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# SONOMA COUNTY



## 2016 STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

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# Sonoma County 2016 Legislative Platform

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## **Introduction and Guiding Principles**

# Introduction and Guiding Principles

## ***Introduction***

The ability of the County to serve the residents of Sonoma County and provide for a thriving and sustainable community requires support from all levels of government. Local government is uniquely and best positioned to support, serve, and respond to community and individual needs. However, State and Federal legislative policy and action is often needed to support local government in having this impact. State and Federal action can affect the County's ability to deliver, shape, and resource services, and remove obstacles to delivering those services.

In order to fulfill Sonoma County's commitment to the community, positive State and Federal action, including the allocation of resources, is being sought. Sonoma County has engaged with legislative advocates at the State and Federal levels, resulting in the accomplishment of legislative priorities and positioning Sonoma County to receive significant financial resources.

To this end, Sonoma County adopts an annual legislative platform that provides a guide for Sonoma County's legislative advocates, and highlights key issues important to the local community. The platform provides 10 over-arching guiding principles, prioritizes State and Federal issues intended for specific legislative action, and lays out ongoing general State and Federal issues that the County will monitor for potential action should opportunities arise.

The numbering of items and order are for tracking purposes and do not denote rank or relative importance. Additionally, some items identified as State priority issues could yield advocacy opportunities in a Federal setting, and conversely. For the Federal Priorities, where appropriate, issue areas have identified federal resources the County is actively seeking.

## ***Guiding Principles***

Through this platform, Sonoma County will use advocates, professional associations (such as the California State Association of Counties and the National Association of Counties), local elected officials, and staff to:

1. Seek out, develop, and support legislative and budget efforts that protect and/or enhance local governments' revenues, maximize the County's access to state and federal funding sources, and/or increase local funding flexibility.
2. Oppose any effort to balance the state budget through the taking of local government resources, and support legislation that will allow the County to ensure full cost recovery for services provided to other governmental entities.
3. Support legislation that furthers the goals identified in the County's Strategic Plan: Safe, Healthy and Caring Communities; Economic and Environmental Stewardship; Invest in the Future; and Civic Services and Engagement.
4. Encourage and seek legislation to facilitate orderly and sustainable economic development, and increase the opportunity for discretionary revenues, and programmatic and financial flexibility for the County.



5. Oppose unfunded mandates, and oppose any realignment initiatives which fail to fully fund services shifted to the County, including appropriate cost of living increases and cost increases due to population and caseload growth.
6. Support the County's authority to assure mutually acceptable tax sharing agreements for annexation and incorporation that protect or enhance the County's ability to provide services to its residents.
7. Support legislation that provides tax, bond and other funding formulas for the equitable distribution of state and federal monies while opposing attempts to decrease, restrict, or eliminate County revenue sources.
8. Support legislation and budget action that provides additional and continuing funding for local road infrastructure.
9. Support legislation that encourages mutually respectful relationships between tribal and local governments including reform to both the fee-to-trust process and off-reservation gaming provisions to insure that the impacts of tribal development are fully mitigated and jurisdictional issues are resolved.
10. Support state and federal action advancing the health, vibrancy and resiliency of local communities through evidence-based preventative services and efforts, and consistent with the National Prevention Strategy, including prevention of community violence and chronic disease; increasing access to care, services, and housing; investment in safe and complete streets, parks and infrastructure; emphasizing education and early childhood development; and engaging the public.

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## **State Priorities**

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## State Priorities

### **S1. Sonoma Developmental Center**

Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) is the oldest facility in California established specifically for serving the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. The facility opened its doors to 148 residents in 1891. Since that time, SDC has served as a critical resource to people in Sonoma County as well as throughout the North Bay Region. SDC provides an extensive array of services that promote ongoing health, learning, self-advocacy and increased independence; and innovative social, recreational, educational, vocational, and other programs are continuously offered. Not only does SDC provide valuable services to individuals and families, it also serves as a significant scenic and environmental resource; SDC is adjacent to natural open space and park land, along with heavily traveled wildlife trails. Ensuring the land continues to provide these community benefits is of great importance to the Board of Supervisors and the community.

**Action:** The County supports working with State and community stakeholders to sponsor and develop legislation, funding, and other opportunities to preserve SDC's valuable health services for Sonoma County and North Bay residents as well as preserving critical environmental resources.

### **S2. Pension Reform**

The Public Employee Pension Reform Act of 2012 (PEPRA) made significant changes to pension law for PERS contracting agencies as well as 1937 Act Counties. Sonoma County supports pension reform efforts, but is opposed to reforms that are inconsistent with principles adopted by the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). Concerns include loss of local control, lack of recognition for those programs that are fiscally and managerially sound, and loss of flexibility and employee choice of retirement age. Additionally, PEPRA remains ambiguous in many areas and requires further clarification.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation to further clarify PEPRA. Clean-up legislation should address, for example but not be limited to, the ability to share the costs due to market investment losses and actuarial assumption changes equally with employees; clarity and flexibility regarding ad hoc cost of living adjustment (COLA) programs under the County Employees Retirement Law (CERL) for application with PEPRA; and authority for the Board of Supervisors to appoint four additional public members to the Sonoma County Employees Retirement Board.

### **S3. Regulation of Marijuana**

Local government agencies continue to face many impacts arising out of the cultivation and distribution of marijuana, including the potential effects on the environment caused by cultivation (i.e., excessive water usage, uncontrolled pesticide use, and erosion); the creation of public and private nuisances due to strong odors; the heightened risk of electrical fires presented by indoor grows; negative health impacts, including those related to unregulated edible cannabis products; and safety concerns created by a high value crop or dispensary inventory. In addition to addressing these concerns, local agencies must balance the concern of availability to qualified patients. Because the potential impacts of marijuana can vary broadly depending upon the geography and urban versus rural nature of counties and cities throughout California, regulation at the local level is more effective. However, uncertainty in State legislation needs to be addressed to help guide local jurisdictions in balancing these concerns.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation that would:

- Create specific statutory authority to preserve local control but also establish supportive compatible State regulation with regard to environmental, health, and safety standards for indoor and outdoor grows and product production and storage with accompanying local agency funding;
- Develop regulations addressing distribution of marijuana through delivery services rather than storefront dispensaries; and
- Establish a regulatory framework that would provide the necessary tools and authority to prepare the state and local governments for the potential legalization of recreational marijuana use.

#### **S4. Vote by Mail Elections with Regional Voting Centers**

For the statewide elections in 2014, Sonoma County had a 41% turnout in June and a 60% voter turnout in November. In the same elections the County had over 70% of the registered voters sign up to vote by mail. While most voters sit home and cast their ballots, the County is required to staff and supply over 195 polling places. Polling place voters often represent less than 20% of the votes cast in a statewide election. The cost of conducting elections with the current precinct model is outdated and leads to costly elections and low voter participation. SB 450 (Allen), introduced in 2015, would authorize a county to conduct any election as an all-mailed ballot election if certain conditions were satisfied, including conditions related to ballot drop-off locations and polling vote centers. Moving to an all Vote by Mail Election with Regional Voting Centers, similar to the existing model in the State of Colorado and that proposed by SB 450, will improve voter participation and reduce election costs.

**Action:** Support legislation that would allow counties the option of conducting elections by mail if the percentage of registered voters in the jurisdiction participating in the Vote by Mail program exceeds 70%, and require a number of Regional Vote Centers in the jurisdiction in proportion to the number of registered voters to be established for the purpose of dropping off ballots or for voters who may require the use of a Disabled Access Unit to cast their ballot independently.

#### **S5. Increasing Revenues for County Road Infrastructure**

The revenues received from taxing fuel suppliers are deposited in the State Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA). These revenues are allocated to the state, counties, and cities. More than 80% of all road miles in the State are owned and operated by the cities and the counties; however, the State receives the majority (56%) of the HUTA revenues for state highway maintenance. As a whole State gas tax revenues are woefully inadequate to cover the road infrastructure needs across the state, 54 out of 58 counties have average Pavement Condition Indexes that are at risk or poor. Sonoma County is one of these counties. Existing funding levels to cities and counties is \$1.65 billion/year. Funding needed to just maintain existing road conditions for cities and counties is \$3.33 billion/year.

Research shows that voters strongly support increased funding for transportation improvements, and are more open to a package that spreads potential tax or fee increases across a broad range of options. History tells us that voters have supported dedicating and constitutionally-protecting transportation dollars for transportation purposes (Proposition 42, 2002; Proposition 1A, 2006). Additionally, it is worth supporting any package that moves California toward an all-users pay structure, in which everyone who benefits from the system contributes to maintaining it.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation that would:

- Increase State revenues to the County;
- Create a significant investment in transportation infrastructure and split money equally between the State and local governments. Funding should come from a broad range of revenue sources, move California towards an all-users pay system, and include guarantees to assure taxpayers that funds will be spent responsibly and that direct subventions for road funding will be maintained to continue transparent funding, effective planning and cost effective execution; and
- Reduce the voter threshold for local special sales tax measures.

### **S6. In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)**

The County's interest is to sustain the 2012 funding methodology for IHSS as established in the 2012-13 Budget. The county contribution for IHSS has increased each year until a Maintenance of Effort (MOE) was established for IHSS. The MOE replaced the share of cost methodology that was used to determine the county cost for IHSS. The new MOE allows counties to fund the IHSS program and support the community at a lower cost.

The MOE took effect July 1, 2012, and includes a substantial shift in how counties budget IHSS costs. All 58 counties began paying the MOE in July 2012, regardless of the date of transfer of collective bargaining for IHSS Providers. The base year for county expenditures for the MOE is the 2011-12 fiscal year; beginning in 2014-15, the county MOE will be increased by an inflation factor of 3.5% per year (with the exception of years when 1991 Realignment revenues decline). The county MOE will be increased for the county's share of any costs of locally negotiated wage and benefit increases prior to the State taking over collective bargaining if the State approves.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislative efforts to provide sustaining wages to IHSS workers while limiting the County's obligation to increases in local required funding.

### **S7. Broadband Deployment**

Broadband connection throughout Sonoma County would foster significant economic development, and provide enhanced education, safety, and other benefits. However, broadband deployment and access throughout the County remains challenging due to geography and market forces. In particular, the Sonoma coast and Northern Sonoma County include isolated and remote areas without significant utility or other infrastructure. Market forces have proven inadequate to achieve general broadband access in the County. Additional funding and regulatory incentives are required to ensure that all residents are provided broadband access. Furthermore, the data utilized by regulatory agencies regarding broadband penetration in rural areas remains questionable.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislative and funding programs to effectuate broadband deployment throughout Sonoma County. Support legislative and regulatory actions that produce accurate metrics to gauge broadband access in the County. Broadband deployment data should reflect actual services and speeds and be able to be verified in the field.

### **S8. Anti-Poverty, Affordable Housing, and Homelessness Assistance**

Sonoma County's residential rental market, long considered to be one of the least affordable in the nation when comparing rent levels to the area median income, did not share in the downward price adjustment that created a more affordable for-sale housing market since the Great Recession. The fair market rent for a 2-bedroom unit jumped 47.4% between 2000 and 2010, going from \$886 to \$1,306. For workers earning the current minimum wage, the fair market rent in 2013 required a household with at least three full-time workers. The affordability situation is only worsening, as the average apartment rent rose to almost \$1,600 in 2015, a jump of 30% since 2012. The rate of Sonoma County's increase was the greatest of 23 metropolitan areas in California studied by Real Answers, a Novato-based rent research firm. Axiometrics, a rent research firm based in Dallas, reported in May 2014 that Sonoma County tied for fifth, with the Vallejo area, among U.S. communities with the fastest yearly rent increases.

The availability of affordable housing in the County is further limited by the current rental market vacancy rate that is hovering around just 1%. Even renter households with sufficiently high income levels, or with rental subsidies through the local housing authorities, are finding it increasingly difficult to find a suitable and affordable place to live.

The lack of affordable housing stock in the County helps to fuel the rate of homelessness for local residents. During the last biennial point-in-time homeless count conducted in January 2015, 3,107 people were without permanent housing, with 2,070 of those sleeping outdoors. There are now 9,274 local households on the Sonoma County Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program waiting list, many of which are

homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless as they are forced to pay up to 50% or more of their income just for housing costs. For those who receive assistance, it is very common to be denied housing by landlords throughout the County who refuse to accept Section 8 vouchers as a form of rent payment. Currently, neither federal law nor California law prohibits discrimination against tenants with Section 8 vouchers. In California, Section 8 vouchers do not qualify as a “source of income” and thus are not covered under the State’s source of income antidiscrimination provisions. There are several states and some local jurisdictions within California that do have laws to protect tenants against discrimination based on the use of public housing assistance.

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is proposing providing Medi-Cal funds for shelter and new housing with wrap around services. Medicaid-funded shelter could contribute to better health outcomes and reduced total cost of care for beneficiaries. DHCS will be introducing ideas to local jurisdictions that can support the goal of a whole-person approach to care for vulnerable populations.

Finally, the resources available to the County to assist in the development of more affordable housing to mitigate the affordability trends and rate of homelessness have been severely diminished over recent years.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation that would:

- Increase the minimum wage in California, such as SB 3 (Leno);
- Enhance the state Earned Income Tax Credit;
- Provide a permanent source of funding for development of affordable housing;
- Increase funds for operation of homelessness assistance programs;
- Restore Emergency Solutions Grant funding to Sonoma County homeless service providers;
- Support efforts to effect meaningful reform on the policy of housing insecurity to achieve better outcomes for vulnerable populations;
- Evaluate options for targeted populations including homeless individuals who utilize Emergency Rooms and hospitals, and nursing facility residents who can be cared for in a community setting;
- Make available funds and new programs equally available to both rural and urban areas; and
- Eliminate discrimination against tenants or landlords based on the use of Section 8 vouchers or other government assistance.

