



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 Congress and Federal agencies.

MAJOR LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

The County of Fresno supports the following Major Legislative Issues:

- No claw-back provision for Federal funding, legislative, and regulatory assistance for County governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to continuance of spending flexibilities for Federal COVID-19 funding.
- Long-term reauthorization and full funding for the Payment-In-Lieu-Taxes (PILT) program by which local governments are reimbursed for the cost of providing services to property tax-exempt Federal lands and installations.
- Stable water supplies for urban and agricultural users in the County and Federal funding to expand facilities for storing, banking, conveying, distributing, conserving, and reclaiming water.
- Federal funding for emergency protective actions, monitoring of conditions, prescribed fire projects, reforestation actions and other active forest management strategies including thinning and grazing, where prescribed, 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 funding, policies, and regulations to mitigate effects of invasive pest diseases, freezes, flooding, drought, and other potential damages to the local agricultural industry.
- 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 the implementation of comprehensive and permanent immigration reform, including the enhancement of H-2A and H-2C programs to promote year-round employment opportunities to fulfill the needs of Fresno County agriculture.
- Support policies that increase the export of agricultural commodities and development of trade policies with foreign governments that expedite new market access for commodities grown in Fresno County.
- Support policies and funding for Nutria Control programs.
- Ensure Congressional delegation is aware of the County's priorities for the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization.



Community and Workforce Investment

- Support full funding for the Community Development Block Grant, public and assisted housing, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs.
- Support continued Federal investment in local infrastructure and workforce training programs that target economic development and workforce training in communities experiencing higher levels of poverty and chronically high unemployment and matches the requirements of growing and emerging industries.
- Support Federal investment programs that target public park and open space development and maintenance throughout Fresno County.

Criminal Justice and Public Protection

- Support increased Federal expenditures to assist local law enforcement agencies with crime prevention and prosecution, technology improvements, forensics science, and training.
- Support Federal funding to combat drug production and trafficking on public lands.
- Support increased Federal funding to address violence against at-risk groups, including funding to implement/enhance services to at-risk youth with the goal being to prevent them from entering the juvenile justice system, including reentry support for community reintegration.
- Support full Federal reimbursement for county costs to incarcerate, prosecute, defend, and supervise criminal aliens.
- Support increased Federal expenditures to help prepare and equip local law enforcement agencies in fulfilling their role in preventing and responding to terrorist attacks.
- Support improved Federal emergency preparedness and response, including more efficient distribution of homeland security grant funds and disaster response and mitigation.
- Support Federal funding for additional judgeships for the Eastern District, Fresno Division.
- Oppose the decriminalization of marijuana crimes.
- Urge Federal cooperation, in particular training, with local law enforcement concerning the investigation and prosecution of cybercrimes.
- Support legislation and regulations which allow law enforcement to work seamlessly between Federal and state agencies, including addressing policies that hamper the ability to combat drug and human trafficking.
- Support continued Federal funding for the Violence Against Women Act to assist local law enforcement with targeted domestic violence investigations and prosecutions.
- Support increased Federal funding for Project Safe Neighborhood to enhance Federal, state, and local law enforcement collaboration on cross-jurisdictional matters involving street gang activity, illegally possessed firearms, and human trafficking.
- Support victims of crime by maintaining sufficient fiscal appropriations that fund Victim Witness Assistance programs, and ensure any proposed legislative changes protect and uphold victims' rights.
- Support Federal funding to combat technology facilitated child sexual exploitation and internet crimes against children.



COUNTY OF FRESNO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2024



- Support Federal funding for agencies with crime laboratories to process DNA samples and prevent backlogs.
- Support increased Federal funding to enhance Federal, state, and local law enforcement collaboration on cross-jurisdictional matters to tackle the illegal transportation, distribution, and possession of fentanyl-laced counterfeit drugs/pills.
- Support keeping youth (ages 18 to 25) appropriately placed out of adult criminal justice facilities for each new offense after attaining the age of criminal responsibility while keeping adults (ages 25 and over) appropriately placed out of juvenile criminal justice facilities, all under the jurisdiction/discretion of the Juvenile Court.

Economic Development

- Support legislation, regulations, and programs, including Opportunity Zones and other designations, that expand community revitalization and economic development tools.

Elections

- Support the authorization and appropriation of funds to ensure the compensation of local governments for upgrading voting equipment, election security and for mandated election requirements.
- Support legislative efforts to strengthen locally-driven election and redistricting processes and oppose legislative efforts that usurp local control in these processes.

