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**AB-254 California-Ireland Trade Commission.** (2025-2026)

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AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 23, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**NO. 254**

Introduced by Assembly Member Gallagher  
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Calderon and Flora)

January 15, 2025

An act to add Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 99530) to Title 20 of the Government Code, relating to international relations.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 254, as amended, Gallagher. California-Ireland Trade Commission.

Existing law establishes the Governor as the primary state officer representing California's interest in international affairs, to the extent that representation is not in conflict with federal law or the California Constitution. Existing law establishes the Lieutenant Governor as the Chair of the Commission for Economic Development to improve trade opportunities for California, and develop international partnerships for foreign companies to do business in the state and for California.

Existing law requires the Office of Planning and Research to maintain and update a list of all state agreements made with foreign governments. Existing law additionally requires the Director of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to provide the Legislature with an updated strategy for international trade and investment, that includes, at a minimum, specified components, once every 5 years.

This bill would require the Governor to establish the California-Ireland Trade Commission within the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development as an advisory body to the Governor and the Legislature, consisting of specified appointed members, upon availability of sufficient funding resources for this purpose, as provided. The bill would establish the various purposes of the commission, which would include advancing bilateral trade and investment between California and Ireland.

This bill would require the commission to report its findings, results, and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature within one year of its initial organizational meeting and by February 1 of each succeeding year, as specified. The bill would require the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to consider the commission's recommendations when updating its strategy for international trade and investment. The bill would include related legislative findings.

## THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 99530) is added to Title 20 of the Government Code, to read:

### **CHAPTER 3. California-Ireland Trade Commission**

**99530.** The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

- (a) California is home to a vibrant and diverse population, including a substantial number of Irish Americans.
- (b) With over 2,000,000 Irish Americans, California is home to the largest Irish American population in the United States.
- (c) Many Irish immigrants came to California during the Gold Rush. By 1880, one-third of San Francisco's population was of Irish decent.
- (d) The substantial number of individuals with Irish ancestry enriches the state's cultural diversity and has helped shape the identity of various regions across the state, such as Dublin, California, named in acknowledgment of the large Irish community that settled there. This connection is also highlighted by notable figures like former California Governor and President Ronald Reagan, and other Californians of Irish heritage who have made significant contributions to the state's development and prosperity.
- (e) There are significant and enduring connections between California and Ireland, and California has historic, economic, and strategic interest in strengthening its ties with Ireland.
- (f) Recognizing the mutual economic interests of both California and Ireland, and understanding the need to adapt to the evolving global economy, there is a shared commitment to fostering stronger commercial ties between California and Ireland, and establishing a Trade Commission is an important step to encourage investment between the two regions.

**99531.** (a) Upon appropriation by the Legislature, the Governor shall, upon the availability of sufficient ~~existing resources, nonstate funds, or both,~~ *nonstate funds*, establish the California-Ireland Trade Commission within the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) as an advisory body to the Governor and the Legislature.

(b) The commission shall consist of seven members. Members of the commission appointed by the Governor, the President pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the Assembly shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority and shall be appointed as follows:

- (1) Two members of the commission shall be Senators appointed by the President pro Tempore of the Senate.
- (2) Two members of the commission shall be Members of the State Assembly appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.
- (3) Three members of the commission shall be appointed by the Governor, and one of which shall serve as the chair. These members shall include at least one representative from each of the following, neither of whom shall be members of the same political party:
  - (A) A public institution of higher education.
  - (B) A statewide trade organization.
  - (C) An Irish American community.

(c) A vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(d) In appointing members pursuant to subdivision (b), priority shall be given to those individuals who have current or past involvement in organizations that promote Irish affairs or those who have interest in the well-being of trade relations between California and Ireland.

(e) Members of the commission shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for approved expenses actually incurred in the performance of their duties, at the state standard reimbursement rate, within the limit of funds appropriated to the commission or otherwise made available to it for its purposes.

(f) The commission shall meet and hold hearings at the places it designates throughout the state.

(g) The President pro Tempore of the Senate and Speaker of the Assembly shall designate two cochairpersons from among the appointments, one each from the majority and minority party.

(h) A majority of the members of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the commission.

**99532.** (a) The purpose of the California-Ireland Trade Commission shall be to do all of the following:

- (1) Advance bilateral trade and investment between California and Ireland.
- (2) Initiate joint action on policy issues of mutual interest to California and Ireland.
- (3) Promote business and academic exchanges between California and Ireland.
- (4) Encourage mutual economic support between California and Ireland.
- (5) Encourage mutual investment in the infrastructure of California and Ireland.
- (6) Address such other issues as determined by the commission.

(b) (1) The commission shall report its findings, results, and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature within one year of its initial organizational meeting and by February 1 of each succeeding year for the activities of the preceding calendar year. The report shall be in writing and include recommendations as deemed appropriate by the commission to effectuate its purpose, as provided by this section.

(2) The requirement for submitting a report imposed under paragraph (1) is inoperative after submission of the February 1, 2030, report.

(3) A report to be submitted pursuant to subdivision (a) shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795.

(c) The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development shall consider the commission's recommendations when updating its strategy for international trade and investment pursuant to Section 13996.55.