### **S9. Prevent Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults**

In spite of the progress made in reducing the number of tobacco users over that last 20 years, tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death killing almost half a million people and costing \$170 billion in health care expenses each year. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, if current trends continue, 5.6 million of today's youth will die prematurely from smoking. In fact, in Sonoma County tobacco use contributes to all of the top four leading causes of death (cancer, heart disease, stroke, lower respiratory disease). Health behavior patterns formed in adolescence play a crucial role in health throughout life. 90% percent of current smokers started before the age of 18 and 95% percent started before the age of 21. Those who start smoking young are more likely to have a long-term addiction to nicotine than people who start smoking later in life, putting them at greater risk for smoking-related illness and death.

Evidence-based strategies such as policies to increase the legal age to purchase tobacco and raise the price of tobacco products reduce tobacco use among youth and prevent chronic diseases. Hawaii was the first state to raise the tobacco sales age to 21, which will take effect January 1, 2016. Federal and state bills were recently introduced to raise the legal minimum age of purchase for tobacco products from 18 to 21. Additionally, raising the price of tobacco and eliminating discounting of tobacco products has been proven to limit purchases by groups that are price-sensitive, such as youth. Increasing the cost of tobacco is widely recognized as the most effective way to reduce youth smoking. The 2000 U.S. Surgeon General’s Report, *Reducing Tobacco Use*, found that raising tobacco-product prices decreases the prevalence of tobacco use and is one of the most effective tobacco prevention and control strategies.

The tobacco industry has been resorting increasingly to tactics that make nicotine products attractive to new consumers, especially youth. Currently, federal law bans flavored cigarettes, while other flavored tobacco products such as little cigars (similar in size to cigarettes) and cigarillos are not banned. Furthermore, the federal ban on flavored cigarettes does not include menthol cigarettes. Menthol use has long been one of the key strategies to soften the harshness of tobacco, making it more palatable and contributing greatly to facilitating smoking onset. The FDA has recently reviewed the issue, and their tobacco advisory committee has confirmed the harmful role played by menthol flavorings, yet no federal regulation has been issued to date. Use of e-cigarettes, which come in a variety of flavors, has more than doubled among middle and high school youth from 2013 to 2014. Prohibiting flavored tobacco products would decrease the attraction to youth.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation that would:

- Prohibit the sale of all tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, to anyone under the age of 21, such as the federal bill Tobacco to 21 Act (S.2100) and SBX2 7 (Hernandez)/ ABX2 8 (Wood) in California;
- Establish a minimum price and discount ban on tobacco products;
- Increase state tax on tobacco products, such as SB-591 (Pan);
- Establish local authority to tax tobacco products, such as SBX2 9 (McGuire)/ABX2 5 (Bloom);
- Increase fees for tobacco retailers and distributors to provide adequate funding to maintain an effective enforcement program, like SBX2 10 (Beall)/ABX2 11 (Nazarian); and
- Restrict the sale of flavored nicotine-containing products in California and in the United States.

#### **S10. Improve Access to Behavioral (Mental) Health Services in Primary Care**

Patients being seeing in a primary care setting may also have mental or behavioral health needs that require treatment by a different provider at that same setting. However, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs) are currently prohibited from billing for a mental health visit of a patient on the same day they bill for a medical visit for that patient. This creates a logistical obstacle to vulnerable clients as they then have to return to the clinic on a different day in order to obtain care. Patients with the greatest need for mental health support often have the most difficulty returning to the health center which can result in a worsening of their condition. Delayed access to mental health care and a decline in mental health functioning can impact their children, family and the larger community. Making both medical and mental health visits payable on the same day of service would address a primary barrier to mental health care within a FQHC or RHC.

**Action:** Sponsor or support efforts such as AB 858 (Wood) to increase access to mental health services within Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs) to improve their ability to provide and be reimbursed for both medical and behavioral (mental) health services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries on the same day, in the same location.

#### **S11. Background Investigations for Extra-Help Retired Employees**

The California Peace Officers Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) requires that any peace officer with a break in service must be placed into a comprehensive background investigation process prior to reinstatement. Prior to the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA), retirees could retire one day and return as extra-help employees the following day. With the new retirement rules in place, retirees must now take a 60 day break in service before returning to work as an extra-help status employee. Due to the 60 day break in service these employees now must go through a rigorous, lengthy background investigation process similar to new employees before they can return to work. In most cases these individuals have been longtime employees of the agency and have left full-time employment in good standing.

Background investigations are lengthy processes that can take 6 to 8 weeks to complete and have substantial costs to the agency in investigative time, medical testing expenses and delay of services. In cases where these people are known recent retirees providing a needed service to the agency, the break in service of 60 days can be equally compared to other types of leave that may have occurred over the course of their careers. The need

to conduct comprehensive backgrounds for returning employees when there is a short break is unwarranted as they carry no measureable risk above that of existing employees.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation that changes the POST requirements to waive most processes in the background investigation for returning extra-help status employees after a short break in service. POST requirements that should be eliminated under these circumstances include personal history statements, psychological testing, medical standards testing and credit reporting.

## **S12. Wastewater Treatment Infrastructure**

Maintenance, repair and replacement of wastewater treatment infrastructure is critical to ensuring that all waste is properly treated and disposed of. If sewer lines or laterals or septic systems have failed or are underperforming, the untreated wastewater can contaminate groundwater, rivers and streams, creating a major public health concern.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems, most typically individual septic systems, are most common in unincorporated areas of the County that are more remote and cannot be served by municipal sewer systems. Many of these communities have older infrastructure and aging septic systems are beginning to fail. Individual property owners are responsible for maintenance, repair and replacement of their personal septic systems. Upgrading an underperforming septic system can cost between \$5,000 and \$20,000, and completely replacing a failed system with a new one can cost \$30,000 to \$60,000. In some instances this cost represents a large percentage of the total property value. Currently there are few funding options, especially for lower income homeowners, to assist with repairing and replacing onsite septic systems.

Further innovations are needed in the area of onsite sewage treatment that would enable the process to be more effective and affordable. Current efforts are focused on pretreatment and alternative technologies for improving or supplanting onsite wastewater treatment systems. Additional research and development and subsequent testing and certification of new technologies will play an important role in assisting homeowners and protecting the public health from failing septic systems.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation that would:

- Fund the testing, repair, and replacement of sewer laterals and collection systems;
- Assist homeowners with financing the repair or replacement of onsite wastewater treatment systems;
- Fund the study and testing of new and alternative technologies to improve or supplant onsite wastewater treatment systems; and
- Increase the ability for new technologies to be tested and become certified for use for onsite sewage treatment.

## **S13. Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Assistance**

The County is responsible for the planning and coordination of response, recovery, and mitigation activities related to emergencies and disasters. This includes developing emergency operations plans, conducting trainings, and communicating with the community. In addition, the County provides vital support to neighboring counties experiencing emergencies. State and Federal assistance is critical to improving emergency planning and disaster response. Further, funding is required to provide financial assistance to local governments and private property owners to efficiently repair homes, businesses, infrastructure and the natural environment.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation that would:

- Advocate for additional funding for emergency operations planning, exercises to validate the planning process, trainings, and equipment;
- Seek funding for emergency planning specifically addressing the safety of seniors and those with disabilities; and
- Increase access to funding for local jurisdictions for disaster-related damages.



**S14. Restoration of Health and Mental Health Realignment Funding Baselines**

The formula for the distribution of realignment between the Social Services, Health, and Mental Health Services Trust Funds allocates funding to Human Services on a priority basis based on increased caseload growth. Increased realignment growth is diverted to Human Services with little or no growth in the funding for the Health or Mental Health Trust Funds. As a result, the department has been forced to make reductions to health and mental health realignment programs and services.

This inequity in the current realignment funding formula was been made worse by the downturn in the economy, which has resulted in a significant decrease in revenue and a lowering of baseline funding levels. As a result, any growth in revenues above the new lower baselines will go disproportionately to the Social Services Trust Fund, thereby further reducing available funding for health and mental health realignment funded programs. Furthermore, Governor Brown has indicated his interest in opening up the 1991 Realignment to shift more services from the State to counties. This causes the concern that the share of realignment funds that currently flows to Sonoma County could be eroded by pressures from other counties to secure a larger share of the original realignment.

**Action:** Support legislation that provides a temporary restructuring of the realignment distribution formulas to provide growth in health and mental health funding consistent with levels that existed prior to the downturn in overall realignment funding. Oppose efforts to reduce funding from the 1991 Realignment to Sonoma County or add more realigned services without additional adequate funding.

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## **State Issues**

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## State Issues

Following are the County's general state advocacy issues for 2016. General advocacy issues differ from priority advocacy issues in that the County's legislative advocates will primarily support the efforts of others to enact legislation to address these concerns, which are most often shared concerns of multiple counties. The State Issues are categorized by functional area within the County organization.

### Health & Human Services

#### **S15. Distribution of Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Treatment State Discretionary Funding**

Since 1994, as a result of the *Sobkey v. Smoley* court decision, the disparity in the distribution of AOD discretionary state general funds has grown. Some counties receive no AOD discretionary state general funds (such as Sonoma County), some receive less than 50 cents per capita, and some receive more than 50 cents per capita. The methodology for distribution of AOD state discretionary general funds needs to be revisited and a more equitable distribution methodology developed. Furthermore, juveniles are not eligible for alcohol and drug related services, which results in significant unmet need. The County substantiated, through its recent Jail Alternatives Study, the high correlation between alcohol and other drug use and involvement with the criminal justice systems. Investing in upstream programs, like AOD treatment, and making these services available to all age groups, could relieve pressure on the criminal justice system, thereby resulting in savings to the County and to the State.

**Action:** Support legislation that provides a base level (minimum \$1.00 per capita) of state discretionary funding to all counties for local alcohol and other drug treatment programs to be used for various eligible populations as determined by each county.

#### **S16. Emergency Medical Services Planning and Local Control**

Legislation introduced in the past would have reduced county control over local planning and emergency medical services by requiring local policies and procedures be reviewed and approved by the State Emergency Medical Services Authority. Such legislation would fail to reflect California's diverse geography and population and would negatively impact local emergency medical services agencies.

**Action:** Oppose legislation that would impose State reviews of county policies for Emergency Medical Services planning and delivery.

#### **S17. Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption Among Youth**

Overweight and obese children constitute a preventable public health crisis. According to the California Department of Education, 38% of students in 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade in Sonoma County were overweight or obese. Sugar-sweetened beverages play a significant role in contributing to the youth overweight and obesity epidemic. While efforts to protect youth from the harmful effects of sweetened beverages are having some positive impacts in Sonoma County, consumption among teens increased 10% in recent years.

A study by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) estimated the cost to Sonoma County of overweight, obesity, and physical inactivity in 2006 was approximately \$436 million. Approximately half of the total was attributed to health care costs (Medicaid and prescription drugs) and the other half to lost productivity. Fees or State funding could be used to fund upstream community-based childhood obesity prevention programs; early recognition, monitoring and weight management interventions in medical settings; and educational, policy and public health approaches that promote nutrition and physical activity in schools as well as providing healthy food choices in retail stores.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages among youth, including AB 1357 (Bloom) to pass a sweetened beverage tax or fee and SB 203 (Monning) to enact sugar-sweetened beverage warning labels; and
- Increase access to healthy food and beverages, decrease availability of unhealthy food and beverages, support local businesses to become CalFresh and WIC approved vendors, and promote licensing laws that support retail stores to carry fresh produce and other healthy foods and beverages.

### **S18. California Children’s Services Program**

The California Children’s Services (CCS) program provides diagnostic and treatment services, medical case management, and medical therapy which includes physical and occupational therapy services (PT and OT) to children under 21 with CCS-eligible medical conditions. Historically, the CCS program has operated as a public health program for the benefit of medically fragile children. Services have been paid for by a combination of state, federal, and county funds and provided on a fee-for-service basis rather than through a capitated financial agreement. In 2015, the law that requires CCS services be provided on a fee-for-service basis, outside of managed care, will sunset.

An agreement between the California Department of Education and the California Department of Health Care Services dated on January 24th, 2007, delineates the roles and responsibilities of local health departments and local Special Education Local Planning Agencies (SELPA) with respect to facilities, transportation, equipment and other costs related to the delivery of medical therapy services at public schools. In recent years, lawsuits and differing interpretations of the program’s authorizing legislation and subsequent operating agreements have caused local agencies to examine potential policy solutions to improve the program and access to services.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Streamline the program’s funding under a capitated service delivery model, clarify the responsibilities of local agencies, and remove other barriers that limit the ability to offer accessible and high-quality medical therapy services to this medically-fragile population; and
- Include CCS under Medi-Cal managed care plans and other options to remove barriers to provide services in an integrated health care delivery system.

### **S19. Communicable Disease Control**

Control of communicable diseases is a fundamental and required responsibility of local governmental public health agencies. Strategies to prevent the spread of infectious disease include surveillance, immunizations, disease investigation, laboratory testing, treatment, and response activities. Immunizations are a critical strategy of disease control. Not only do immunizations protect the individual who is vaccinated, but they also create community immunity which blocks the spread of disease.

Low vaccination rates put communities at risk for outbreaks. Sonoma County has pockets of very low childhood immunization rates, with some local elementary schools having vaccine exemption rates exceeding 20%. In addition, not all adults, including those caring for vulnerable populations, are up-to-date on their immunizations. As a result the community is at greater risk of outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases.

Research has shown that for some specific infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, the best way to prevent the spread is to ensure infected individuals receive full treatment so they cannot pass it to others. Some individuals face challenges in completing treatment due to the out-of-pocket costs not covered by insurance. If treatment of these infectious diseases were classified as a preventive service, insurance companies would be required to cover the services without a copay for the individual.

Additionally, rapid and accurate identification of a case is critical for disease control, which requires laboratory diagnosis. California law requires a number of diseases to be reported to local health departments. The law also

requires that certain isolates, when cultured, be sent to local public health laboratories for additional testing. Local health departments pursue further characterization of these isolates including genetic “typing” which can enable identification of clusters of related cases which in turn enables an epidemiologic investigation to identify the source of an outbreak. However, new techniques in the private market can identify a disease through molecular testing without growing a culture. Currently, in those situations, no sample is sent to the local public health laboratory. This interferes with public health’s ability to recognize clusters, trace outbreaks, identify trends, and monitor pharmaceutical resistance.

