

A large, semi-transparent image of the California State Capitol building in Sacramento, California, serves as the background for the entire page. The building is a grand neoclassical structure with a prominent dome and a portico with columns. The image is tinted with a dark blue color.

2021 | STATE 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 pandemic continues major fiscal challenges to the County remain.

In order for the County to continue to provide quality services, assistance from the State and continued partnership with the delegation is imperative. In this platform, you will find San Bernardino County's state legislative priorities for 2021.

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, County Sponsored Proposals, Legislative Positions, and Policy Statements. The Legislative Priorities section describes the County's legislative goals and outlines the legislative agenda for the current year. The County Sponsored Proposals section provides a summary of specific statutory changes the County is seeking in the current legislative session. Finally, the Legislative Positions and Policy Statements provide general policy direction when developing a position on pending legislation.

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County of San Bernardino
Office of Governmental and
Legislative Affairs

385 North Arrowhead Ave., 5th
Fl.
San Bernardino, CA 92415

(909) 387-4821 • Phone
(909) 387-5430 • Fax

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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 expanding recreational opportunities and access to Prado Park, increasing access to housing, pandemic response and recovery and reducing and preventing homelessness.

EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS TO PRADO 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 will work with the delegation, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative proposals that: 1) increase access and 2) permit the County to use Proposition 70 funds or other resources to improve Prado Park.

INCREASE ACCESS TO HOUSING

Housing costs play a critical role in the economic stability of families as well as their physical and psychological well-being. The shortfall of affordable and workforce homes increases the burden on families in the County and can undermine family health, stability and children's educational attainment, putting future opportunities at risk and perpetuating a cycle of poverty. In addition to the impact on the family structure, businesses are impacted by the cost of housing. Many employers who leave California or focus future growth outside the State cite affordable housing options for their employees as a major reason for leaving.

The County will work with the delegation, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, administrative proposals, or regulations that include: 1) an equitable amount of funding for housing in the County; 2) programs that increase access to housing; and/or 3) regulatory reforms that reduce the cost and delivery time of affordable housing and workforce housing.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Although the timing, nature and severity of a pandemic cannot be predicted, a planned and coordinated response is critical to minimizing the public health impact, as well as the social and economic disruption to our everyday lives. The impacts of COVID-19 are vast and will be long lasting. Schools have transitioned to distance learning and healthcare providers have turned to telehealth, leveraging technology to address a number of healthcare problems. To utilize telehealth or take classes online, people need digital access. As we recover, we must continue to align recovery strategies to ensure that the existing social, geographic, and economic inequities and challenges are not exacerbated.

The County will work with the delegation, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget action, or administrative proposals that: 1) support local discretion; 2) maximize local resources and secure relief to assure continued delivery of critical services; 3) promote county budget stabilization and mitigate significant budget shortfalls; 4) allow the utilization of technology and innovation to streamline County services; 5) allow for the continuance and expansion of innovative care delivery models such as mobile healthcare; 6) increase access to advanced telecommunications services; and/or 7) improve the health outcomes of populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

REDUCE AND PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a persistent national problem that impacts cities and communities throughout San Bernardino County. According to the 2020 Point-In-Time Count Homeless Survey, the number of homeless was 3,125 persons. A comparison of the last two counts revealed that 518 more persons were counted in 2020, which represents an increase of 19.9%. Despite our investments in positive programs such as permanent supportive housing, homeless outreach, and aggressive use of the “housing first” and “rapid re-housing” protocols, the homeless population in San Bernardino County continues to grow.

The County will work with the delegation, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, administrative proposals, or regulations that will: 1) support initiatives to reduce and prevent homelessness; 2) ensure the County receives an equitable share of funding aimed at addressing homelessness and affordable housing; 3) expand the availability of permanent and supportive housing that provides wraparound and coordinated services; and/or 4) allow counties to maximize and leverage Federal, State and local funds and programs to provide services for at-risk and homeless individuals.

The County Sponsored Proposal section includes specific statutory changes that the County is seeking in the current legislative session. Sponsoring bills provides a proactive opportunity to advance the County’s legislative goals and agenda. This is accomplished by working with the legislative delegation, statewide associations and regional stakeholders.

ISSUE	SUMMARY	ACTION
<p>Augment the Definition of “Emergency” to Better Provide Essential Public Services.</p>	<p>Section 15269 under the California Environment Equality Act (CEQA) and Section 21060.3 under Public Resource Code, define “Emergency” as “a sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate the loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services. ‘Emergency’ includes such occurrences as fire, flood, earthquake, or other soil geologic movements, as well as such occurrences as riot, accident, or sabotage.” This definition however excludes preventable emergencies such as a flood or debris flow after a fire. The addition of language to augment the definition of “Emergency” to include anticipated dangers would assist departments in local and State governments by allowing public entities to perform pre-emptive work in an effort to prevent emergencies rather than mitigate the damages.</p>	<p>The County will sponsor or co-sponsor legislation that will augment the definition of “emergency” to include anticipated dangers.</p>
<p>Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Funding</p>	<p>The San Bernardino County Fire Protection District provides proactive services to meet the needs of communities within the County. Local Response Areas (LRA) are fire departments with jurisdiction in local areas that complete Community Risk Assessments (CRA) in an Operating Area (OA) with a County-wide approach. Community Risk Reduction (CRR) projects in an OA or the County increase public safety for all residents. Additional funding is needed for the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District to provide these services.</p>	<p>The County will sponsor or co-sponsor legislation and/or a budget request that will establish additional funding to the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District in order to facilitate Community Risk Reductions and Community Risk Assessments.</p>

