on conservative expectations and includes a good level of reserves.

**Moody's** upgraded to Aa2. The upgrade reflects the strength and diversity of an economy that continues to exceed consensus growth expectations and comfortably outpaces the nation in terms of personal income and

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employment growth. The upgrade also reflects the state's increased fiscal conservatism.

**S&P** upgraded to AA. The upgrade was due to the state's substantially improved General Fund balances; new history of conservative fiscal budgeting; and prospect that it will now budget financial reserves on an on-going basis.

**2001**      **S&P** lowered to A+, citing the mounting and uncertain cost to the state of the current electrical power crisis, as well as its likely long-term detrimental effect on California's economy.

**Moody's** lowered to Aa3, citing increased financial risks associated with the continuing energy crisis, as well as those related to trends in the broader US and California economies.

**Moody's** lowered to A1, citing an expectation that the state's General Fund and liquidity position will weaken substantially over the next eighteen months.

**2002**      **S&P** lowered to A, citing the \$34.8 billion budget gap, including a larger than anticipated 2002-03 deficit.

**Fitch** lowered to A, citing the \$34.8 billion budget gap, which includes a steep, unprecedented drop in personal income tax receipts.

**2003**      **Moody's** lowered to A2, citing the magnitude of the imbalance between the California's revenues and expenditures, and the expectation California will not be able to sufficiently address the imbalance in the upcoming fiscal year – given the inherent obstacles to reaching consensus on solutions to the problem.

**S&P** lowered to BBB, citing the lack of progress in adopting a budget. In addition, the political turmoil surrounding the recall diminishes the likelihood of structural budget reform.

**Moody's** lowered to A3, citing the large size of the structural budget gap and the view that the state will have substantial difficulties closing the gap.

**Moody's** lowered to Baa1, citing the recent action to cut the Vehicle License Fee and continuing inability to reach political consensus on solutions to the budget and financial problems.

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**Fitch** lowered to BBB, with negative watch, citing California's widening budget gap, the intention to increase the amount to be raised from deficit funding and the magnitude of measures necessary to restore balance, which may become mandated, underlie the rating downgrade.

**2004** **Moody's** upgraded to A3, with positive outlook, on May 21, 2004, citing an established trend of recovery in the state's economy and tax revenues, as well as an improved state budgetary and liquidity outlook.

**Fitch** removed negative watch on August 9, 2004.

**S&P** upgraded to A, with positive implications, on August 24, 2004, and removed the rating from CreditWatch, citing the easing of immediate liquidity pressure on the state following the sale of the \$11.3 billion Economic Recovery Bonds, the state's recent economic improvement, and an enacted fiscal 2004-05 state budget that is still reliant on substantial amounts of long-term borrowing to achieve balance.

**Fitch** upgraded to A-, on September 7, 2004, citing the state's financial improvement with the successful issuance of economic recovery bonds, improving economic indicators, and revenues matching estimates.

**2005** **Moody's** upgraded to A2, with positive outlook on July 11, 2005, citing a continuing favorable trend of recovery in the state's economy and tax revenues, better than expected financial performance in fiscal 2005, and a moderately improved outlook for 2006 and beyond.

**Fitch** upgraded to A, on July 14, 2005, citing improved economic and revenue performance, and some progress in addressing the structural budget imbalance.

**2006** **Fitch** assigned a positive rating outlook to California's "A" rating on April 13, 2006. Fitch cites the state's general economic and revenue improvement and progress reducing its structural imbalances, although the final outcome of the proposed budget could affect the rating direction.

**S&P** upgraded to A+ from A, with stable outlook, on May 17, 2006. S&P cited a \$7.5 billion surge in combined fiscals 2006-2007 revenues over January projections, leading to higher-than-expected general fund balance levels estimated for fiscal 2006 and projected for fiscal 2007, and reducing the state's structural deficit.

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**Moody's** upgraded to A1 from A2, and changed the rating outlook to stable from positive on May 22, 2006. Moody's states that the upgrade reflects the state's strong economic and tax revenue trends, better than expected financial performance in fiscal 2006, and a moderately improved financial outlook for 2007 and beyond.

**Fitch** upgraded to A+ with stable outlook on June 9, 2006, citing continuing economic recovery, strong revenue performance, and continued progress in reducing fiscal imbalances.

**2007**      **S&P** upgraded outlook from stable to positive on June 11, 2007, citing the state's achievement of a positive GAAP unreserved general fund balance in fiscal 2006, the first positive unreserved balance in a number of years; the expected rapid paydown of 2004 deficit financing bonds; and the expectation that fiscal 2007 fund balances will end ahead of budget due to strong economic performance.

**2008**      **Fitch** placed California on Rating Watch Negative on January 14, 2008. Fitch states the action reflects California's widening structural budget and cash flow imbalances as the state's economy slows largely due to the housing downturn.