Another laboratory issue is that California rules are different than federal rules regarding the skill level, certifications and education requirements of the public health laboratory director. At present, the number of eligible individuals does not meet existing need for laboratory direction; furthermore, many current public health lab directors are eligible for retirement. Efforts are needed to increase training for and career pathways to become a California public health laboratory director.

**Action:** Support legislative and regulatory efforts to:

- Increase child and adult immunization rates and improve tracking of immunization rates;
- Improve insurance coverage of treatment for communicable diseases;
- Amend California law so that certain samples must be sent to the local public health laboratory regardless of whether a laboratory had to perform a culture; and
- Address public health laboratory workforce shortages including the availability of training programs.

#### **S20. Certification of Mental Health Peer Providers**

Peer providers who use their lived experience with mental illness and recovery, coupled with skills learned through formal training, are valuable additions to service delivery in behavioral health settings. Independent clinical research demonstrates that peer support specialists reduce hospitalizations and hospital days, improve client functioning, increase client satisfaction, reduce family concerns, alleviate depression and other symptoms, and enhance client self-advocacy.

Peer support services are an evidence-based, cost-beneficial service that both the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) fully endorse states to implement. Additionally, peer support services are included in California’s 1115 Waiver Renewal-- Medi-Cal 2020-- as submitted to the federal CMS. Although DHCS anticipates that there will be substantial growth in the demand for peer support specialists, there are no statewide training or supervision standards, and there is currently no Medi-Cal peer certification program. Further, the U.S. Department of Veterans’ Affairs and more than 34 states have already established programs for the certification of peers.

SB 614 (Leno), for example, would require the State Department of Health Care Services to establish, by July 1, 2017, a statewide peer, parent, transitional-age, and family support specialist certification program, as a part of the State’s comprehensive mental health and substance use disorders delivery system and the Medi-Cal program. The bill would include 4 certification categories: adult peer support specialist, transitional-age youth peer support specialist, family peer support specialist, and parent peer support specialist. The bill would enable California to meet federal CMS requirements, obtain new federal Medicaid financial participation, provide a framework and standards for peer provider training, better define peer support services, and expand an evidence-based practice. Additionally, SB 614 allows for the use of Mental Health Services Act Funds and Workforce Education and Training Funds to be matched with federal funds for the purpose of establishing and maintaining the Peer Support Certification Program. The use of these funds for this purpose is consistent with Proposition 63 of 2004 as determined by the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**Action:** Support legislation that advances peer support programs for mental health treatment services, such as SB 614.

### **S21. Powdered Alcohol Products**

Powdered alcohol is the latest in a long list of specialty alcohol promotions that have been attractive to youth including alcopops (the sweetened drinks containing alcohol), caffeinated alcohol (which was eventually banned statewide), whipped cream alcohol and vaporized alcohol.

The reemergence of powdered alcohol and its introduction into the U.S. market have raised concerns among public health professionals, law enforcement, educators, parents, and community groups specifically for its potential to encourage binge drinking and to contribute to alcohol toxicity, which can be fatal. This product ‘of convenience’ is not only mixed with liquid, but in its more highly concentrated dry form, can be snorted, sprinkled on food and eaten. It can also be mixed with energy drinks, providing a risky mix of a drugs, with one being a central nervous system depressant and the other a stimulant. Of utmost concern is how this product is more easily stolen and concealed, and therefore more likely to be snuck into schools, movie theaters, parks, sporting events and concerts. Powdered alcohol products under the brand name ‘Palcohol’, were approved for sale in the United States in March 2015 by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), unless otherwise prohibited. These powdered alcohol products are 50% alcohol by weight.

California is the largest alcohol market in the U.S. It also suffers the most alcohol-related harm. Allowing another dangerous alcohol product to be sold in the State, especially one that is so easily concealed, puts youth at great risk. Many states have taken action in the absence of a federal ban. As of August 2015, 25 states made the decision to ban powdered alcohol. Two states have temporary one-year statutory bans. Colorado, Delaware, Michigan and New Mexico have included powdered alcohol in their statutory definitions of alcohol so that the product can be regulated under their existing alcohol statutes.

**Action:** Support legislative activities to address powdered alcohol, as advised by the Health Officers Association of California, which, pending the outcome of the technical assistance guidance from the Department of Public Health and the Attorney General’s office may take one of the following legislative forms:

- A ban on the sale, use, or possession of powdered alcohol;
- A temporary ban on the sale, use, or possession of powdered alcohol, with a sunset date to allow legislators to review the issue after it has been researched and/or implemented in other states; and/or
- Redefining “alcoholic beverage” in the California code to include powdered alcohol, making it subject to all the restrictions of other alcoholic beverages.

### **S22. Prevent and Reduce Prescription Drug Abuse and Misuse**

Abuse and misuse of prescription drugs (opioid pain relievers, stimulants, and sedatives) is a growing public health problem in the United States and in Sonoma County. National data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate that drug-induced deaths now exceed all other causes of injury-related deaths. Increased nonmedical use of prescription drugs has fueled the increases in addiction and mortality. Opioid use and abuse and subsequent morbidity and mortality rates are higher in Sonoma County than in California. The impact of prescription drug abuse demands immediate community attention.

Policies that strengthen funding, access and use of California’s Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES) database are beneficial as they help to reveal patient prescription patterns (e.g., “doctor shopping”) and prescribing opioid trends. In turn, this data aids in drug abuse surveillance and prevention efforts. Furthermore, policy that promotes links between the CURES, State mortality data, and Electronic Health Records (EHR) systems will allow for deeper understanding of trends. These linkages currently do not exist.

Statewide expansion of safe medication disposal programs is critical in the response to misuse of prescription drugs. Most medical providers and pharmacies will not take medication back from patients. However, it is important to remove these prescription medications from the community safely so that they are not misused. Nearly 70 percent of people misusing prescription pain relievers report receiving them from a friend or relative.

Medication disposal programs allow individuals to dispose of unneeded or expired medications in a safe, timely, and environmentally responsible manner and can help prevent potential diversion and abuse.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Require pharmacists to counsel patients on the proper storage and disposal of opioids and better enable health providers to prescribe abuse-deterrent formulation (ADF) opioids, like AB 623 (Wood);
- Allow pharmacies to accept unused and expired prescription medications and make drug companies responsible for the cost of disposing unused portions of their products;
- Strengthen funding, access and use of the California’s Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES) database; and
- Promote links between the California’s Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES), State (CDPH/DHCS) mortality data, and Electronic Health Records (EHR) systems.

### **S23. Current and Future Realigned Health and Human Service Programs**

The 2011-12 State Budget Act included the 2011 Realignment. While a large part of this shift of responsibilities from the State to counties focused on the public safety systems, it also included the realignment of two mental health and several substance use disorders programs.

The 2011 Realignment shifted funding for mental health managed care and the state general fund contribution to the local match for children’s Medi Cal services (known as Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) funding) to the sales tax revenues identified to fund this realignment. While the counties have been responsible for managing the provision of Medi-Cal services to children in their role as the Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Plan, this action shifted financial risk for these services to counties. In addition to this change related to the EPSDT funding, the mental health managed care allocation funding was also shifted from state general fund to sales tax revenue, a funding source that fluctuates with economic stability. In the past, the State has withheld cash payments in leaner years based on lower than budgeted sales tax receipts, requiring counties to float the required cash for behavioral health programs.

Along with the realignment of mental health funding and risk, 2011 Realignment shifted financial risk and responsibility to manage substance use disorders services, including the Drug Medi-Cal Program, Drug Courts, Perinatal Drug Program, and Non-Drug Medi-Cal Services.

While cash payments are controlled by the State and services are mandated to be provided by counties, the State continues to control rate setting and to retain the certification of new providers even if the County would prefer to not contract with the provider due to risk associated with some providers’ lesser than optimal quality assurance. As cost of doing business adjustments drive up provider rates, the State could force counties to fund “excess costs” with ‘91 realignment or other local funds. The counties would incur risk in their ability to manage their provider networks, utilization or quality. The solution to this conflict lies in establishing guidelines for Medi-Cal Managed Care contracts that are in alignment with federal guidelines.

**Action:** Support legislation and regulations that would:

- Provide counties the authority and processes needed to manage the new responsibilities shifted to them by the State;
- Index the allocation of mental health managed care funding to cover the costs of psychiatric hospitalization and other mandated mental health services; and
- Establish reimbursement rates under Medi-Cal Managed Care Contracts.

Oppose any efforts to reduce Sonoma County’s share of funding from 2011 Realignment.

**S24. Elimination of Fingerprinting Requirement for Participation in CalWORKs Program**

The Governor approved legislation in 2011 that eliminated the fingerprinting requirement for persons applying for CalFRESH assistance; however, a commensurate elimination of fingerprint requirements for CalWORKs was not approved. Fingerprinting has not been proven to reduce instances of fraud, but does create a barrier for both applicants and for counties, as getting fingerprinted can be difficult for persons who live in rural areas without access to transportation.

**Action:** Support legislation to repeal the fingerprinting requirement for CalWORKs applicants.

**S25. Retain County Psychiatric Expertise as Basis for LPS Conservatorship**

Current law provides that professionals in charge of county mental health facilities are responsible for recommending an investigation for a Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) conservatorship and provides for specific processes intended to protect the individual's federal due process rights. Legislation intended to authorize a probate court to order an investigation for an LPS conservatorship, or legislation intended to force psychiatric treatment for an individual either currently under or proposed for a probate conservatorship would circumvent both appropriate clinical input from county clinicians and circumvent federal due process rights.

**Action:** Oppose legislations regarding LPS conservatorships that would circumvent county clinical professionals and the protections that are currently in place to protect the due process rights of citizens who have a mental illness.

**Natural Resources****S26. Pesticide Law Enforcement Activities**

In the budget-trailer bill (Chapter 741, Statutes of 2003; SB 1049 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review)), intent language indicates that the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) should fund county Agricultural Commissioners' local pesticide regulatory programs with \$22 million annually. The Legislature failed to appropriate adequate funding to DPR to meet this level and no authority was provided to county Agricultural Commissioners to establish fees to cover their program costs. As approximately \$16 million in county general funds are contributed per fiscal year in order to maintain the integrity and quality of the pesticide regulatory system Californians have grown to expect, it is critical to find a way to fund these local programs.

**Action:**

- Support methods that would provide long-term stable funding for county pesticide regulatory activities.
- Support legislative or budgetary proposals that maintain or increase funding through the pesticide mill fee that is sufficient for pesticide regulatory activities to protect the safety of workers, the public and the environment and provides funding for education, outreach and compliance assessment activities related to the safe use of pesticides.
- Support the preemptive status of State pesticide laws and authority provided to the Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) and California Agricultural Commissioners.

**S27. Invasive Weed Management Funding**

Invasive noxious or non-native weeds continue to proliferate on public and private lands throughout California, threatening the State's critical infrastructure, its biodiversity, and ecological integrity. Weed Management Areas (WMA's) have been formed around the state to bring together all stakeholders concerned about invasive weed control within their respective areas. County stakeholders had established viable WMA's and funding needed to support these efforts. Unfortunately, weed management funding has been eliminated and the State's role in weed management has been significantly reduced or eliminated.



**Action:** Support legislative or budget proposals to fund invasive weed control on public and private lands throughout the State.

### **S28. California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act)**

The Williamson Act is one of the most effective tools in preventing the loss of farmland and open space. The Act provides tax breaks to landowners who contract with a county to keep their land in agriculture for a period of 10 years. To encourage county participation in the program, the State historically reimbursed counties a portion of the property tax revenue losses resulting from the lower assessments. The State discontinued the reimbursement in FY 2010-2011.

**Action:** Support legislative or budget proposals to fund the Williamson Act subventions to counties.

### **S29. Funding for Land and Conservation Easement Acquisition**

Sonoma County is rich with agricultural and natural open space lands – many of which are at risk of development. In 2006, the voters approved Measure F to extend a quarter-cent sales tax to fund the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District through 2013. However, the funds generated from the tax are not sufficient to ensure permanent protection of these important lands. In order to successfully achieve the goals set out in the District’s Board-adopted Acquisition Plan, the District and its land conservation partners will need to leverage every local sales tax dollar earned. State government has a history of creating opportunities to assist with funding land and conservation easement acquisition. Current programs and programs under consideration include:

*Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALCP)* through the Strategic Growth Council’s Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC) – This past year the Strategic Growth Council approved \$121.9 million in grants and loans to 28 different organizations, however only \$4.6 million from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) was allocated for agricultural conservation easements. The current staff recommendation for next year is \$40 million toward agricultural conservation easements.

*Proposition 1/2014 Water Bond* – Acquisition projects play a critical role in furthering the goals of the 2014 Bond and should qualify for water bond funds, and yet grant opportunities for land and conservation easement acquisition is not a specific category in allocation of water bond funds.

*SB 317 (de León)/2016 Parks Bond* – Any Parks Bond should allocate significant funds for land conservation, including sensitive natural habitats such as oak woodlands and coastal forests.

**Action:** Support Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District efforts to obtain funding through state-funded grant programs including but not limited to the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SGC) and any other programs funded by California’s climate auction revenues, 2014 Water Bond (Proposition 1) and a potential Parks Bond (SB 317) in 2016.

### **S30. Fishery Restoration Programs and Funding**

Remnant populations of Coho salmon in the Russian River are endangered, and a multi-agency captive broodstock program has been developed to assist in their recovery. Hatchery operations and production of fish are coordinated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The University of California and Sea Grant conduct monitoring of released fish as they rear in Russian River tributaries and subsequently migrate to the ocean in the spring. This information is used to evaluate the success of the recovery program and adaptively manage it to maximize the likelihood of long term success resulting in self-sustaining runs. The County strongly supports funding for Coho salmon issues, which will allow University of California, Cooperative Extension (UCCE) to continue its work on critical natural resources throughout the County.

