



County of San Bernardino

**2018**

**Federal Legislative Platform**





The largest of the over 3,000 counties in the U.S. by geographic area and the 12th largest by population, San Bernardino County enjoyed a robust economy prior to the collapse of the housing and financial markets. With the decline of traditional revenue streams such as property and sales tax, the County was forced to make difficult budget decisions. Even as the economy and the State's fiscal condition have slowly started to improve, major fiscal challenges to the County remain.

In order for the County to continue to provide quality services, assistance from the federal government and continued partnership with the delegation is imperative. In this platform, you will find San Bernardino County's federal legislative priorities for 2018.

Based on principles of fiscal stability, preservation of local control, efficient service delivery and operations, and the promotion of inter-agency cooperation, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors provides specific direction and overall policy guidance by adopting a legislative platform annually.

The Platform is arranged by Legislative Priorities and Legislative Positions, and Policy Statements. The Legislative Priorities section describes the County's legislative goals and outlines the legislative agenda for the current year and the Legislative Positions and Policy Statements provide general policy direction when developing a position on pending legislation.

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The Legislative Priorities section describes the County's legislative goals and outlines the legislative agenda for the current year, which includes appropriate management of federal lands, improving the local economy, increasing recreational opportunities, the preservation of the safety net, recovering from the December 2nd Tragedy, reducing and preventing homelessness, and strengthening the region through investments in infrastructure.

#### Appropriate Management of Federal Lands

San Bernardino County is the largest county by geographical size in the contiguous United States, with more than 80 percent of its land area owned and managed by the federal government. Our diverse public lands support a range of environmental, economic and quality of life benefits. The County is committed to balancing conservation with continuing public access for sustainable multiple uses, including recreational (hiking, camping, OHV travel, rockhounding) and economic uses (grazing, mining, filming, and more recently, renewable energy developments). In 2016, additional restrictions on public access and economic activity on federal lands have come in the form of designation of three new national monuments and adoption of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan Phase 1. The current administration has reopened the DRECP, potentially to open more land to utility-oriented renewable energy development. A number of large scale solar projects have covered thousands of acres of public land, resigning that land to a single restricted use and requiring mitigation that takes many more thousands of acres of private land off the tax rolls. The establishment of renewable energy projects also requires additional public service resources, including fire protection, law enforcement and road maintenance, with little, if any, additional revenue or adjustments to Payment in Lieu of Taxes payments.

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, other counties, associations and regional stakeholders to support legislation or budget actions that: 1) require robust and meaningful consultation and coordination with counties, local jurisdictions and tribal governments during any proposal for a change of designation, or during any planning process that would develop or revise management of public lands; 2) require a portion of lease, royalty or other revenues generated by renewable energy projects on federal land to be directed to the local jurisdiction where projects are sited; 3) require species and habitat mitigation to be conducted largely on public land, including the retirement of grazing allotments; 4) protect areas with identified mineral resources from withdrawal; and/or 5) accommodate or mitigate for any loss of existing or permitted human activities on public land, including recreational and economic activities.

#### IMPROVE THE LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH REGULATORY REFORM

Government regulations can provide protection for the environment, public health, and worker safety and fairness. All too often, however, compliance is burdensome, redundant, costly, and time consuming and yield limited benefit, in terms of economic growth and government operations. For example, the routine maintenance of public infrastructure, including roads and flood control projects, may require extensive environmental review and mitigation, resulting in delays in completion of work essential to the protection of life and property. Often times, these projects have existed for decades. Since 1995, there have been nearly 6,600 significant rules published in the Federal Register. Of those, approximately 1,900 have been identified as having a significant effect on businesses. Regulations also affect governmental operations. The County recognizes the opportunity to improve the economy through smart regulations to ensure workplace safety and protect public health, but with a \$2 trillion price tag for compliance with an increasing number of complex rules, the regulatory system needs to be modernized.

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, other counties, associations and regional stakeholders to support legislation or budget actions that will: 1) provide environmental regulatory and permitting reforms that improve California's business climate and competitiveness; 2) enact effective regulatory streamlining; 3) require deadlines for making regulatory decisions; 4) require economic impact studies to be conducted on any new rules or regulations; and 5) attract private capital to stimulate the local economy.

