



Board Agenda Item 7

DATE: February 11, 2025

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Nerland, County Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Fresno County Federal Legislative Platform Updates

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. **Adopt recommended changes to the Fresno County Federal Legislative Platform;**
2. **Authorize the Chairman to execute letters of support, or opposition, in accordance with the Platform;**
3. **Authorize the County Administrative Office to work with the County's Federal Congressional Delegation, federal advocates, and/or other necessary parties to support or oppose legislation in accordance with the Platform; and**
4. **Receive presentation from Federal lobbyists Townsend Public Affairs regarding legislative actions.**

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. The Platform is also used as a guide for support letters related to grant applications. The last recommended action will provide your Board with an update on current Federal legislative activities. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

1. Make changes to the recommendations or language in the Federal Legislative Platform.
2. Postpone updates to the Federal Legislative Platform.
3. Choose not to make changes and continue to work off the existing federal Legislative Platform, last updated and approved by your Board on February 6, 2024.

If your Board chooses to postpone or not make updates to the Platform, staff will need to bring items that are not currently included in the Platform to your Board to be addressed on an individual basis.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no additional Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions.

DISCUSSION:

The Federal Legislative Platform is used by County officials and staff as policy guidelines for legislative action and to facilitate timely responses to requests from the County's Federal Congressional Delegation, the County's federal advocates, and interested citizens. Your Board last updated the Federal Legislative Platform on February 6, 2024 and this is the annual update to the Federal Legislative Platform. All County departments have had the opportunity to review and recommend changes to the Platform.

For letters of support or opposition, the Platform serves as a guide for departments to easily identify if Federal issues they are working on fall within the County's Federal Platform. Consistent with Administrative Policy 21, any specific federal issues falling outside of the Platform and any letter requesting the signature of all five Board members would require an agenda item for presentation to your Board. It should be noted, if an individual Board member wishes to submit a letter of support or opposition that is consistent with the Platform, may do so under their Office; however, they may utilize the Board's letterhead.

The proposed Platform contains three sections:

- I. **Introduction** - an explanation of the purpose of the legislative Platform.
- II. **Major Legislative Issues** - identifies significant issues for the County.
- III. **General Principles** - provides positions that will guide County actions and advocacy efforts in specified categories of Agriculture; Community and Workforce Investment; Criminal Justice and Public Protection; Economic Development; Elections; Energy/Air Quality; Environmental Quality/Natural Resources; Federal Lands and Installations; General Government and Finance; Human Resources; Library; Public Health, Behavioral Health, and Health Care Services; Social Services; Transportation and Infrastructure; and Water.

The primary recommended changes to the Federal Legislative Platform are highlighted in the second attachment and include the following:

Major Legislative Issues

- No claw-back provision bullet has been revised to include all funding since the County is past the obligation deadline of December 31, 2024 for COVID-19 funding and is therefore no longer applicable.

Agriculture

- Bullet regarding the Farm Bill has been revised to encourage swift reauthorization by Congress.

Criminal Justice and Public Protection

- Bullet revised to include the authorization of additional judgeships for the Eastern District, Fresno Division.

Energy/Air Quality

- Bullet supporting Federal investment has been revised changing "green" to environmentally conscious.

Environmental Quality/Natural Resources

- Bullet added to support legislation that provides funding for the National Forest Service to perform wildfire mitigation activities on National Forest lands within Fresno County.

Housing and Homelessness

- Completely new section of the platform which supports:
 - Expanding the definition of chronic homelessness to better serve vulnerable populations.

- Increased funding for homelessness and housing programs.
- Policy flexibility to better address local needs.
- Rural communities.
- Streamlining regulations to accelerate affordable housing development.
- Simplified eligibility criteria for housing programs.
- Reduced regulatory burdens on affordable housing construction.
- Increased funding for public and assisted housing.
- Redirecting CDBG funds to advance fair housing goals

Public Health, Behavioral Health and Health Care Services

- Bullet added to support policies and funding aimed at improving the healthcare worker shortage, especially in rural areas.

Social Services

- Bullet supporting flexibilities enabling agencies to serve individuals and families needing Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) now asks to also increase funding for these benefits.
- Bullet opposing efforts to reduce or limit Federal funding for Medicaid administration or benefits has been revised to oppose efforts to restructure the Medicaid program through block grants in addition to limiting such funding.
- Bullet opposing Federal efforts to limit access to Medicaid, TANF, and SNAP has been revised to oppose both decreased funding and the creation of stricter eligibility criteria.
- Bullet supporting Federal efforts to align with State CalWORKs has been revised due to California's participation in the Fiscal Responsibility Act Pilot to measure program outcomes based on family stability and well-being instead of work participation rate.
- Bullet deleted supporting efforts to provide states and localities administering the CalWORKs TANF program partial work participation credit for individuals as outcome measures are shifting away from work participation.
- Bullets supporting policies and funding to meet the needs of those at risk of homelessness and increasing Federal funding to provide essential infrastructure/funds for low- and moderate income rural communities have been moved to the new Housing/Homelessness section.

Water

- Bullet supporting the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's reinitiation of consultation has been revised to support continued evaluation of the long-term coordinated operations of the Central Valley and State Water Projects to increase supply availability and reliability for valley water users and to prioritize a balanced approach in water management.

Approval of the recommended actions will adopt the updated Federal Legislative Platform, authorize the Chairman to execute letters of support or opposition in accordance with the Platform, and allow the County Administrative Office to express your Board's position on legislation in accordance with the Platform.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

The legislative Platform was developed with input from the County's Washington lobbyist.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #5, February 6, 2024

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Fresno County Federal Legislative Platform
Fresno County Federal Legislative Platform - Redline
Townsend Public Affairs Fresno County Presentation Federal Update Feb 2025

CAO ANALYST:

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