California allocates general fund and water bond dollars to support salmon restoration programs. The State funding forms the state/local match for federal funding under the Pacific Coast Salmon Restoration Fund.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Provide funding for Coho salmon issues, allowing UCCE and California Sea Grant to continue their work on critical natural resources throughout the County;
- Appropriate \$10 million in Proposition 84 funds and \$10 million in General Fund money for salmon restoration programs managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife;
- Mandate that the Department use the funds for projects that fulfill requirements of the State's Coho Salmon Recovery Strategy; and
- Allocation future water bond or water infrastructure dollars for coastal salmon restoration.

### **S31. Protection of Oak Woodlands**

The Oak Woodland Conservation Act approved in 2001 encourages conservation of oak woodlands through the preparation and implementation of Oak Woodland Management Plans adopted by local legislative bodies. Funding is needed for the preparation and implementation of Oak Woodland Management Plans.

**Action:** Support legislation and budget language that provides funding for preparation and implementation of Oak Woodland Management Plans.

### **S32. Groundwater Banking for Local Water Supply**

Groundwater banking is an important component of the Water Agency's water supply strategies for the future. A number of barriers at the state level stand in the way of successful implementation of groundwater banking programs locally. Barriers include the high cost of preliminary studies required to determine feasibility, uncertain authority to capture and divert storm water flows for underground recharge and storage, the need to re-designate point of use or time of use under water rights permits, and unwarranted regulatory restrictions on underground recharge and storage of surface water in underground aquifers. Legislative action and participation in development of regulatory policy could be very valuable in moving local groundwater banking programs forward.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Provide guidelines for implementation of Proposition 1 groundwater project grants that fund groundwater banking or aquifer recharge programs in areas such as Sonoma Valley;
- Expedite regulatory approval and permitting for groundwater banking and aquifer recharge programs; and
- Allow surface water to be directed to off-stream reservoirs and stored for longer than 30 days.

### **S33. Recycled Water**

The State of California has recognized the importance of recycled water for meeting future water needs in the state and has set statewide goals to increase distribution and use of recycled water. However, existing statutes continue to regulate recycled water as a waste rather than a resource, resulting in burdensome rules that have the effect of delaying and increasing the costs associated with reuse initiatives like the North Bay Water Reuse Authority programs and other projects under development by local sanitation districts and cities.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Facilitate implementation of recycled water projects in ways that are protective of public health and surface and ground water quality; and
- Promote efficient implementation of recycled water projects throughout California.

## **Development Services**

### **S34. Improve Code Enforcement Efforts by Counties**

Successful abatement of nuisances and other code enforcement actions often include an award of costs and fines or penalties to the county. Current state law provides a specific process for ordering the cost of the abatement to be specially assessed against the parcel. Fines and penalties, however, are not currently added to the tax roll and must be collected through other methods. Government Code section 25845 and Government Code section 53069.4 address the county's authority with regards to nuisance abatement and collection of costs, fines and penalties. An amendment to these specific provisions of the Government Code to authorize also adding penalties to the tax roll would greatly increase the effectiveness of code enforcement penalty recovery.

**Action:** Support legislation to amend Government Code section 25845 and/or Government Code section 53069.4, and support other legislative efforts to specifically authorize abatement *penalties* to be specially assessed against the real property.

### **S35. Vital Record Certificate Paper**

Existing law requires specific security measures for vital record certificate paper, including intaglio print. AB 1546 (Olsen) seeks to amend Health and Safety Code to allow for a feature other than intaglio print that provides equal or greater security protection than intaglio print. Current options for intaglio printing are scarce, and a recent closure of the only existing US based printer of the intaglio security feature caused major delays in ordering and procurement of certificate paper. Amending the law would allow the State Registrar, in consultation with the County Recorder's Association of California and other stakeholders, to study the feasibility of the continued use of intaglio print and the implementation of different security features for paper used to print a vital record. If the law is not amended, the intaglio print would continue to be a required security feature even as the type of printing becomes scarcer, putting offices that issue vital record certificates at risk of not having a reliable supplier of certificate paper, and jeopardizing their ability to serve the public by providing vital records.

**Action:** Support legislation, such as AB 1546, to allow for security features other than intaglio print to be used for vital record certificate paper.

### **S36. Dissolution of Redevelopment Agencies**

Governor Brown approved legislation in 2011 to eliminate all redevelopment agencies (RDAs) in California. The provisions of the Redevelopment Dissolution Act as initially enacted and subsequently revised have been unclear, subject to change, and in some cases apparently contrary to other laws (such as federal contract law). Additionally, the State Department of Finance (DOF) has exercised broad, unilateral, and retroactive decision-making authority in implementing the Dissolution Act. Despite close adherence to the provisions of the Act, the duly appointed County Oversight Board's decision to authorize completion of the Highway 12 and Roseland Shopping Center projects was challenged by the DOF, forcing the County Successor Agency to file two lawsuits, which ultimately resulted in a favorable Court ruling and approval to proceed.

The DOF has continued to abuse its decision-making authority by denying the Successor Agency's requests for Redevelopment Property Tax Trust Funds (RPTTF) to pay the annual "housing entity administrative cost allowance" to the Sonoma County Housing Authority, as Housing Successor, as mandated by the enactment of AB 471 (Atkins) in February 2014. The cost allowance was established to provide adequate funds for administration of housing assets and obligations for situations in which the housing functions of the former redevelopment agency were not retained by the sponsoring community and therefore transferred to the local housing authority by operation of law. Successor agencies are required to list this cost on their ROPS and to pay the housing successor a minimum of \$150,000 annually for a period of five years (FY 14-15 through FY 18-19). The DOF asserts that the Sonoma County Housing Authority is the same as the County itself, and therefore not

entitled to receive the cost allowance, despite the fact that it is a separate legal entity from the County. This position is not supported by the existing statute.

While the elimination of RDAs will greatly impede the County's ability to improve and expand the infrastructure, facilities, and economies of the three project areas of Roseland, Sonoma Valley Springs, and Russian River, the County as Successor Agency and the Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC) as Housing Successor are complying with every provision and timeline established in the Dissolution Act. The State DOF is not adhering to this same standard, and is therefore frustrating the Successor Agency and Housing Successor's attempts to unwind and satisfy the former County RDA's non-housing obligations, and prudent management of the former County, City of Sebastopol, and City of Sonoma RDA's housing assets. The County Successor Agency has joined with other local jurisdictions to appeal this apparently erroneous staff level decision to the Courts.

**Action:**

Support CDC efforts to seek legislation that:

- Removes or reduces the State DOF's authority to overturn Oversight Board decisions that are made appropriately pursuant to the terms of the Dissolution Act;
- Enables Successor Agencies and Housing Successors to use bond proceeds from issuances through December 29, 2011, (the date on which the State Supreme Court upheld the validity of the Dissolution Act) for the purposes stated in the bond indenture;
- Requires the DOF to adhere to the provisions of the statute and approve RPTTF for Successor Agencies to pay the housing administrative cost allowance established by AB 471 to a Housing Successor that is a separate legal entity from the community that created the redevelopment agency; and
- Creates new programs or financing mechanisms that could be used in Sonoma County to support redevelopment, infrastructure, and economic development activities.

Oppose passage of any legislation that:

- Strengthens the State DOF's unilateral authority to overturn Oversight Board decisions that are made appropriately pursuant to the terms of the Dissolution Act.

Monitor new legislation or initiatives that:

- Revise the Dissolution Act to reform the way in which Successor Agencies will be permitted or required to implement the unwinding and final satisfaction of their enforceable obligations;
- Revise the Dissolution Act to reform the way in which the Housing Successors will be allowed to take ownership of, and use, housing assets of the former RDAs; and
- Amend the housing provisions of CRL to reform the way in which Housing Successors are permitted or required to use housing assets, and future income from housing assets.

**S37. Seismic Safety**

State law requires that General Plans include a Safety Element that evaluates seismic safety and establishes policies and programs to address potential concerns. State law also requires property owners to post notice of unreinforced masonry buildings potential safety hazards but does not provide funding to actually address these public safety concerns.

Earthquakes can also result in significant damage and hazardous conditions in mobile home parks. Sonoma County operates a program to install earthquake resistant bracing systems (ERBS) under the flooring of mobile home units, flexible gas lines, and hot water heater bracing. These measures are intended to prevent units from falling from their pier supports, or rupturing gas lines. The primary goal is to prevent fires that can spread throughout a mobile home park, and secondarily to minimize damage to the units themselves. Because a fire can be caused by just one unit's ruptured gas line and can quickly spread to other units throughout a mobile home park, ERBS should be installed on all units to be most effective. To date, funding for this program has been

available only for some areas of the County and only for units owned and occupied by specific income-eligible households.

**Action:** Support legislation and budget language that provides funding for seismic safety measures such as retrofits of unreinforced masonry buildings as well as auto shut offs, earthquake resistant bracing, flexible gas lines, and water heater bracing for mobile homes and other structures.

### **S38. Community Choice Aggregation**

The Water Agency and the County engaged in developing feasibility studies for development of a community choice aggregation program (Sonoma Clean Power) that provides local residents and businesses with an alternative source for procuring power. A joint powers authority was formed to develop and implement the Sonoma Clean Power entity, including an independent Board of Directors that is currently governing the entity. Sonoma Clean Power has been serving customers since May, 2014, and all eligible cities within Sonoma County have voted to join in addition to the County's participation. The Water Agency's investment in the development of Sonoma Clean Power is being reimbursed over time from the revenues of the new power entity.

#### **Action:**

- Monitor future community choice legislation and oppose bills that have negative impacts on Sonoma Clean Power;
- Support legislation that reduces cost or removes barriers to Community Choice implementation; and
- Submit filings and testimony before the California Public Utilities Commission regarding utility cost allocation, energy efficiency programs and other issues impacting Sonoma Clean Power.

### **S39. Air Pollution Program Efficiency and Effectiveness**

Legislation, state regulations, and policy substantially shape local air pollution control programs. Each year, legislative efforts, as well as rules and policies, are proposed at the state level. Air pollution control districts, the California Air Resources Board currently fund grants to incentivize cleanup of various pollution sources. Some of these grants are supported with state funds, others with local funds. Incentive programs are an increasingly important tool to achieve reductions in air pollution, including pollutants that harm public health and/or contribute to climate change.

#### **Action:**

- Support air quality bills or efforts that improve air quality or public health protection and enhance or do not restrict the District's authorities;
- Work to minimize negative program impacts and costs;
- Oppose or seek to change air quality bills or efforts that harm air quality or public health, or that restrict air district authority or impose significant unfunded obligations; and
- Support budget initiatives, legislation, or regulatory changes to increase funds available for incentive programs to reduce air pollution, reduce incentive program complexity and enhance incentive program efficiency and effectiveness.

### **S40. Aviation Fuel Tax Diversion to State General Fund**

Per Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Policy and Procedures Concerning the use of Airport Revenue, the State was notified in 2014 that California and others have until December 8, 2017, to allocate aviation fuel taxes to aeronautical purposes. The State has estimated between \$100 to \$150 million is currently directed to the State General Fund in violation of FAA policy. Legislation is required to bring the State into compliance and provide important funding for aeronautical purposes.

**Action:** Support legislation like SB 747 (McGuire) to allocate aviation fuel taxes in compliance with FAA policies and provide additional funding for aeronautical purposes.

#### **S41. Comprehensive Service Delivery to Address Energy, Poverty and Jobs**

Funding and programs to address community and individual health and wellness such as those related to climate, energy, transportation, housing, food, and poverty are not currently integrated into comprehensive service delivery systems. Coordinating and integrating broad public and private support services has the potential to engender greater and longer-lasting improvements to client conditions and create significant short- and long-term cost savings. Currently program delivery systems are typically short-term and isolated from other services, without consideration for comprehensive and long-term impact and interaction. Local government planning, coordination and delivery of a broad array of programs to improve health, human, housing, energy and transportation services could stabilize and transition underserved communities to sustainable and secure communities.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Aggregate both state and local resources into an *Integrated Climate Funding Market* model, using a performance-based approach, to expedite implementation, reduce administrative redundancies, optimize return on investment and achieve deeper savings;
- Require implementing a comprehensive service delivery approach for underserved and tenant-based communities and individuals over a period of at least 10 years;
- Incentivize property owners to accept permanent improvements to property through housing and energy programs that will permanently improve the finances of tenant residents and businesses;
- Combine program funding to retrofit housing and shift family transportation to zero emission vehicles; and
- Integrate workforce development for building performance and zero emission vehicles into the system of service delivery created through comprehensive program design.

#### **S42. Selection and Implementation of a National Home Energy Score Standard**

Performance Benchmarking for residential and nonresidential buildings is essential to understanding and then managing the energy usage of a building, in relation both to others and to an objective standard. The Home Energy Scoring (HES) Tool developed by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) would provide that standard at a low-cost. The primary goal is to provide a standardized set of energy information.

The Home Energy Score is similar to a vehicle's miles-per-gallon rating. It informs homeowners and homebuyers of how much energy a home is expected to use and provides suggestions for improving its energy efficiency. It also allows homeowners to compare the energy performance of their homes to other homes nationwide. The Home Energy Score includes: 1) the Score itself, 2) facts about the home including data collected and energy use breakdown, and 3) recommendations to improve the Score and the energy efficiency of the home. The Home Energy Score can be used to support appraisals and real estate listings. The data translates easily to appraisal information, including the Green Addendum, and can easily be transported to the multiple listing service (MLS) to support energy efficiency in real estate valuation. It helps customers have a consistent frame of reference as they move between states. The HES current pricing is \$79-\$129 for a score, versus \$450 and up for a CA HERS II rating.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Increase direct funding of contractor training and access to the HES Tool; and
- Require a recent Home Energy Score be made available to prospective buyers at the point of sale of the building.