## INCREASE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS TO PRADO REGIONAL PARK

The County of San Bernardino operates the 2,280 acre Prado Regional Park in Chino on a leasehold obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), all of which lies within the Corps' Santa Ana River Main Stem/Prado Dam project area. The County is in the process of developing a master plan to improve Prado Regional Park with amenities and activities that focus on improving the outdoor and recreational experiences of park patrons. The County was the recipient of Proposition 70 park grant funds approved by California voters in 1988. Subsequent state legislation authorized the County to sell agricultural preservation land acquired with the original grant funds and use the sale proceeds to acquire replacement property. Pursuant to California law, the County may acquire park and/or open space land in fee or perpetual easements with the Proposition 70 land sale proceeds. The County would like to replace the leasehold at Prado with easements funded with Proposition 70 funding, which will then allow the County to increase recreational amenities and fund improvements that are consistent with the Corps' mission of developing multi-use flood control projects.

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, other counties, associations and regional stakeholders to support legislation, budget actions or policies that increase access and would permit the County to use Proposition 70 funds to improve Prado Regional Park.

## PRESERVATION OF THE SAFETY-NET

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law on March 23, 2010 to reform aspects of health care in America including affordability, quality, and availability of health insurance. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) aimed to greatly increase access to affordable health insurance, in part, by expanding Medicaid, providing tax credits to individuals who needed help paying for insurance, and opening up State-based online health insurance exchanges where individuals could buy insurance and receive cost-assistance. According to data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the uninsured rate in California has fallen by 54 percent since the ACA was enacted in 2010, translating into over 3 million Californians gaining coverage. In San Bernardino County the ACA has reduced the uninsured rate from 18 to 8 percent. Now facing a repeal of the ACA, an estimated 211,000 individuals in San Bernardino County could lose coverage currently provided through Medi-Cal or Covered California. The County's public hospital, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center, could lose up to \$120 million annual revenue per year. Furthermore, the Inland Empire Health Plan estimates a full repeal of coverage for Medi-Cal enrollees would threaten more than \$1 billion in annual funding to the local community in San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to support legislation or budget actions that preserve the safety net through a replacement framework that 1) does not disadvantage enrollees' access to primary and preventative care; 2) provides adequate funding for patient care and program administration; 3) allows for flexibility and coordination of health care at the local level; 4) maintains the mental health and substance use disorder essential health benefit; and 5) allows for the continuance and expansion of innovative care delivery models.

## RECOVERY FROM THE DECEMBER 2ND TRAGEDY

On Wednesday, December 2, 2015, our lives changed forever. Fourteen people were taken from us on that tragic day. Many other county employees were wounded, physically and emotionally. Similar to 2016, this year will be a year dedicated to those that were taken from us, to those who continue to recover from their wounds, and to all of our County employees who help make our organization better every day. As we move forward in recovering we remain committed to addressing the lingering unforeseen impacts of this terrorist act.

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, other counties, associations and regional stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions or proposals that assist with full recovery.

## REDUCE AND PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a persistent national problem that impacts cities and communities throughout San Bernardino County. According to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count Homeless Survey, the number of homeless, 1,866, represents a slight decrease over the 2016 homeless count. This improvement is a result of investments in positive programs such as permanent supportive housing, homeless outreach, and aggressive use of the “housing first” and “rapid re-housing” protocols. Despite a decline in the homeless population in San Bernardino County, additional assistance at the federal level is needed.

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, other counties, associations and regional stakeholders to advocate for legislation or budget actions that will: 1) support initiatives to reduce and prevent homelessness; 2) expand the availability of permanent and supportive housing that provides coordinated services; and 3) allow counties to maximize and leverage Federal, State and local funds and programs to provide services for homeless individuals and families and those at risk of becoming homeless.

## STRENGTHEN THE REGION THROUGH STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

The administration released an outline proposal for a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure plan, which includes \$100 billion for incentive grants that provide funding for surface transportation, airports, passenger rail, maritime and inland waterway ports, flood control, hydropower, water supply, water resources, drinking water facilities, storm water facilities, Brownfield and Superfund sites. A well-performing and maintained infrastructure network is vital to economic development, allowing businesses to expand, jobs to be created and commerce to be transported efficiently.

The County will work with the congressional delegation, other counties, associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to support legislation and budget actions that: 1) expedite infrastructure projects and provide flexibility in the administration of infrastructure programs and funding; 2) protect existing funds dedicated to local transportation/transit improvements; 3) promote and expand alternative financing programs; 4) improve mobility options for the public; 5) mitigate the impacts of freight and congestion on the County’s residents; and 6) improve the County’s ability to maintain its infrastructure.

The Legislative Positions and Policy Statements provide general policy direction when developing a position on pending legislation and is broken into areas of cultural, educational and recreational services, environmental protection and health, flood control and water resources, governance, finance and operations, health and human services, and public safety and first responders.

