

INTRODUCTION

The Legislative Platform is a statement of the goals and priorities of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors and establishes the basis for its advocacy efforts with the Executive and Legislative branches of the State of California.

MAJOR LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

The County of Fresno supports the following Major Legislative Issues:

- Support legislation that provides for stable water supplies for urban and agricultural uses in the County and enactment of State appropriations to expand facilities for storing, banking, conveying, distributing, conserving and reclaiming water.
- Support San Joaquin Valley regional efforts to ensure a reliable, adequate, quality water supply to sustain a high quality of life and a world class agricultural sector, and continued expansion of value-added economic development opportunities, while protecting and enhancing the environment.
- State funding for emergency protective actions, monitoring of conditions, and re-forestation actions to address the vast tree mortality resulting from years of unprecedented drought and the resulting bark beetle infestations across large regions of the County.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Agriculture

- Support policies and funding that encourage long-term economic viability of all scales and types of agricultural operations and local markets within the Fresno County food system.
- Support legislation and programs that address the needs of housing for the farmworker community.
- Support funding, programs and assistance to mitigate the effects of pests, diseases, freezes, flooding, drought, and other potential damages to our local agricultural industry.
- Support incentives to encourage counties to preserve farmland and open space including full restoration of Williamson Act subventions to ensure preservation of agricultural lands; seek to provide local control for eligibility participation; redirect all or a portion of cancellation fees to the County to help fund administration of the Williamson Act program; and explore new funding sources for the Williamson Act program.
- Support legislation or regulations that provide assistance and/or incentives to landowners following land as a result of water supply reductions or other factors beyond their control.

Child Support Services

- Support increased State funding to the Department of Child Support Services and legislative changes that will help to improve the program's efficiencies and effectiveness in serving customers.

Criminal Justice and Public Protection

- Support additional funding for more inmate education, training, programs and services to reduce recidivism, as well as funding to assess and evaluate the efficacy of such programs and services.
- Support increased funding allocations that recognize the regional responsibility of public safety agencies to provide mutual aid to surrounding communities.
- Support increased State funding for indigent defense services as mandated by constitutional, statutory, and case law.
- Support enhanced victim compensation requirements for criminal offenders.
- Support funding to implement/enhance services to at-risk youth with the goal being to prevent them from entering the juvenile justice system.
- Support strengthening State search and seizure statutes to help combat crime.
- Support funding for local law enforcement training to aid in drug and rural crime prevention, to bolster juvenile justice intervention and prevention efforts, to counteract and prevent gang violence, and to help prepare and equip law enforcement agencies to fulfill their role in preventing and responding to terrorist activity.
- Support legislation that enhances public safety and holds criminals accountable.
- Support State funding for additional judicial positions to address caseload.
- Support State funding for any mandated improvements or new construction needed at jail and juvenile facilities to provide required services/programs, including those resulting from implementation of the AB 109 Public Safety Realignment Act.
- Support the continued involvement of the State Department of Justice in local task forces to combat drug trafficking.

Economic Development and Workforce Investment

- Support State investment in local infrastructure including, but not limited to roads, pipes, facilities necessary to deliver mandated programs, and electronic infrastructure, such as bandwidth and processing/storage capacity.
- Support State/local initiatives to provide venture capital.
- Support tax and financial incentives that will encourage the growth of new and existing businesses in the County.

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- Support funding of local education, workforce training and employment-related investment that matches the requirements of growing and emerging industries.
- Support legislation that reduces the cost of doing business in the State through cost reduction measures, streamlined land use and environmental reviews, and permitting processes.
- Support legislation, policies, programs and other designations that expand community revitalization and economic development tools.

Elections

- Support legislation that eliminates the requirement that counties bear the cost of special Statewide or legislative vacancy elections.
- Support the authorization of secure and effective use of new technologies available in the field of election administration.
- Support authorization for implementation of additional, expanded, and alternative voting opportunities.
- Support legislation to assist counties in the effective implementation of State-mandated changes in the elections process and administration.
- Support legislation providing election officials additional tools to maintain voter rolls.
- Support the authorization and appropriation of funds or bonds to provide compensation to local governments to lease or purchase new voting systems, including related components for successful implementation.