#### **S43. Job Order Contracting**

A Job Order Contract (JOC) is an annual, competitively bid, firm fixed unit price, non-specific scope contract used for the performance of repair and remodeling construction work, including renovation, alteration, painting, and repair. The JOC program affords tremendous efficiencies by way of completing a formal bidding process. Once the bidding process is complete and an award is made, project managers, utilizing local contractors wherever

possible, can contract work out quickly, often at lower overall project cost. Current law limits the term of JOC contracts to one year. However, a one year term is too limiting, particularly when going through a thorough and robust bidding process. A longer term would reduce administrative work required each year, reducing the annual cost of administering the JOC program.

**Action:** Support legislation or regulatory policy to increase the term limit of JOC contracts beyond one year.

#### **S44. Force Account Dollar Limits**

The Public Contract Code allows counties to utilize in-house workers for construction projects up to \$45,000 in value under a Force Account. While the Force Account Dollar Limit was increased from \$30,000 to \$45,000, this threshold is simply too low. Construction costs have increased significantly over the past several years, resulting in many smaller projects exceeding the \$45,000 limit and requiring them to be bid. Bidding these smaller projects increases the overall project costs and, in many cases, it is difficult to find contractors willing to bid on these projects.

**Action:** Support legislation or regulatory policy to increase the existing Force Account Dollar Limit.

#### **S45. Informal Construction Dollar Thresholds**

The Public Contract Code allows construction projects under \$175,000 to be bid using an informal bidding process through the Purchasing Agent. The informal bidding process has allowed counties to bid out work more quickly and at less cost than the formal bidding process. With the increased construction costs, fewer projects are able to take advantage of the informal process as they exceed the \$175,000 threshold, requiring them to be bid using the more costly formal bidding process. Increasing the threshold for informal bidding presents low risk and allows counties to save time and money bidding these smaller projects.

**Action:** Support legislation or regulatory policy to increase the Informal Construction Dollar Threshold.

#### **S46. The Sonoma County Green Business Program**

The Sonoma County Green Business Program (SGBP) certifies small-to-medium sized businesses (SMBs) for meeting a high set of environmental standards in the areas of energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, pollution prevention, and employee behavioral changes. The California State Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy reports that businesses under 100 employees comprise nearly 98% of all state businesses and are responsible for employing over 37% of all workers. SMBs use an estimated 45% of all energy in California. Considered “hard to reach” by utilities and state programs alike, SMBs typically lack expertise, time, and funding to implement new conservation practices, even when it would benefit both their bottom line and California’s greenhouse gas goals. Local Green Business Programs like the SGBP collaborate via a formally established network called the California Green Business Network to coordinate, share resources, create/update standards, and expand the program statewide.

In 2011, AB 913 (Feuer) was signed by the governor and recognized the California Green Business Program. As part of the bill, the California Green Business Program received funding and staff support from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). However in 2012, due to state budget cuts, AB 913 was amended to no longer have DTSC provide any fiscal or staff support.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Increase direct funding of local Green Business Programs or the California Green Business Network;
- Support the creation of unsiloed small businesses multi-media funds (focused on reducing energy, water, waste, pollution prevention, wastewater, behavioral environmental changes) through one state agency; and
- Effectuate AB 913 and add a funding component to the bill.

**S47. Limited Liability for Agritourism Operations**

Agritourism presents a unique opportunity for people to participate in agriculturally based operations or activities that are important to Sonoma County. These activities vary widely and may include a pumpkin patch, picking fruit, visiting cheese creameries and grape stomping. However, these activities carry risks and the cost of liability insurance and the risk of liability prevents many potential agritourism operations. To address this, some states have passed laws to limit the liability for agritourism by protecting the operations from being liable for “injury to or the death of a participant arising from the inherent risks of an agri-tourism activity” with specific stipulations about signage and related noticing depending upon the state. (Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 535 (2015)).

**Action:** Support legislation that limits the potential liability of organizations engaging in agritourism activities.

**S48. Water/Energy Programs for Climate Protection**

The state has an ongoing interest in developing programs to increase energy efficiency and to reduce energy consumption in the water sector. Allowance revenue from the cap-and-trade program could be used to fund programs to meet these goals. Revenues are projected to range from \$850 million to more than \$1.5 billion per year. While the Water Agency has largely achieved its objectives to reduce energy-related greenhouse gas emissions it has other opportunities to make further reductions in water-related energy use. The state is also has an interest in developing plans for climate adaptation for the water sector.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to:

- Support legislation to allocate state allowance revenues for implementation of energy/water and youth employment programs at the local level;
- Support legislation to enable statewide implementation of on-bill energy/water efficiency programs similar to the Windsor PAYs pilot program;
- Advocate for legislation and regulatory policy to facilitate implementation of distributed generation projects like the existing floating solar photovoltaic project; and
- Participate in policy development related to climate adaptation and advocate for positions that provide maximum benefit to local interests.

**S49. Water-Related Revenue Allocations for Water Suppliers**

The State has from time to time looked to the water sector to capture additional revenue to meet other State obligations or sought to apply fees for water use that could be used to meet state priorities. Enactment of Proposition 1A has largely secured the Water Agency’s allocation of local property tax revenue. However, legislative leaders continue to consider opportunities to apply fees on water use to meet primarily watershed-related needs. The Water Agency’s retail contractors are already paying a watershed related charge that funds implementation of the Biological Opinion and other programs and may view additional state fees for this purpose as redundant and unnecessary.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to oppose legislation or administrative policy that would reallocate or restrict the use of local tax revenue for water and wastewater agencies and oppose implementation of any statewide fee applied to water users that would have undesirable impacts on local ratepayers.

**S50. Household Hazardous Waste Program and Funding**

Many existing products and several new waste streams have been identified as hazardous waste when discarded, requiring the County to provide for collection and load checking to remove these wastes from the waste stream. The State has provided funding assistance for only a limited number of these items.

Local agencies, including Sonoma County, are currently tasked with diverting 100 percent of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) from landfills. Collectively, these waste streams are costing the County hundreds of thousands of dollars to manage annually. The Sonoma County Waste Management Agency oversees all waste



diversion mandated under AB 939 (Salas), including HHW, and is funded with a surcharge on tipping fees. Managing the hazardous waste program accounts for over 78% of the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency's ongoing budget, and over 65% of the program cost is spent on the cost of disposing of HHW.

All mandated improvements should come with identified funding sources. An unfunded mandate would force local governments to significantly increase garbage rates and/or taxes, or shift funding from mandated recycling and composting programs.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a vital component to HHW programs. EPR provides an economic incentive to manufacturers to make their products less toxic and easier to process at the end of the product's useful life. Waste streams such as batteries, fluorescent lamps, electronic devices, pharmaceuticals, and sharps have emerged as a major concern, and requires attention and action from the Legislature.

**Action:**

- Support extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation, including extended responsibility for mercury-containing items (fluorescent lamps and tubes etc.), electronic devices (in addition to CRT's), batteries, sharps, pharmaceuticals, and other hazardous items that are prohibited from landfill disposal.
- Oppose unfunded mandates that increase program costs for local government HHW programs.

**S51. Reclamation vs. Restoration of Terrace Mines**

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act requires mining operators to prepare Reclamation Plans to ensure mining sites are properly reclaimed for an appropriate end use. However, many historic terrace mining sites are being reclaimed to an end use that is harmful to endangered fish. Terrace mines are often reclaimed by maintaining a disconnected floodplain and deep water ponds that provide anaerobic conditions that trap endangered fish and cause toxic contaminants to accumulate. Restored floodplains would provide critical habitat for endangered fish and avoid the entrapment and contamination issues. Changes to adopted Reclamation Plans for major restoration efforts to restore historic floodplain functions are costly to prepare and even more costly to implement, in part because state law requires bonding for any improvements.

**Action:** Support legislation and budget language that would:

- Provide funding for preparation of Restoration Plans for mining sites that provide for reconnected floodplain habitats in lieu of revised Reclamation Plans, and allow bonding requirements to be waived by the local agency when other public funding for the implementation of the restoration project is provided; and
- Provide funding of specific restoration sites, including the two terrace mining sites along the middle reach of the Russian River.

**S52. Storm Drain Maintenance Assessment Districts New NPDES Water Quality Standards**

Storm drains are separated by law from sewer drains. To form a maintenance district and assess property owners to fund storm drain maintenance requires a high threshold of voter approval (66 2/3 %). AB 2403 (Rendon) expands the definition of "water" under Proposition 218 to include storm water which is used to enhance water supply (allowing for a 60% or less vote). While helpful, this legislation will apply in limited circumstances and will likely not affect storm water projects which provide benefits to the environment.

**Action:** Support legislation that assists with funding for storm water maintenance and that lowers the voter approval threshold to form storm water maintenance districts to 60% or less of property owners.

**S53. Building Accessibility**

Building accessibility regulations are established and promulgated on both Federal and State levels. Federal regulations are updated every 20 years and State regulations are updated every 3 years. One component previously required in both Federal and State regulations was the requirement to install detectable warning strips prior to entering a vehicular way. These warning strips are commonly known as "truncated domes."

Truncated domes serve visually impaired citizens to provide an audible detection. Unfortunately, these same truncated domes impose a hazard to the citizens who are dependent on using walkers, wheelchairs, crutches and otherwise can cause a trip and slip hazard.

Due to the liability of using truncated domes outweighing the benefit, the 2010 Federal Standards for Accessible Design dropped the requirement to install truncated domes. However, the 2013 California Building Code did not follow suit and retained the requirement.

**Action:** Support legislation to amend the State Building Code (California Building Code) to mirror Federal standards and drop the requirement to install and maintain truncated domes.

#### **S54. Transportation Fee Limits**

The County has authority to issue transportation permits for extra-legal loads (i.e., over height, width or length) on County roadways. The County issues over 1,000 such permits each year. Approximately 80 percent of these permits are for one-time uses, such as moving a large piece of equipment or a building. The remaining permits are annual permits for entities that regularly move large loads.

The fees for these permits are set by the Vehicle Code at an amount not to exceed the fee collected by Caltrans for similar permits on state highways. The fees themselves are set in the California Code of Regulations. Currently these fees are \$16 for a one-time permit and \$90 for an annual permit. The time needed for County staff to process these permits is not great. However, these very low fees do not begin to cover the actual cost. Staff analysis indicates that these fees only recover just over 60 percent of the actual cost. Occasionally a permit takes many hours of staff time to ensure the transport will occur safely and, still, \$16 is the only fee collected.

#### **Action:**

- Amend the California Code of Regulations, Title 21, Section 1411.3 to increase transportation permit fees for one-time and annual permits to \$50.00 and \$110.00, respectively;
- Amend California Vehicle Code Section 35795 to allow local jurisdictions to charge transportation permits fees that reflect the cost of processing these permits; and
- Support the current proposal of the Caltrans Transporter Permits Advisory Council to increase transportation permit fees by 19 percent and support efforts to move toward eventual full cost recovery for these permits.

#### **S55. Proposition 1 Implementation**

Proposition 1, a \$7.5 billion water bond, was approved by the voters in November 2014. The measure allocated \$26.5 million to the North Coast and \$65 million to the Bay Area for implementation of Integrated Regional Water Management Plans, and provided funding for recycled water, storm water, groundwater, fisheries, watershed restoration, flood control and storage programs. In 2015, the administration developed guidelines for many of the grants that will allocate the funding. This effort will continue in 2016. In addition, some of the Proposition 1 funds will be disbursed by the legislature through the budget process.

**Action:** Advocate for guidelines that ensure that Sonoma County and regional agencies have maximum opportunity to draw down grant funding for local projects. Actively participate in development of budget language and implementation legislation, to help ensure funding eligibility for Water Agency and sanitation district projects and the Integrated Regional Water Management programs.

Specific priorities include development of grant criteria that will benefit:

- Projects to enhance forecasting capabilities to track atmospheric rivers and other storms and that provide opportunities for Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations at Lake Mendocino;
- Sonoma County's sanitation upgrade projects;
- Recycled water projects, including storage and delivery of water;

- Development of groundwater resources, including costs associated with implementation of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and for groundwater recharge;
- Expansion of water-use efficiency programs, including opportunities for rural well-owners;
- Recovery and monitoring of endangered or threatened Russian River salmon and steelhead including the meeting the required state match for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund;
- Projects that reduce flood risks through enhanced stormwater management at Copeland Creek, Sonoma Valley, Petaluma and other locations;
- Programs that facilitate stormwater regulatory compliance through the use of offset mechanisms that improve effectiveness and reduce cost;
- Allocation of bond funds designated for flood control and wildlife conservation to projects needed to restore and preserve the Laguna de Santa Rosa;
- Development of programs at the Wildlife Conservation Board that contribute to increased instream flow in natural streams;
- Projects to enter geologic information from well logs into a groundwater model or other computer or electronic system to assist in groundwater availability studies, groundwater sustainability studies, and/or assessment of environmental/aquatic impacts; and
- Projects for groundwater modeling relative to groundwater availability studies, groundwater sustainability studies, and/or assessment of environmental/aquatic impacts.

#### **S56. Proposition 218 and Water Fees**

A recent court decision strictly limited the authority for water providers to implement water conserving tiered rate structures based on an interpretation of the California constitution as amended under Proposition 218. The language also limits the ability of water providers to adopt rate structures that assist low income customers and subjects the implementation of property related fees to approval by two thirds of the voters. Water service, wastewater service and refuse disposal were exempted from the vote requirements but fees for stormwater maintenance and flood protection were not exempted. Stormwater programs are of increasing importance at this time due to the rising flood risk and the need to capture stormwater for aquifer recharge and other purposes.

**Action:** Support development of legislation that would propose an amendment to the terms of Proposition 218 in the California constitution in order to:

- State clearly that tiered water rate structures for conservation purposes or rate structures that provide for low income ratepayer assistance are allowed under the constitution; and
- Find that flood protection and stormwater maintenance, capture, and water quality improvement are included in the category of fees exempt from the two thirds vote requirement.

#### **S57. California State Solid Waste Tipping Fees**

Cities and counties have worked hard and have borne a significant cost to maximize their solid waste recycling activities while minimizing their solid waste landfill disposal. Sonoma County locally funds programs to reduce our waste stream and increase diversion for recycling and compost. As of 2014, Sonoma County's estimated waste diversion level was 74.6%. We are currently taking action to increase our diversion to meet our goal of 80% waste diversion.