**S&P** assigned a negative rating outlook to California's "A+" rating on December 10, 2008, citing declining revenues as the result of the economic slowdown

**2009**      **Moody's** placed California's A1 rating on Watchlist for possible downgrade on January 21, 2009, citing the state's significant budgetary shortfall, impending liquidity crisis, and lack of legislative solutions

**S&P** downgraded from "A+" with negative implications to "A" with stable outlook on February 2, 2009. S&P states the action reflects its view that the state's cash position is rapidly eroding, ongoing concerns about the state's costs and ability to enter the capital markets and/or obtain credit enhancements, expectation that it won't have the financial capacity to meet all of its regular operating obligations beginning in February, and the state's inability to reach an agreement on a mid-year budget revision,.

**Fitch** downgraded to "A" with stable outlook from "A+" on March 19, 2009, citing the ongoing weakness of the state's economic and revenue performance and Fitch's expectation that the state will experience continued budgetary and cash flow stress going forward.

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**Moody's** downgraded to "A2" with stable outlook from "A1" on March 20, 2009, citing the state's liquidity pressures, which persist even with a budget in place; the likelihood of further downward revenue revisions, given the continued economic decline; the reliance on one-time revenues, including the lottery bonds, which require voter approval and market access; and the fact that further solutions will be difficult for the legislature to make after already enacting significant cuts and revenue measures.

**Fitch** revises the Rating Outlook to Negative from Stable on May 29, 2009 to reflect growing concerns with the state's widening budget and cash flow deficits.

**S&P** placed its "A" rating on California's general fund-supported general obligation (GO) debt on CreditWatch with negative implications on June 15, 2009, citing its assessment of the state's projected depletion of cash by the end of July 2009 absent the adoption of a significant revision to the fiscal 2010 budget.

**Moody's** placed California's A2 rating on Watchlist for possible downgrade on June 19, 2009, citing an expected budget gap of over \$20 billion (or more than 20% of the state's General Fund budget) in the state's fiscal year 2010 budget; the announcements by the state controller that without solutions the state will not be able to meet all its financial obligations in July; the continued political stalemate that has resulted in inaction by the legislature thus far; and the limited solutions available to the state.

**Fitch** downgraded California to "A-", from "A", and placed the bonds on Rating Watch Negative on June 25, 2009. Fitch states the downgrade is based on the magnitude of the state's financial and institutional challenges and persistent economic and revenue weakening. On July 6, 2009, Fitch further downgraded the state's GO bond rating to "BBB" from "A-". The bonds remain on Rating Watch Negative. Fitch states the downgrade is based on the state's continued inability to achieve timely agreement on budgetary and cash flow solutions to its severe fiscal crisis.

**Moody's** downgraded to "Baa1" from "A2" on July 14, 2009. The ratings remain on Watchlist for possible downgrade. Moody's states the downgrade reflects the increased risk to the legally or constitutionally required payments as the state deadlock continues and the controller has begun to make certain payments that are not legally or constitutionally required to be paid on time with IOUs. Per Moody's, the downgrade incorporates the risk they believe exists at the current time, as well as the state's inability to solve the current difficulties in a timely fashion.

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**S&P** reaffirmed its “A” ratings on California's general obligation (GO) debt and removed the ratings from CreditWatch with negative implications on August 18, 2009. The outlook is negative. S&P states the rating affirmations and CreditWatch removal reflect their view of the state's credit following the state's July 28, 2009 adoption of its 2010 budget amendment, which they believe significantly reduces state expenses and provides a path to improved financial liquidity.

**Moody's** confirmed its “Baa1” rating on California's general obligation (GO) debt and removed the credit from Watchlist for possible downgrade on August 21, 2009. The outlook is stable. Moody's states the rating and outlook reflect the budget amendments that were passed in late July, 2009, which solve the current year budget gap, but do so largely with one-time solutions that will likely result in further budget gaps in upcoming years. Moody's adds the rating reflects the fact that the controller has announced he will cease making payments with IOUs in September as the budget amendments have improved the state's cashflow projections.

**Fitch** affirmed its “BBB” rating on California's long-term general obligation bond and removed the rating from Rating Watch Negative on August 26, 2009. The Rating Outlook is Stable. Fitch states the removal from Watch Negative is based on actions taken by the state to resolve its severe near-term cash flow imbalance.

**2010** **S&P** downgraded California's GO bonds to “A-” from “A” on January 13. The outlook is negative. S&P's indicates that the rating reflects its view of the state's credit quality in light of its severe fiscal imbalance and the impending recurrence of a cash deficiency if the state's revenue and spending trajectories continue. The negative outlook reflects S&P's concerns about the large structural projected budget deficits facing the state and their implications for the state's cash position.