Energy/Air Quality

- Support State incentives to encourage development of alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, biomass, and geothermal.
- Support the encouragement of local siting of renewable energy facilities.
- Support restoring counties' authority to assess alternative energy facilities by removing existing exemptions.
- Oppose efforts to exempt other renewable energy facilities from county property tax assessment.
- Support legislation that would increase funding to counties in order to implement new air quality standards and provide sustainable incentives for persons, businesses, and local government to use or convert to clean technologies, and funding for transit system planning and implementation efforts.
- Oppose the imposition of federal/state sanctions on local regions when their inability to attain federal/state standards is due to pollution from sources outside their regulatory authority.

Environmental Quality

- Support the sovereignty of land use plans and ordinances to protect the people and the environment of Fresno County against encroachment by agencies acting outside their boundaries.
- Support State Endangered Species Act amendments that balance social and economic benefits with species protection and ensure that policies are based on peer reviewed scientific research.
- Support legislation to amend the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to add flexibility in the issuance of Exemptions with minor mitigation and/or project features that reduce impacts to a less than significant level.
- Support legislation that allocates funding to increase waste stream recycling and waste stream diversion.
- Support legislation that supports flow-control of solid waste generated within the County.

General Government and Finance

- Support further reforms in the State-local fiscal relationship that will improve the County's ability to fund and efficiently administer both mandated and discretionary services.
- Support legislation and regulatory guidelines that facilitate and fully fund County administration of State-mandated programs.
- Support legislation that would hold counties harmless for implementation of State-only requirements that result in Federal sanctions and oppose legislation that requires counties to share in Federal sanctions.
- Oppose legislation that creates mandates without adequate State funding sources to implement them.
- Oppose legislation, proposed regulations and administrative rulings that usurp local control and authority.
- Oppose legislation that limits the County's authority to provide services in the most efficient, effective way to their residents, including the County's authority to contract out for services.
- Support reforms that will promote accountability in program performance at the State and local level.
- Support the reduction of administrative burdens for local government and those entities the County is mandated to regulate.
- Support the payment of interest by the State to counties on all delayed payments for State-mandated programs.
- Support State constitutional protection exempting counties from incurring any costs to carry out unfunded mandates.
- Support legislation that provides for the mitigation of costs associated with the termination of former State-mandated programs, including the costs incurred in litigating against efforts to require a county to continue to provide programs or services no longer mandated by the State.
- Support the continuation of State and County Assessor Partnership Agreement Program (SCAPAP) grant funding for the purpose of increasing the efficiencies and effectiveness of property tax administration.
- Oppose legislation and/or initiatives to implement a split roll property tax system.

Labor Relations and Employee Benefits

- Support reforms in employment laws to support charter counties' rights to establish their own terms and conditions of employment and employee relations, consistent with the collective bargaining process.
- Support Workers' Compensation reforms that will lower costs to employers while delivering equitable benefits to employees.
- Support legislation that would harmonize California's tax treatment of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) with federal law.

Land Use

- Support legislation that promotes local land use authority and authorizes, but does not mandate, the formation of regional alliances.
- Oppose legislation that withholds local transportation and land use planning funds pending compliance with State-mandated regional land use and transportation planning efforts.
- Oppose attempts to override County land use plans and ordinances.
- Oppose any attempt by the State to usurp the County's authority to approve solar photovoltaic projects.
- Support comprehensive housing element reform that recognizes the unique role of counties and oppose punitive funding approaches.
- Support public parks, including providing State funding for improvements to local and regional parks.

Library

- Support local publicly funded libraries, including providing funding for development of new and ongoing library programs, services and facilities.

Public Health, Mental Health and Health Care Services

- Support continued reform of health and welfare entitlement programs, provided that reforms do not shift additional cost burdens from the State to counties.
- Support annual adjustments in State payments to counties that reflect the increased costs of administering mandated health and human services programs.
- Oppose State administrative or legislative actions that reduce the amount of Medicaid disproportionate share hospital funding or Medicaid safety-net care pool funding that California hospitals receive.
- Oppose legislation that reduces or eliminates reimbursement to emergency ambulance providers or local control of emergency medical services.