Tipping fees on waste in Sonoma County are \$115.00/ton for self-haulers, which make up about 22% of haulers at the landfill. The rate for the County is 122.45, and 126.45 for cities. Currently, \$1.40 is paid to the State on every ton disposed to fund the activities of CalRecycle. Proposals in the legislature would substantially increase this CalRecycle Fee imposed on operators of disposal facilities to \$4.00/ton. This increase would be directly born by self-haulers and passed on to customers in cities and unincorporated areas.

For years, CalRecycle has neglected to recognize that its current structure of revenue generation through solid waste tipping fees is insufficient. Instead of raising tipping fees on solid waste, CalRecycle should implement approaches that reflect the changing nature of the solid waste management system.

**Action:** Oppose any substantial increase on the Disposal Fee imposed on operators of disposal facilities. Any increases to tipping fees should reflect expanded or new programs that reduce the waste stream. Any new proposals for revenue generation should diversify funding sources and be decided through a stakeholder process with local participation.

## **Justice Services**

### **S58. Public Safety Realignment**

The 2011-12 State Budget Act included the 2011 Public Safety Realignment Act. A large part of this shift of responsibilities from the State to counties focused on the public safety systems, with non-violent, non-sexual, non-serious offenders being sentenced to time in county jails, rather than state prison, increasing the population in county jails. The 2011 Realignment provided a stable source of funding to counties, but the funding is not sufficient to cover the entire cost of the responsibilities shifted to Counties. In 2014, the voters approved Proposition 47, which changed certain offenses from felony to misdemeanor, creating another significant change to the criminal justice system.

County jails have not only seen an increase in population due to Realignment, but also a change in the nature of the population, bringing older and more sophisticated inmates into county jails for longer terms. This has resulted in increased challenges in providing the most appropriate types of beds, as well as programs and health services, including behavioral health. One of the many changes due to Realignment has been an increase in the number of assaults in the jail.

Sonoma County believes in providing Criminal Justice services locally, when appropriate, but wants to ensure adequate resources are available to provide such services. Subsequently, any responsibilities shifted to the county must be shifted with adequate resources to provide meet these responsibilities.

**Action:** Ongoing funding for AB 109 (Committee of Budget) operations at the local level is now enshrined in the CA Constitution; continue to support any legislation that maintains current funding levels and provides additional funding to address specific service needs (e.g. custody-based treatment programs and cognitive behavioral interventions).

### **S59. Jail Alternative Model Recognition**

The Legislature passed and the Governor signed SB 863 as part of the 2014-15 budget. This legislation provides funding for jail beds that are accompanied by programming facilities to improve outcomes for released prisoners. The Sonoma County Strategic Plan, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in December 2007 and re-affirmed by the Board in October 2009 and November 2010, discusses the need to “more effectively address public safety issues at the lowest risk levels for all members of the community, including early detection, intervention, and diversion of minor criminal activity, substance abuse, and mental health issues.” Sonoma County recently updated the Criminal Justice Master Plan. This revision updated the offender profile to take into consideration the implementation of Public Safety Realignment and Proposition 47, and will help inform recommendations for the most appropriate detention alternatives for Sonoma County.

Sonoma County is exploring a number of jail alternatives including the potential development of an expanded Day Reporting Center. This model holds offenders accountable while providing programs to help them become productive members of our community, and assists offenders in taking responsibility for their lives through law-abiding and responsible behavior. The model includes offering programs and services such as job skills training,

life skills classes, thought-restructuring programs, cognitive behavioral interventions, individual and group counseling, alcohol and drug counseling, family counseling, and financial management classes.

**Action:** Establish a funding source (similar to SB 1022 or SB 863 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review)) which allows counties to propose construction of Day Reporting Centers to accommodate offender programming and services in a non-custodial setting.

#### **S60. PC 1170(h) Sentencing Structure**

Criminal Justice Realignment (AB 109) represented a paradigm shift in the criminal justice system, shifting prison housing for “low level offenders” from prison to county jails, and transferring the supervision from State Parole to counties. AB 109 requires the imprisonment of offenders meeting specified conditions in local jails instead of prison. Penal Code Section 1170(h) specified those crimes, and also enabled the Court the discretion to impose a “split sentence” to enable a period of community supervision for offenders serving felony sentences in local jails.

PC 1170(h) does not limit the length of county jail commitment. The only restrictions on the eligibility for a county jail commitment are based on the offense or the offender’s record. This has resulted in some local jurisdictions being required to house inmates in county jails for extremely lengthy periods of time, putting pressure on local jail capacity and changing the nature of the inmate population county jails were built for.

**Action:** Advocate to change the PC 1170(h) sentencing structure to limit the length of 1170(h) sentences at county jail/local prison to a maximum sentence of five years, and limiting sentences imposed consecutively to ten years in the aggregate, with all sentences subject to PC 4010 credits.

#### **S61. Reduce Recidivism and Housing and Employment Barriers for Individuals with Criminal Records**

The County and the Law Office of the Public Defender support legislation in which offenders are encouraged to safely reunite with the community, avoid recidivism and promote the health and safety of the community at large. Successful completion of drug treatment, anger management and other such programs while incarcerated or on probation are a key component to avoid future incarceration. Many clients experience challenges during the course of these programs. Lack of time management skills, conflicts with family, lack of transportation, and continued alcohol and/or drug dependence may lead to minor probation violations that result in further incarceration.

There are many barriers facing offenders with respect to housing and employment. Gainful employment and stability at home improve opportunities for continued education, therapy, drug treatment and other activities which are necessary to the reduction of recidivism.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts to fund and assist indigent inmates with the reentry process after release from county jail or other detention facility, such as AB 920 (Gipson).

#### **S62. Peace Officer Training: Mental Health Response**

The Law Office of the Public Defender represents individuals suffering with a variety of mental health issues. Often individuals are arrested as a result of behavior associated with mental illness. The health and safety of those individuals and of the first responders in contact with them is a priority to the office. Existing law requires the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to provide basic training courses in the handling of persons with developmental or mental illness, or both. Further training and a better understanding of persons suffering from mental illness, intellectual disabilities and/or substance abuse disorders would improve community policing practice and potentially reduce negative encounters between peace officers and the community.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts that require increased training and continuing education courses for law enforcement officers and field training officers on law enforcement interactions with persons with mental illness, such as SB 11 (Beall) and SB 29 (Beall).

### **S63. Reimbursement for Court Security Costs**

Pursuant to Government Code Section 69922, the Sheriff's Office is obligated to provide security for the local Court. For the past several years, funding for court security services has been provided through the State Trial Court Trust Fund as a payment from our local Court. Many costs have been either non-eligible or not allowed to be paid until additional funds were allocated to the local Court by the State Legislature. These costs include new hire and ongoing general deputy training, initial uniform and equipment, Lieutenant's time managing the Court Security Bureau, professional services such as payroll and accounting, general overhead, retiree health care, 4850 costs, and costs to transport inmates to and from court.

As part of the 2011-2012 State Budget, the legislature enacted a "realignment" of State program responsibilities and revenues to local government. With the passage of AB 118 (Committee on Budget), the Local Revenue Fund 2011 and various subaccounts, including the Trial Court Security Account, were created in the State Treasury. Funding is provided through specified tax sources and other monies. The Trial Court Security Account monies are allocated monthly by the State Controller to the counties. Certain court security costs not funded in the past will be eligible to be reimbursed, if monies are sufficient in the Trial Court Security Account. These costs include the Lieutenant Pay and professional services.

Confusion still exists around what can be funded since the Administrative Office of the Courts rules and SB 1396 (Dunn) still apply with regard to the billing principals of negotiated security contracts. The legislative language needs to be consistent and allow the broadest use of the funds so that counties are not responsible for payment of court costs. Ideally, new legislative language should also allow for expansion of the funds to apply to costs required for the transportation of inmates to and from Court facilities. Additionally, realignment funding for court security ensure that future funding includes cost of living adjustments and allows for additional costs related to new judgeships, expansion of court facilities, or other conditions requiring additional court security personnel.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Allow counties to be reimbursed for all costs for court security;
- Provide future court security funding to the counties with cost of living adjustments, provisions for new judgeships, changing or expanding court facilities, and other events that require additional court security personnel or security costs;
- Allow for other court security related items, such as transporting inmates to and from Court facilities, to be considered as eligible costs for realignment funding;
- Clean up language in the Superior Court Law enforcement Act of 2001 (SB 1396) to be consistent with the Realignment Act of 2011 (AB 118);
- Revise Government Code 69922 as a result of the State's Realignment Act of 2011 (AB 118);
- Clarify the definition of what Court Security costs are and provide that all court security costs shall be reimbursable; and
- Expand the eligibility of costs to include transportation of inmates.

### **S64. County Correctional Facilities and Funding/Overcrowding**

Sonoma County projects the county jail will reach its inmate population capacity by 2025. State prison reform efforts have shifted many state inmates to the county jail, further reducing available capacity. The estimated cost to consolidate and expand the County's main adult detention facility to house the increasing inmate population is over \$400 million. Furthermore, a panel of three federal judges ordered the State to reduce the State prison population to 137.5% of capacity by April 18, 2014, down from the December 2013 population of approximately 150% of capacity. In February 2014, the panel extended the deadline until February 28, 2016. As of September 9, 2015, the state prison population was at 135% of capacity or 111,656 inmates housed in State facilities. Not included in this number are the 6,508 inmates being housed in out-of-state facilities.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Enhance diversion strategies, to prevent offenders from further involvement in the criminal justice system, e.g. mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, vocational training, and adult probation supervision; and
- Provide state funding to maintain and expand county correctional facilities to house increasing inmate populations, and to fund viable jail alternatives.

Oppose legislation that would:

- Comply with the federal court order by shifting more State prison inmates to county jails and/or county probation, and releases dangerous felons into our community, for lack of a secure state facility to house them through the end of their sentence; or
- Reduce state resources available for alternative facilities for special needs populations, such as the mentally ill in need of restoration services.

### **S65. Retiree Extra Help Annual Hourly Limit**

Currently, the number of allowable annual hours for retiree extra help in counties governed by the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 ('37 Act) is less than the number of hours allowed for retiree extra help employees who retired from CalPERS agencies. Additionally, '37 Act retiree extra help hour limits are based on a fiscal year while CalPERS retiree extra help hour limits are based on a rolling calendar year. '37 Act retirees are only allowed 960 hours in a fiscal year while CalPERS retirees are allowed 1,380 hours in a rolling calendar year. The County seeks to equalize this by increasing the number of annual extra help hours for '37 Act retirees by 420 hours and changing the basis for the annual hourly limit from fiscal year to rolling calendar year.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts to increase the annual allowable hours worked for '37 Act retiree extra help to 1,380 and to change hour limits from being based on a fiscal year to a rolling calendar year to be consistent with CalPERS retiree extra help.

### **S66. Court fines and penalties**

Revenue from fines and penalties assessed by the Courts are distributed broadly to support the criminal justice system in the state of California, as well as other programs. Counties are required to support the cost of Court operations in each county through a Maintenance of Effort requirement that was established by the Lockyer-Isenberg Trial Court Realignment Act. The County funds this primarily through revenue received from court-ordered fines and penalties. These fines and penalties also provide financial support for the Alternate Defense Counsel services provided in cases where the Public Defender cannot provide services due to a conflict of interest. In addition, penalty assessments support other activities in the County, including lab testing fees for alcohol and drugs in the District Attorney's office, Emergency Medical Services to indigent individuals through the Maddy and Richie Funds, and operational support for substance use disorder treatment services, law enforcement services, and road maintenance. At the state level, fine and penalty revenue supports trust funds that are passed through to the County for Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) for sworn deputies and Standards and Training for Corrections (STC) for correctional and probation officers.

The County acknowledges that the high fines and penalties put an undue burden on those on the margins of poverty, and efforts to reduce fees and penalties is a strategy in the efforts to reduce poverty. However, since these fees and penalties support critical, mandated functions, any reduction to fees and penalties should be offset by state support for these functions, or a reduction in the Maintenance of Effort required for Court Support operations, or a combination of both.

**Action:** Support legislation that reduces fees and penalties only if there is a corresponding reduction in county obligation to support court support operations or increased revenue from the state for supported programs. This should apply both to long-term reductions in fees and penalties, and any short-term strategies such as amnesty programs.

## **Administrative Support & Fiscal Services**

### **S67. Workers' Compensation**

Since passage of SB 899 (Poochigian) Workers' Compensation Reform, labor representatives and the workers' compensation applicant attorney bar have sought legislative support for weakening the just-enacted reforms, pressed the Administrative Director to produce weakened guidelines, and pursued legal challenges to the new reforms. Previously, extraordinarily high Workers' Compensation costs experienced by Sonoma County and other public employers resulted in the need to divert important discretionary general funds away from other identified needs to offset this growing liability. Further, the claims adjudication system became unbalanced to the point that common sense often did not prevail in the determination of benefits.

**Action:** Oppose all legislative and administrative efforts aimed at further reducing improvements made to the workers compensation system through SB 899. Continue to actively support the legislative platforms outlined by various statewide public employer organizations, including the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the CSAC Excess Insurance Authority (CSAC-EIA), and the Public Agency Risk Managers Association (PARMA).

### **S68. California Paid Sick Leave Law Clarification**

In September 2014, through AB 1522 (Gonzales), the State enacted the Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act of 2014 ("Paid Sick Leave Law"), codified as Labor Code Sections 245 through 249. The provisions of the law become effective July 1, 2015. Briefly, the new law:

- Mandates minimum sick leave accrual levels (accrue up to 24 hours annually, with possible cap of 48 hours) for all workers in California after 30 days of employment;
- Provides protected use of accrued sick leave (employer cannot deny use, employee determines how much time is needed; employer may not retaliate, threaten to demote or discharge, or discriminate for use of sick leave); and
- Expands the situations under which employees may use accrued sick leave. (Currently, use of sick leave is generally limited to care of self, child, spouse, domestic partner, or parent. The new law adds grandparent, grandchild and parent-in-law to the list. Employees may also use the time to seek relief and assistance - medical, shelter, restraining orders, etc. – related to incidents of domestic violence or sexual assault).