ISSUE	SUMMARY	ACTION
Public Pool Features	California Building Code, Chapter 31-B, Title 24, Public Pools, states that a pool shall not have projections or recessed areas except for pool inlets and outlets as specified in Section 3137B. Swimouts, islands, benches, recessed areas or other types of projections are not permitted. Features such as a swimouts and benches offer swimmers the ability to enter or exit the pool or just rest and relax safely in the pool. These features also allow people to stay engaged without fully immersing themselves in the pool.	The County will sponsor or co-sponsor legislation that will revise the existing code section related to commercial pools to allow additional features such as recessed seating areas and swimouts.
Regionalized Approach To Policies Put Forth By The State Water Resources Control Board.	The State Water Resources Control Board implements statewide policies that do not consider local and regional efforts. San Bernardino Co-Permittees have long collaborated and established a successful stormwater program unique to San Bernardino County based on previous requirements issued in the 2010 MS4 Permit. The one size fits all approach and policies will essentially nullify established practices that the County, Cities, and local businesses have developed and implemented. A localized approach utilizing Regional Board expertise and local agencies would increase interagency collaboration on issues that the directly impact the County.	The County will sponsor or co-sponsor legislation that will establish a regionalized approach to policies put forth by the State Water Resources Control Board.
Transfer of Grant-Funded Land to Increase Access to Recreational Opportunities.	The County acquired land located in the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve in part with grant funds administered by the Office of Grants and Land Services. The use of grant funds issued by the Office of Grants and Land Services are restricted to the purpose for which the funding was requested, unless authorized by the Legislature. Due to restrictions on the usage of funding, the San Bernardino County Department of Regional Parks is unable to transfer portions of the land to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).	The County will sponsor or co-sponsor legislation that will allow the transfer of grant-funded land to BLM within the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve.

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, economic development, environmental protection and health, equity, flood control and water resources, governance, finance and operations, health and human services, public safety and first responders, transportation and infrastructure and workforce development.

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, budget actions, or leverage existing resources, such as Proposition 68, that: 1) provide residents and tourists 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/or 3) provide funding that will enhance the quality of life for County residents.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Improve the economy through attracting investment, creating and retaining a skilled workforce, and reducing unnecessary and burdensome regulations.

Support legislation, budget actions, or proposals that will: 1) provide tax relief programs and incentives for business recruitment, retention and expansion; 2) provide environmental regulatory and permitting reforms that improve California's business climate and competitiveness; 3) promote cross-sector collaborations and partnerships to enhance and strengthen our regional economic competitiveness and well-being; and/or 4) diminish poverty and stimulate the local economy.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND HEALTH

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

Support legislation, budget actions, and proposals that: 1) enhance environmental quality that balance the interest of the local economy and balanced energy solutions that provide the County with the decision-making authority and resources needed to achieve the state's climate goals; and/or 2) require regulatory agencies to better reflect and accommodate the unique characteristics and needs of local communities.

Oppose legislation, budget actions and proposals that reduce environmental quality funding to the region or compromises the health of the community.

EQUITY

Promote the inclusion of marginalized groups, protect investment in human capital and eliminate racial disparities.

Support legislation, budget actions, and proposals that: 1) result in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all; 2) ensure that people with marginalized identities have the opportunity to grow, contribute, and develop; and/or 3) reduce or remove barriers for all members of our community.

FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER RESOURCES

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

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

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 State 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 County residents.

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) fully fund the cost of State-mandated health and human service programs and hold counties exempt from fiscal penalties when the State does not provide adequate funding; 2) create, provide and protect funding formulas for services that ensure an equitable allocation of State funding; 3) provide greater flexibility to ensure programs are delivered efficiently and in a cost-effective manner; 4) provide for the health, safety and well-being of County residents; 5) improve and increase the accessibility and quality of supportive services for vulnerable populations; 6) promote data sharing and coordination between agencies to improve service delivery; 7) align state regulations to improve outcomes; and/or 8) remove categorical funding restrictions allowing for greater local authority to achieve desired outcomes.

Oppose legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) transfer health and human service programs from the State to the County without guaranteed program control and adequate funding; 2) propose funding formulas that adversely impact and impede the ability of the County to deliver health and human service programs; 3) erode local control of the administration of health and human service programs; and/or 4) negatively impact health and human services program sustainability.

LAND USE

Strengthen the County through strategic and planned development.

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

Oppose legislation that: 1) erodes local land use authority; 2) uses air quality and/or climate change policy as a vehicle to restrict or remove local land use authority; and/or 3) 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, budget actions and proposals 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 and property of County residents, and law enforcement and first responder personnel; 4) mitigate any potential unintended impacts associated with Proposition 47, 57 and bail reform; 5) plan for, respond to, and receive reimbursement for emergency disasters, acts of terrorism and other catastrophic events; and/or 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 State 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 local law enforcement or first responders' ability to deliver services.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Connect communities through strategic investments in local and regional transportation and infrastructure projects.

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) expedite infrastructure projects and provide flexibility in the administration of infrastructure programs and funding; 2) protect existing funds dedicated to local transportation projects; 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; 6) improve the County's ability to maintain and modernize our infrastructure; 7) expand and fund high-quality broadband access; and/or 8) develop an inland port.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that impact and compromise local and regional projects.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Improve the economy by targeting high growth industry sectors that are the most competitive and will generate family-sustaining career pathways.

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) support the technology, healthcare, trade, manufacturing, logistics, construction, leisure and hospitality, bioscience, clean energy economies, and other in demand sectors; 2) promote economic self-sufficiency by supporting comprehensive employment and training programs, provide education and job placement, encourage employers to hire jobseekers with training and employment plans, and improve the retention of workers; and/or 3) support Local Workforce Development Boards.