### **CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES**

*Promote opportunities and access to cultural, educational and recreational services within the County that add to the quality of life of residents and visitors.*

Support legislation, proposals and budget actions that: 1) provide residents and tourist with access to County facilities that promote knowledge, education, lifelong learning, recreation/leisure and cultural enrichments; 2) preserve and protect the conservation of the County's natural and historical land resources, including sustainable multi-use on public lands; and 3) provide funding for services that enhance the quality of life for County residents.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND HEALTH**

*Promote environmental sustainability that strikes a balance with the local economy.*

Support legislation, budget actions or programs and enhance environmental quality that balance the interest of the local economy.

Oppose legislation, budget action and proposals that reduces environmental quality funding to the region.

### **FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER RESOURCES**

*Protect life, property and public health through responsible management of natural resources.*

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) promote sound management of natural resources; 2) assist local jurisdictions by removing unnecessary barriers and costs associated with environmental regulations; 3) fund the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of watershed management or flood control projects; and/or 4) maintain or improve upon the supply of adequate potable water.

### **GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

*Improve the delivery of county services, reduce mandates on local government, and promote effective management of county programs by allowing local control.*

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) provide flexibility to administer federal, state or local programs; 2) allow decision-making authority over the use of federal funds, including directing grants or mandatory pass-through allocations; 3) allow the utilization of technology and innovation to streamline County services; 4) eliminate unnecessary, redundant, or overlapping requirements or regulations for program eligibility, funding maintenance of efforts, monitoring, permitting or reporting; 5) constitutionally protect all local revenues; and 6) adequately fund programs the County operates on behalf of the federal government.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that will adversely impact County operations by: 1) preempting the County's authority; 2) eroding local control; 3) limiting the ability to operate in a reasonable and cost-effective manner; 4) transferring programs from the federal government to counties unless program control and flexibility are also shifted and adequate funding is guaranteed; 5) exposing the County to unreasonable litigation; 6) increasing County responsibilities or expenses without a viable, adequate and dedicated source of revenue; and/or 7) reducing the County's share of total funding through formula allocations or reductions.

**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

*Enhance safety-net services and invest in programs that strengthen the community and improve the lives of residents.*

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) fully fund the cost of Federal mandated health and human service programs; 2) create, provide and protect funding formulas for services that ensure an equitable allocation of federal funding and reflect complete, accurate and total caseloads and administrative costs; 3) promote local control over health and human service programs; 4) provide greater flexibility to ensure programs are delivered efficiently and in a cost-effective manner; 5) provide for the health, safety and well-being of county residents; 6) diminish poverty and stimulate the local economy; and/or 7) hold counties exempt from fiscal penalties when the Federal Government does not provide adequate funding; 8) improve the accessibility and quality of supportive services for vulnerable populations; 9) promote data sharing and coordination between agencies to improve service delivery; 10) align state and federal regulations to improve outcomes; and/or 11) remove categorical funding restrictions allowing for greater local authority to achieve desired outcomes.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that: 1) transfer health and human service programs from the federal government to the County unless program control and adequate funding is guaranteed; 2) propose funding formulas that adversely impact and impede the ability of the County to deliver health and human services; and/or 3) erode local control of the administration of health and human service programs.

**HOUSING AND LAND USE**

*Strengthen the County through strategic and planned development.*

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) provide for additional funding for housing programs; 2) promote local authority to adopt or plan for orderly growth and development; 3) increase local control and regulatory authority over land use, zoning, renewable energy, subdivisions and annexations; 4) make the preservation of farmland and land suitable for farming economically feasible for property owners and local government; and/or 5) streamline the regulatory processes.

Oppose legislation or budget actions that: 1) reduces funding for housing programs; 2) erodes local land use authority; 3) uses air quality and/or climate change policy as a vehicle to restrict or remove local land use authority; and/or 4) imposes unfunded land use and general plan mandates.

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND FIRST RESPONDERS**

*Preserve and protect the safety of the public, law enforcement and first responder personnel.*

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) provide adequate resources to deliver services; 2) provide flexibility and local discretion in the administration of programs; 3) ensure the safety of the public, property of County residents and law enforcement and first responder personnel; 4) mitigate any potential unintended impacts associated with Proposition 47 and 57; 5) plan for, respond to, and receive reimbursement for emergency disasters, acts of terrorism and other catastrophic events; and 6) ensure continued funding for adult criminal justice facilities and programs that will meet the needs created by public safety realignment.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that: 1) reduce funding at the federal and local level for public safety programs; 2) compromise the safety of the public, local law enforcement or first responder personnel; and/or 3) impede the local law enforcement or first responders' ability to deliver services.