



COUNTY OF FRESNO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2020



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:

- Support 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 enactment of Federal appropriations to expand facilities for storing, banking, conveying, distributing, conserving, and reclaiming water.
- Federal funding for emergency protective actions, monitoring of conditions, prescribed fire projects 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 funding, programs, and assistance 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.



COUNTY OF FRESNO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2020



Community and Workforce Investment

- Support full funding for the Community Development Block Grant, public and assisted housing, and Workforce Investment Act 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.

Economic Development

- Support legislation, policies 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 and for mandated election requirements.



COUNTY OF FRESNO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

2020



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.

Environmental Quality

- 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 Federal 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 increasing the acreage limit for National Environmental Policy Act Categorical Exclusion on tree mortality projects.
- 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 restoring the full Federal deductibility of local property and income taxes.



COUNTY OF FRESNO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2020



- 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 legislation, proposed regulations and administrative rulings that usurp local control and authority.
- Support sufficient Federal funding for the 2020 U.S. Census as data collected determines future Federal funding levels for local governments.

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.
- Support legislative initiatives to eliminate the Cadillac tax, which unfairly penalizes and forces employers to offer less competitive and comprehensive plans.

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, Mental 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, 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 account for a greater need for public services in counties that have disproportionately high levels of poverty.
- Support allocation and reimbursement policies that fully fund public health, health care, mental health, 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.



COUNTY OF FRESNO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

2020



- 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 and smokeless tobacco product use.
- Support funding for treatment programs targeting substance abuse.
- 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.

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 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 child welfare funding reform efforts that increase eligibility of Federal funds under programs that include, but are not limited to Title IV-E.
- Support efforts to reform child welfare financing, including providing Title IV-E Federal foster care match funding for prevention activities.
- Support alternative methods to meeting Federal mandated monthly contacts with youth in extended foster care when attending college.
- Provide equitable and sufficient funding to reduce housing insecurity and promote employment opportunities to help clients achieve self-sufficiency.



COUNTY OF FRESNO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

2020



- 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 efforts to provide states and localities administering the CalWORKs Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program partial work participation credit for participants.
- 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 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.

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.

Water

- Support legislation, regulations, and policy that provide for the development of local and regional water resource management activities within the County.
- Support legislation that would fund and expedite the construction of surface water storage (e.g., dams, groundwater recharge facilities).
- Support legislation to provide funding for building, repairing, upgrading, and maintaining levee and flood control systems in the County.



COUNTY OF FRESNO FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2020



- Support legislation to provide funding for renewal, enhancement, and maintenance of community potable water systems.
- Support Federal policies and regulations that allow flexibility to implement local water/wastewater programs.
- Support the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources' request for 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 as a result of ongoing collaborative scientific efforts.