**Action:** The County of Sonoma seeks either clarifying legislation or clarifying guidelines from the California Department of Labor, to assist agencies with developing new policies related to the implementation of the Sick Leave Law. Four specific areas for clarification are:

- Are interns considered temporary employees and therefore eligible to accrue sick leave? Does it matter whether the internship is paid or unpaid?
- Can we interpret "hours worked" (as used in 246 (b)(1) – *An employee shall accrue paid sick days at the rate of not less than one hour per every 30 hours worked...*) to mean regular hours worked, and not include overtime hours? (Employees do not currently accrue sick leave on overtime hours.)
- Our agency exceeds the minimum accrual rate and cap stipulated in the new law (employees have no cap on accrual). Do the conditions and protections in the new law pertaining to the use of accrued time apply to all accrued sick leave, or can it be applied to a subset of accrued sick leave hours that meet the minimum requirements of the law?
- The law only requires the employee to provide notice of intent to use accrued sick leave. If the provisions and protections of the law apply to ALL accrued sick leave hours, departments are left with no recourse for excessive and fraudulent use of sick leave. As written, requiring a doctor's note to substantiate an absence, counseling an employee for excessive, unsubstantiated, use of leave, addressing "pattern" use of sick leave (Monday/Friday), or addressing reduced productivity related to undocumented absences could arguably result in retaliation charges. Please clarify, or add language, that allows employers to require medical certification/documentation, or at least limits the no-documentation-required provision of this law to the first 48 hours of sick leave used per year.



**S69. Fair Share of Property Tax Administration Costs**

Since 2005 the State of California, on behalf of schools, has not paid any of the property tax administration costs. The prior Property Tax Administration Program (PTAP) only covered a small portion of the State's share of the costs (Sonoma County's share was \$1,035,000). The County, cities and special districts pay all costs for the property tax administration program, but get less than 40% of the property tax revenue. Having the State pay its "Fair Share" of the administration costs would provide more financial support for Assessor's, Tax Collector and Auditor's offices, as well as potentially reducing the County's cost for the program.

**Action:** Seek and support legislation which would ensure that the State, on behalf of schools, provides its share of needed funds associated with administering and collecting property taxes.

**S70. Vacation Rentals and Transient Occupancy Tax Collection**

The rapid growth of the online home sharing economy poses many challenges to local municipalities. One such challenge is the identification of vacation homes that are operating without the required permits and certificates, and the resulting difficulty in collection of Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT). Due to real concerns for their users' privacy and safety, most online sites do not post actual property addresses or full names and contact information for their users. This poses a challenge to government in properly identifying illegal operators, and to Tax Collectors in properly identifying the appropriate entity to tax. Additionally, due to the ease of registration and a lack of proper instruction, many individuals engaged in the home sharing economy are not aware of Sonoma County's permitting and TOT requirements. Requiring online home sharing sites to collect and share information with local governments, as well as to collect TOT and allow for audits, will significantly improve tax compliance and remove a competitive advantage non-payers enjoy.

**Action:** Support legislation that requires online vacation rental and home sharing sites to:

- Collect and share vacation rental information with California municipalities;
- Collect TOT on behalf of California municipalities; and
- Allow for the audit of their users as prescribed by the Sonoma County TOT Ordinance.

**S71. Single Sourcing Based on Green Standards**

Sonoma County supports state action to develop "Green Standards" for single source procurement/sourcing decisions as they relate to the purchase of goods and professional services. As many of the standards today are self-certifying, the appropriate criteria would need to be established so that it is fair for all parties. Developing green preference programs, for example, would allow true benefits to be realized by suppliers. Similarly, expanding existing law to include incentives for suppliers that objectively demonstrate certifications in particular areas promotes expertise and an overall acceleration of green projects. Local government agencies will benefit from any legislative processes that help support and govern such green procurement policies.

**Action:** Support legislation that authorizes local procurement agencies to single-source green goods and professional services, and that provides incentives for suppliers to objectively demonstrate certifications.

**S72. Marketplace Equity and Consumer Protection**

Weights and Measures Programs are important to businesses and consumers in California. Weights and Measures regulatory activities ensure that there is a “level playing field” for businesses and industries. Likewise, these programs are critical to providing protection for consumers and a method for making value comparisons by providing equity in the marketplace. The Division of Measurement Standards (DMS) within the California Department of Food and Agriculture is the lead agency for weights and measures. DMS has incurred significant general fund reductions that have diminished their ability to provide consumer protection.

**Action:**

- Support legislation that preserves and enhances funding resources for weights and measures programs at the State (DMS) and local (Sealer) level for consumer protection;
- Encourage the use of state general funds for the Division of Measurement Standards;
- Support legislation that assures clear labeling and accuracy of the net quantity of packaged products to promote value comparison and to ensure the consumer receives the correct product and the quantity of product for which they pay;
- Oppose legislation that would allow for industry self-certification of commercial weighing and measuring devices;
- Oppose legislation that would diminish or remove protections now afforded to consumers for transactions measured by weighing or measuring devices or computed by Point of Sale systems; and
- Support legislation that establishes funding for quantity control and package inspection.

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## **Federal Priorities**

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## Federal Priorities

### **F1. Geothermal Royalty Revenues**

Sonoma County received a share of Geothermal Royalty revenues from September 2006 through October 2010, for a total of \$5.4 million. Since 2010, these funds have been placed in jeopardy, with intervention required by the County's legislative delegation in order to provide short-term fixes. Without permanent protection, this funding source remains threatened.

**Action:** Seek legislative or budget action that permanently protects the County's geothermal royalty share of \$2,100,000.

### **F2. Anti-Poverty, Affordable Housing, and Homelessness Assistance**

Sonoma County's residential rental market, long considered to be one of the least affordable in the nation when comparing rent levels to the area median income, did not share in the downward price adjustment that created a more affordable for-sale housing market since the Great Recession. The fair market rent for a 2-bedroom unit jumped 47.4% between 2000 and 2010, going from \$886 to \$1,306. For workers earning the current minimum wage, the fair market rent in 2013 required a household with at least three full-time workers. The affordability situation is only worsening, as the average apartment rent rose to almost \$1,600 in 2015, a jump of 30% since 2012. The rate of Sonoma County's increase was the greatest of 23 metropolitan areas in California studied by Real Answers, a Novato-based rent research firm. Axiometrics, a rent research firm based in Dallas, reported in May 2014 that Sonoma County tied for fifth, with the Vallejo area, among U.S. communities with the fastest yearly rent increases.

The availability of affordable housing in the County is further limited by the current rental market vacancy rate that is hovering around just 1%. Even renter households with sufficiently high income levels, or with rental subsidies through the local housing authorities, are finding it increasingly difficult to find a suitable and affordable place to live.

The lack of affordable housing stock in the County helps to fuel the rate of homelessness for local residents. During the last biennial point-in-time homeless count conducted in January 2015, 3,107 people were without permanent housing, with 2,070 of those sleeping out-of-doors. There are now 9,274 local households on the Sonoma County Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program waiting list, many of which are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless as they are forced to pay up to 50% or more of their income just for housing costs. For those who receive assistance, it is very common to be denied housing by landlords throughout the County who refuse to accept Section 8 vouchers as a form of rent payment. Currently, neither federal law nor California law prohibits discrimination against tenants with Section 8 vouchers. In other words, Section 8 vouchers do not qualify as a "source of income" and thus are not covered under source of income antidiscrimination provisions. There are several states and some local jurisdictions within California that do have laws to protect tenants against discrimination based on the use of public housing assistance.

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is proposing providing Medi-Cal funds for services that wrap around shelter and new housing. Medicaid-funded shelter could contribute to better health outcomes and reduced total cost of care for beneficiaries. DHCS will be introducing ideas to local jurisdictions that can support the goal of a whole-person approach to care for vulnerable populations.

Finally, the resources available to the County to assist in the development of more affordable housing to mitigate the affordability trends and rate of homelessness have been severely diminished over recent years.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Increase the federal minimum wage;
- Provide a permanent source of funding for development of affordable housing;
- Increase funding for the Housing Choice Voucher Program to increase the number of households that can be served by the local housing authorities;
- Provide Housing Choice Vouchers dedicated to veterans (VASH Vouchers) to the Sonoma County Housing Authority (currently provided only to Santa Rosa Housing Authority);
- Increase funds for operation of homelessness assistance programs;
- Make available funds and new programs equally available to both rural and urban areas;
- Support efforts to effect meaningful reform on the policy of housing insecurity to achieve better outcomes for vulnerable populations;
- Evaluate options for targeted populations including homeless individuals who utilize Emergency Rooms and hospitals, and nursing facility residents who can be cared for in a community setting;
- Provide funds directly to local jurisdictions, through block grants or similar mechanisms, to allow for local prioritization and decision-making regarding use of resources for specific homelessness assistance and affordable housing developments; and
- Eliminate discrimination against tenants or landlords based on the use of Section 8 vouchers or other government assistance.

### **F3. Family Justice Center Sonoma County**

The Family Justice Center Sonoma County (FJCSC) is a multi-disciplinary, physically co-located model with a coordinated, single point-of-access offering comprehensive services for victims of family violence. The FJC collaborative model is designed to improve victim safety and recovery, increase success in offender prosecutions, and reduce family violence injuries and homicide. Additional collateral benefits documented as outcomes include increased service efficiencies through the provision of collaborative services, and increased community support for services being offered to victims and their children, thus reducing costs and increasing revenues. All Family Justice Centers seek to improve the services being offered to victims, and to reduce the number of locations a victim must visit as well as the number of visits they must make to tell their story and receive the help they need. The United States Department of Justice, through its Office on Violence against Women (O.V.W.), has identified the Family Justice Center model as a best practice in the field of domestic violence intervention and prevention services. Additionally, Congress has recognized the importance of Family Justice Centers as a "purpose area" in the Title of the Violence Against Women Act (V.A.W.A. 2005).

**Action:** Seek federal appropriations or other grant sources for continued and enhanced advocacy programs at the Sonoma County Family Justice Center, such as expansion of the video conferencing program that allows victims in remote locations to more easily access FJCSC services.

### **F4. Increase Chronic Disease Prevention and Wellness Promotion**

Millions of Americans suffer from diseases that can be prevented by addressing common risk factors like tobacco use, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity. Chronic diseases in California such as heart disease, cancer, lung disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity and asthma increasingly place a burden on our communities. Aspects of the community environment such as recreation facilities, building safe communities, and ensuring access to low cost farm-fresh fruits and vegetables can mitigate chronic disease issues.

In 2010, Congress created the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), as part of the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA), to expand and sustain the necessary infrastructure to prevent disease, provide for early detection, and manage conditions before they become severe. The Prevention and Public Health Fund (Fund) can address the many emerging and persistent chronic disease rates that Sonoma County must address to become the healthiest county in the State by 2020.

The Fund is the nation's largest single investment in prevention. Programs supported by the Fund take an innovative approach by supporting cross-sector, public-private partnerships and collaborations to improve health outcomes, reduce the chronic disease burden, and lower health costs. Since 2010, the Fund has provided \$5.25 billion to support state and local public health efforts to transform and revitalize communities, build epidemiology and laboratory capacity, track and respond to disease outbreaks, train the nation's public health and health care workforce, prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, expand access to vaccines, reduce tobacco use, and help control the obesity epidemic.

The Fund is intended to ensure a coordinated, comprehensive, sustainable, and accountable approach to improving our country's health outcomes through effective prevention and public health programs and should be used "for programs authorized by the Public Health Service Act, for prevention, wellness, and public health activities" (ACA). The money is to be strategically used to support disease prevention by promoting access to vaccines, building the public health workforce, and investing in community-based prevention. Furthermore, the Act specifically states that community-based prevention funding must only support evidence-based prevention programs which have been shown through scientific research to reduce chronic disease, including behavioral health conditions, and address health disparities. Research has shown that effective community level prevention activities focusing on nutrition, physical activity and smoking cessation can reduce chronic disease rates and have a significant return on investment.

The Prevention Fund provides the first-ever, reliable national funding stream for public health, while creating jobs, bending the health-care cost curve, and prioritizing disease prevention. It creates an unprecedented opportunity for local health departments to augment and expand existing chronic disease programs or to participate in new programs to address longstanding chronic disease issues in their communities. However, this fund may be targeted to pay for other initiatives.

**Action:**

- Support the recommendation that members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees allocate the Prevention Fund in Fiscal Year 2016, and ensure that PPHF resources are allocated in a manner that enhances counties' efforts to prevent disease and injury, promote health and ultimately reduce healthcare costs;
- Strongly oppose any efforts to use the Prevention and Public Health Fund from the Affordable Care Act (ACA) as an offset for revenue lost in any other legislative proposals, such as those being offered during the Senate's consideration of the Small Business Jobs and Credit Act (H.R. 5297). Such an action would virtually eliminate the Fund, and mark a severe blow to this monumental commitment to prevention and public health under the Act;
- Support a varied policy agenda addressing the prevention of chronic disease and promotion of wellness;
- Support a dedicated funding stream to fund preventive health services or activities that improve community health outcomes, including focus on social determinants of health;
- Encourage the allocation of new revenue streams in an equitable manner across all local health jurisdictions;
- Seek to improve nutrition, obesity and fitness education programs as well as health literacy, educational attainment, income security, healthy and equitable built environments and policies that support health throughout the life cycle; and
- Advocate for flexibility to design prevention programs to take advantage of health department strengths and encourage the provision of base funding with additional funding available on a competitive basis.

**F5. Increase Access to Mental Health Services by Supporting Removal of the IMD Exclusion**

The Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion is a part of the federal legislation that implemented the Medicaid program in 1965. It continues to prohibit the use of federal Medicaid funds to pay for services to adults (ages 22 to 64) in freestanding psychiatric hospitals. It does allow payment for services provided in Psychiatric Units of General Acute Care Hospitals.