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- Support increased State funding for essential public health functions, including but not limited to monitoring community health; investigating health hazards; providing community outreach, education, and linkages to critical services; regulating and enforcing food safety; implementing prevention programs such as immunizations, chronic disease, and maternal and child health; and other duly enacted laws designed to protect public health.
- Support allocation and reimbursement policies that fully fund public health, health care, mental health, and preventative health services for all County residents.
- Support funding and State assistance for public health emergency preparedness, response and recovery from natural and man-made disasters, such as extreme temperatures, flood, drought, pandemic disease, and bioterrorism.
- Support policies that 1) increase access to and consumption of fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods; and 2) are designed to encourage walking, biking and linked transit systems.
- Support policies that promote tobacco-free environments, including prevention of electronic smoking device and smokeless tobacco product use.
- Support funding for treatment programs targeting substance abuse.
- Support legislation aimed at a comprehensive approach to addressing the growing Opioid epidemic.
- Support funding for home visitation services for women, children and families, which provide crucial improvements to maternal and newborn health, school readiness/achievement, and family economic self-sufficiency.

Social Services

- Support basing social services realignment funding to counties on the need for services such as foster care and child protective services and not on local expenditures.
- Support legislation that mandates annual funding to counties for administration of social services programs at the levels determined by Section 10507 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.
- Support efforts to increase State resources available to adult services clients who are unable to live independently and the individuals that provide them with care.
- Support healthcare policy implementation efforts that do not have an adverse financial impact to the County.
- Secure equitable and consistent funding to sufficiently support caseload growth, regulatory changes, and other related administrative costs.
- Support measures that enhance the overall quality, affordability, capacity, accessibility, and safety of childcare and development programs.
- Support legislation that increases services and home-based placement resources to children who are victims of or at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and provide support to caregivers of these victims.
- Support efforts to enhance services and resources for seniors, older and dependent adults who are victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

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- Support legislation that maintains the State’s responsibility for Maintenance of Effort requirements.
- Provide equitable and sufficient funding to reduce housing insecurity and promote employment opportunities to help clients achieve self-sufficiency.
- Support measures that increase accessibility and funding for quality substance abuse and mental health services for vulnerable and at-risk children, adults, and families.
- Support State funding for general assistance programs as mandated in Welfare and Institutions Code 17000.
- Support efforts to align state CalWORKs requirements with the provisions of the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program and protect the County from fiscal sanctions for non-compliance stemming from the discrepancies between Federal and State requirements.
- Support efforts that maintain local control over the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act and support State efforts to promote/incentivize regional planning, service delivery, and administrative efficiencies.
- Support legislation that increases and protects the safety of children at-risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Support efforts that improve access to services and assist families in successfully becoming self-sufficient.
- Oppose State efforts to shift additional In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) costs to counties.
- Support the re-evaluation of the IHSS Maintenance of Effort (MOE) in the context of 1991 realignment due to the IHSS MOE unsustainable program growth and the potential fiscal impact to other realigned programs.
- Support efforts that would extend the same provisions for the care of foster youth by relative caregivers in other states.
- Support efforts to maintain the safety of social workers in performing their daily duties.
- Support efforts to increase funding and improve access to services and resources for veterans.
- Support policies and funding that support local county plans to address and meet the needs of individuals and families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Transportation

- Support legislation that provides increased, stable, and equitable State funding for roads, highways, bridges and public transit.
- Support legislation that promotes the timely development of local transportation projects at county’s discretion.
- Support continued State funding and assistance formulas for grade separation projects, maintaining existing funding levels that ensure historical shares of current funding sources to counties for road maintenance, and funding for State Traffic Congestion Relief projects.
- Oppose legislation that shifts taxation from fuel sales taxes, which are constitutionally guaranteed for local transportation, to excise taxes, which are not similarly protected.

Water

- Support legislation to provide funding for building, repairing, upgrading and maintaining levee and flood control systems in Fresno County.
- Support legislation that would fund and expedite the construction of surface water storage (e.g., dams, groundwater recharge facilities).
- Support legislation to fund, or provide low or no-interest loans, to upgrade water or wastewater infrastructure serving Fresno County residents including small, economically disadvantaged rural communities.
- Support legislation that achieves the following:
 - I. Funding of Integrated Regional Water Management efforts;
 - II. Expediting regulatory approval, permitting, and development of groundwater banking programs and other programs and/or projects that support sustainable water resource management;
 - III. Funding the implementation and administration of SB 1168, SB 1319, and AB 1739 (Sustainable Groundwater Management Act 2014); and
 - IV. Protection of groundwater and surface water rights for our region.