Energy/Air Quality

- Support further Federal investment to promote “green” public infrastructure, as well as full funding of the Diesel Emissions Reductions Act (DERA) to assist counties in retrofitting diesel engines in their fleets to help address Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions and particulate matter (PM) non-attainment.
- Support regulatory streamlining and exemptions to speed the development of renewable energy generation and transmission facilities that will help to increase U.S. energy independence and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Oppose the imposition of Federal sanctions on local regions when their inability to attain Federal standards is due to pollution from sources outside their regulatory authority.
- Support local oil and gas industry.

Environmental Quality/Natural Resources

- Support the streamlining of environmental regulations that promote the County’s ability to manage programs efficiently and cost-effectively in carrying out Federal mandates for environmental protection and waste disposal.
- Support amending the Endangered Species Act to balance social and economic benefits with species protection and ensure that policies are based on peer reviewed scientific research.
- Support increasing the acreage limit for National Environmental Policy Act Categorical Exclusion on tree mortality projects.



COUNTY OF FRESNO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2024



- Support simplifying the National Resource Conservation Service – Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for homeowners to harvest dead trees.

Federal Lands and Installations

- Support policies that balance Federal lands preservation with public access, use, and enjoyment of Federal lands.
- Support the long-term reauthorization and continuation of Secure Rural Schools funds to states and counties with National Forests.
- Support the continued location and operation of the Lemoore Naval Air Station and the California Air National Guard 144th Air Wing (at the Fresno Air National Guard Base - located at the Fresno Air Terminal) and seek to ensure the long-term viability of these valuable assets.

General Government and Finance

- Support legislation that maximizes Federal revenues and provides counties with greater decision-making authority over the use of Federal funds.
- Oppose Federal policies and mandates that have adverse impacts on the County's revenues, costs, or decision-making authority.
- Support efforts to restore the deduction for State and Local Income Taxes (SALT).
- Support maintaining the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds that provide critical funding for public facilities, infrastructure, and development.
- Support a Federal balanced budget amendment.
- Oppose unfunded Federal mandate and legislation, proposed regulations, and administrative rulings that usurp local control and authority.
- Support funding and Federal assistance to improve technology infrastructure resilience and assist in prevention, response, and mitigation of cyber-attacks against public entities.
- Support funding and Federal assistance for capital upgrades to County facilities to improve access to the public and increase efficiency in operations including green initiatives.

Human Resources

- Support policies that address actual cost-drivers in the health care system by promoting legitimate value-based pricing throughout the healthcare system.
- Support the preservation of the employer and employee tax status of employee health insurance.

Library

- Support local publicly funded libraries, including providing funding for development of new and ongoing library programs, services, and facilities.
- Support the universal service Schools and Libraries E-Rate Program which helps County libraries obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.



Public Health, Behavioral Health, and Health Care Services

- Support increased Federal funding for essential public health functions, including but not limited to monitoring community health; investigating health hazards; providing community outreach, education, expansion of communicable disease investigation and prevention capacity and linkages to critical services; regulating and enforcing food safety; implementing prevention programs such as immunizations, chronic disease, maternal, child and adolescent health; and other duly enacted laws designed to protect public health.
- Support increased allocation and Federal reimbursement policies to service providers including hospitals in counties that have disproportionately high levels of poverty that account for a greater need for public services.
- Support funding to increase hospital capacity and incentives for new hospital construction in disadvantaged/rural areas.
- Support allocation and reimbursement policies that fully fund public health, physical health care, mental health care, substance use disorder care, and preventative health services for all County residents.
- Support legislation and administrative actions that would amend the Federal Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy and allow pre-trial detainees to have continued access to Federal health benefits such as Medicaid, Medicare, California Healthcare for Indigents Program (CHIP) and Veterans Administration (VA) health benefits.
- Support funding and Federal assistance for public health emergency preparedness, response and recovery from natural and man-made disasters such as extreme temperatures, earthquakes, flood, drought, pandemic disease, and bioterrorism.
- Support continued funding of the Federal Prevention and Public Health Fund that currently supports Fresno County Public Health programs.
- Support policies that 1) increase access to and consumption of fruits and 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 the prevention of electronic smoking device, smokeless tobacco product use, and the reduction of illegal tobacco sales to persons under the age of 21.
- Oppose proposals that reduce or eliminate reimbursement to emergency ambulance providers or local control of emergency medical services.
- Support legislation aimed at a comprehensive approach to addressing the growing Opioid epidemic, as well as increased funding for these programs, including harm reduction services, programs, and activities.
- Oppose mandates or orders that usurp local and state authority requiring health or vaccination status as a condition of employment or access to services.
- Support legislation and Federal funding aimed at creating programs offering a comprehensive approach to the growing fentanyl crises and the opioid epidemic more broadly.



Social Services

- Support efforts to increase Federal resources available to adult services clients who are unable to live independently and the individuals that provide them with care.
- Support full appropriations for the Elder Justice Act to support state and county adult protective services programs.
- Oppose actions which would reduce funding used to provide in-home supportive services for elderly and disabled persons, or to coordinate services to children with disabilities.
- 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 administrative flexibilities to enable agencies to continue to serve individuals and families eligible for pandemic-related services and temporarily waive penalties for failure to meet Federal guidelines for Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for a period of time after the expiration of the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- Oppose efforts to reduce or limit Federal funding for Medicaid administration or benefits, or the state's ability to leverage funds.
- Oppose Federal efforts to limit access to benefits for individuals that do not meet specific funding requirements.
- Support measures that enhance the overall quality, affordability, capacity, accessibility, and safety of childcare and development programs.
- Support by regulation or legislation a provision to exempt Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs) from the Institution for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion which prohibits Medicaid reimbursement in facilities of more than 16 beds.
- Support legislation that increases services, home-based placement resources, and permanency to children who are victims of or at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and provide support to caregivers of these victims.
- Support increased Federal funding to recruit, retain, and support foster families.
- Support increased Federal funding for services and resources needed by parents seeking to reunify with their children in foster care.
- Support child welfare funding reform efforts that increase eligibility of Federal funds under programs that include but are not limited to Title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance.
- Support efforts to reform child welfare financing, including providing Title IV-E Federal foster care match funding for prevention activities.
- Support Federal efforts to align with state child welfare reform initiatives and goals to better meet the needs of children and families.
- Support alternative methods to meeting Federal mandated monthly contacts with youth in extended foster care when attending college or living in another state or out of the country.



- Provide equitable and sufficient funding to reduce housing insecurity and promote employment opportunities to help clients achieve self-sufficiency.
- Support Federal efforts to align with state CalWORKs goals to better meet the needs of individual families.
- Support efforts to provide states and localities administering the CalWORKs Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program partial work participation credit for participants.
- 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.
- Support funding to address housing and human service needs which expand economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals.
- 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.
- Support increases in Federal funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) to provide essential infrastructure and housing funds for low- and moderate-income rural communities and residents.

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Support legislation to increase, streamline, and improve the flexibility of Federal funding to improve, repair, and maintain County roads, bridges, highways, inter-regional movement of goods (rail) and public transit and that promotes the timely development of local transportation projects at counties' discretion.
- Support continued Federal funding for programs like the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program, which assist the County in emission reduction.
- Support an increase in Federal funding for critical rural infrastructure such as water, wastewater, roads and bridges, and broadband deployment for rural communities, and urge Congress and the Administration to oppose further cuts to these important programs.
- Support reforming and streamlining the interpretation of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise contracting rules across Federal agencies for consistency and to reduce the burden on local agencies.
- Support legislation that funds local government's obligation for maintenance of federally funded infrastructure improvement projects.
- Oppose Federal regulations that impact the safe and efficient operation of the US rail network and/or impede implementation of the 1980 Staggers Act.
- Oppose Federal regulations or administrative actions that would delay or prohibit Highway 99 expansion, interchange improvements, and other crucial freight infrastructure.



Water

- Support legislation, regulations, and policy that provide for the development of local and regional water resource management activities within the County to increase water supply availability and address local and regional water quality issues.
- Support legislation that would fund and expedite the construction of surface water storage projects (e.g., dams, groundwater recharge facilities).
- Support legislation to provide funding for building, repairing, upgrading, and maintaining water conveyance facilities and levee and flood control systems in the County.
- Support legislation to provide funding for development, enhancement, and maintenance of community potable water systems.
- Support legislation, policies and regulations that allow flexibility and support implementation of local water/wastewater programs.
- Support legislation, regulations, and policy that allows flexibility to reduce/divert water flows into alternate water systems as needed in support of reducing flooding impacts because of atmospheric river conditions.
- Support the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's reinitiation of consultation on long-term coordinated operations of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and support efforts to update existing Biological Opinions in response to low population abundances of listed species and new scientific information developed because of ongoing collaborative scientific efforts.