Between 1965 and 1995, the number of Psychiatric Hospitals and Psychiatric Units in General Acute Care Hospitals has declined by 32% or 3,000 beds. Under the Affordable Care Act, more IMDs and Psychiatric Hospitals have closed under a consolidation of hospitals. Of the total psychiatric hospital beds available in 2011, 55% were in general acute care hospitals making 45% of the beds unavailable to adult Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

As a result, access to inpatient psychiatric services for adult Medi-Cal clients is limited and in some areas, non-existent. County Mental Health Agencies are forced to attempt placement in a limited number of Psychiatric Units in General Acute Care facilities, or place clients in freestanding psychiatric units that use state/local funds to pay for 100% of the care. This restriction on payment for services in free standing facilities reduces the supply of available beds. In addition, lack of access to psychiatric inpatient beds impacts hospital emergency departments. Clients experiencing mental health crises are often taken to General Acute Care Emergency Rooms. The lack of access to psychiatric inpatient services exacerbated by the IMD exclusion significantly increases the time clients stay in emergency departments awaiting placement.

**Action:** Co-sponsor or support legislation that repeals or modifies the IMD Exclusion to enhance parity and to allow greater equality between Medicaid and Private Insurance benefits.

#### **F6. Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization**

The Charles M Schulz Sonoma County Airport is in the process of developing plans for several key capital projects over the next couple years. Since most of these projects rely heavily on the availability of Federal funding through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), it is critical to ensure that the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) bill be reauthorized, updated, and modernized.

**Action:** Advocate before the Congress on the following airport development and service issues:

- Modernize the Passenger Facility Charge. Urge Congress to modernize the federal cap on the locally set Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) user fee by setting it at \$8.50 and adjusting it annually to offset the impact of inflation. The Airport currently collects the maximum allowable of \$4.50 per passenger enplanement. These funds are currently used to pay for the match requirements for the Runway Safety Area project and at this rate, our PFC collection is committed for the next 15 years. With an increase in PFCs, the Airport would use PFCs for projects such as the terminal upgrades and enhancements. Congress has not increased the PFC since 2000.
- Protect the AIP Grant Program. Urge Congress to fully protect the AIP funding levels, as this grant program helps finance critical safety, security and capacity projects at airports. The Airport has identified the need for \$28 million in capital needs over the next five years for completion of the RSA project, ramp rehabilitations, land acquisition, a new aircraft rescue and firefighting facility building, and terminal expansion (this does not include the construction of a new terminal). Congress has funded the AIP program at \$3.35 billion for the last few years, which is well short of the FAA estimates for AIP eligible projects (estimated need is \$8.5 billion per year).
- Preserve Tax Exempt Bonds. Urge Congress to preserve and restore tax exempt financing for airport bonds and eliminate the alternative minimum tax burden on private activity bonds. Current law allows for tax exempt financing for airport projects. The Airport currently does not use bonds to finance airport projects, however, with the potential for a new terminal it is critical to have access to low cost financing.

Additionally, miscellaneous items may present themselves requiring input and advocacy, such as:

- FAA tower funding. Three years ago, the FAA proposed eliminating funding for contract Air Traffic Control towers (Sonoma County was on that list). Urge Congress to continue the \$144 million contract tower program.
- Small Community Air Service Development Grants. The Airport has been awarded two small community air service development grants to assist in our efforts to attract new commercial air service. We believe it is highly likely that the Airport will need to submit grant applications in the future.

## F7. Federal Transportation Funding Priorities

The County has numerous transportation infrastructure projects that are planned or require funding. Transportation infrastructure is critical to the continued success and bolstering of Sonoma County's economic development, tourism, and manufacturing industries. A secure, long term funding source is necessary for local agencies to plan and deliver road, bridge and transit programs. A reauthorization should not only provide an adequate and secure funding source for projects but also focus on other priorities, such as project streamlining, highway safety, and improved environmental review practices in the form of CEQA for NEPA reciprocity.

**Action:** Support a Long Term Reauthorization or other action that includes the following components:

- **Funding.** Authorize a long-term funding solution that supports current or greater Federal funding levels with adjustment for inflation for road, bridge, and transit programs. Any reauthorization should have a dedicated funding source to address bridges, as these projects do not compete well against major congestion or complete street projects.
- **Project Streamlining.** Current delivery processes for receiving federal funding result in higher project costs and longer completion times. Support legislation that - for projects under \$5 million and similar to ones identified in MAP-21 - establishes an exemption allowing projects receiving limited Federal funding to be performed in the same manner that state and local governments accomplish projects. Support legislation which allows for projects that are within the existing roadway right way to be substantially streamlined.
- **Safety Initiatives.** Rural roads have a disproportionate number of highway fatalities in the US, at roughly 57%. Support future transportation bills that require State Departments of Transportation to coordinate with local agencies in developing Strategic Highway Safety Plans. Urge congress to support Toward Zero Deaths Grants which would provide local and non-profit organizations with funding to establish and implement these effective safety programs.
- **CEQA for NEPA Reciprocity.** Environmental protections afforded by CEQA surpass those of NEPA, however the current dual reporting practice causes increased costs and delays for CEQA and NEPA review. Support action that eliminates the duplication of reporting overlapping analysis. In instances where NEPA surpasses CEQA in environmental analysis, mandate that those portions be included in the CEQA analysis for federally-funded transportation projects.

## F8. Tribal Issues

Federally recognized Indian tribes can develop lands held in trust by the federal government without regard to local land use plans, such as the County General Plan. Further, such developments can result in significant adverse impacts on the county, its citizenry, services, lands, and infrastructure that the county may not have the ability to mitigate. Recognizing this, the Board has adopted resolutions and provided policy direction both on specific development proposals and more general matters to better address tribal gaming and other development on tribal lands. Board policy has included opposing tribal gaming and insuring that the impacts of tribal development projects are fully mitigated. In addition, the Board and County staff have actively participated in developing policy which deals with these issues regionally, and on state and national levels.

**Action:** Monitor and support efforts to enact legislation and regulations consistent with California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and National Association of Counties (NACo) policies, prior and future Board resolutions, and policy direction with respect to tribal recognition, fee-to-trust reform, and development proposals. Oppose legislation and regulations that are inconsistent with the above.

Specific actions include:

- Monitor development of federal rules and legislation regarding tribal acknowledgment and appeals;
- Advocate revisions to the trust acquisition process to insure that impacts of tribal development projects are fully mitigated; and
- Advocate the County position, in coordination with CSAC, as legislation is developed to address the *Carciari* decision or otherwise affect the trust land acquisition process.



**F9. Bodega Bay Dredging**

Bodega Bay, located in Sonoma County on the California Coast about 60 miles north of San Francisco, is a shallow draft harbor of refuge that supports a Coast Guard search-and-rescue station, commercial and sport fishing, and recreational craft. The Operations and Maintenance schedule provides for periodic inspection and repair of three breakwaters and infrequent (11-year cycle) maintenance dredging of the Federal Channel (including three turning basins) to a depth of 12 feet Mean Lower Low Water.

Funding for the permitting and testing of the dredging area was approved in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)14. Pending FFY15 federal labor obligations, the Army Corps will have approximately \$70,000 carryover funds for the first quarter of FY16 to continue project administration and coordination with agencies pending the testing results due in December.

\$1,000,000 in the FFY16 Army Corps of Engineers work plan is necessary to resume environmental and engineering activities. Inclusion of the full remaining budget for the dredging is requested to be included in the President's FFY17 budget so that a complete plans and specifications package is ready for contract by Feb, 2017. Funding will need to be available by mid-March to allow a re-start of uninterrupted work schedule. The schedule supports a contract solicitation in spring of 2017 in order to start dredging in early summer of 2017 to coincide with the preferred summer weather work window.

**Action:** Add necessary funding to Bodega Bay Operations and Maintenance dredging to Army Corps Federal Fiscal Year 2016 work plan, and \$6.6 million needed for dredging to the President's Army Corps budget.

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## **Federal Issues**

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## Federal Issues

Following are the County's general federal advocacy issues for 2016. General advocacy issues differ from priority advocacy issues in that the County's legislative advocates will primarily support the efforts of others to enact legislation to address these concerns, which are most often shared concerns of multiple counties. The Federal Issues are categorized by functional area within the County organization.

### Health & Human Services

#### **F10. Threat to Primary Care Access**

Health Centers' federal funding is financed through a mix of annual discretionary appropriations and mandatory funding appropriated through the mandatory Health Centers Fund. In FY2016, Health Centers face a funding cliff: mandatory funding for Health Centers is scheduled to end. With only discretionary funding at current levels, Health Centers would see up to a 70% reduction in grant funding, leading to closures of sites, staff layoffs and elimination of health care access in some of the nation's most vulnerable communities. This would reverse 12 years of bipartisan investment in Health Centers, and would occur just as the demand for the primary and preventive care Health Centers provide is growing.

In addition to Health Centers, the National Health Service Corps and Teaching Health Centers programs also face looming funding cliffs. The National Health Service Corps is a vital program that provides scholarships and loan repayment to providers that commit to serving in underserved areas. The Teaching Health Center program is an innovative effort focused on growing the supply of primary care providers trained in community-based settings.

**Action:** Support stabilizing funding levels for Health Centers in FY2015 and beyond to ensure continued viability, invest in access and prevention, and meet increasing demand. Continuing funding for the vitally important National Health Service Corps and Teaching Health Center primary care workforce programs.

#### **F11. The Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act by a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform of the public workforce system in more than 15 years. Every year the key programs that form the pillars of WIOA help tens of millions of job seekers and workers to connect to good jobs and acquire the skills and credentials needed to obtain them.

WIOA replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and retains and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In general, the Act took effect on July 1, 2015, the first full program year after enactment. Provisions of this new law will impact the County's Workforce Board and the One Stop Center, Job Link. WIOA legislation requires Workforce Boards to procure their One Stop Operator and have them in place by July 1, 2017. 36 of the 51 Workforce Boards in California, including Sonoma County, are operated out of county government. The employees of these One-Stops are county employees. By requiring the One Stop Operator to be procured, Workforce Boards need to go through the procurement process to hopefully be allowed to continue offering the services they currently provide and if not successful in the procurement process would need to lay off their staff.

**Action:** Support efforts that allow Workforce Boards the option to operate or procure their One Stop services.

**F12. TANF Reauthorization**

Authorization of TANF was temporarily extended to September 30, 2015, by the Continuing Appropriations Resolution of 2015. Ideally, reauthorization will include a revision of how the state's Work Participation Rate (WPR) is calculated. Currently, the formula for WPR ensures failure because the numerator includes all recipients who are required to participate in work activities, and the denominator includes recipients who are not required to work. Nearly 6,800 Sonoma County residents receive TANF (CalWORKs).

**Action:** Support reauthorization of TANF including a revised definition of Work Participation Rate (WPR).

**F13. Elder Justice Act**

President Obama proposed \$25 million in funding for the Elder Justice Act for 2015. The appropriation was reduced to \$4 million, but marked the first time that federal funds were allocated for the Elder Justice Act.

After years of advocacy efforts, the Elder Justice Act (EJA), the nation's first comprehensive national legislation addressing elder abuse, was signed into law in March 2010. Appropriations have not been authorized at the levels that have been proposed by the President, which left the most provisions of this law unfunded. The EJA law has the promise of establishing federal standards for adult protective services and providing a dedicated federal funding stream for services to protect seniors and vulnerable adults from abuse. The EJA also provides funding for the Long Term Care Ombudsman to investigate abuse and neglect in skilled nursing facilities. The law also provides for the establishment of Forensic Centers on Elder Abuse and training in abuse investigation standards. The Human Services Department urges full federal funding to support the Elder Justice Act as it was originally designed.

**Action:** Support federal budget appropriations for the Elder Justice Act.

**F14. Older Americans Act (OAA)**

Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA) was proposed in 2012. In each year the reauthorization has not been acted on by Congress. In July 2015, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Older Americans Act, the Senate unanimously passed the reauthorization. The House must now act on OAA reauthorization. The OAA is vitally important to Sonoma County because the state funding for Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) has been eliminated. Seniors age 60 years and older account for over 20% of the total population in Sonoma County. By 2030, seniors age 65 years and older will account a projected 25% of the total population in Sonoma County. Public services for older adults are limited, with the majority of services available to seniors with low incomes.

Congress passed the OAA in 1965 to address a lack of community social resources for older persons. The act established a national network of Area Agencies on Aging which oversee a variety of social services for seniors including: nutrition, elder abuse prevention, legal services and advocacy, and caregiver resources. The OAA has never been adequately funded and does not reflect the need for senior services or the population growth in people over age 60. With the elimination of state funding to support California's Area Agencies on Aging programs, it is critical that the proposed federal funding remains in place. The Human Services Department urges the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act to expand services that are not currently funded, and advocates for increased flexibility in federal regulations.

**Action:** Support the reauthorization of and increased federal funding for the Older Americans Act.

**F15. Close the Readiness Gap with Investments in Early Learning**

A multitude of longitudinal studies shows that investments in early childhood education for three- and four-year-old children yield a significant dividend to communities including improved educational, employment and health outcomes, a reduction in the achievement gap, lower crime rates and fewer people in need of economic assistance. In the current system of State subsidized slots there are two barriers that restrict full access to

quality early care and education, (1) a lack of facilities to support the expansion of subsidized slots, and (2) the eligibility range for subsidized slots is too narrow to pay for the high cost of quality early care.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts that:

- Increase access to quality early childhood education and school readiness programs that are designed to align with common core standards;
- Fully fund voluntary, transitional kindergarten for all four-year-old children;
- Expand access to state government subsidized slots for all low-income, three-year-old children by expanding facilities and raising the income levels to qualify;
- Increase federal funding levels for Early Head Start, Head Start, and other federally sponsored early childcare and education programs to ensure access for all qualifying Sonoma County families; and
- Address the critical need for early childcare and education facilities by increasing state and federal funding opportunities for infrastructure development.

## **Development Services**

### **F16. Federal Tax Credits: Extension of Solar, Reinstatement and Expansion of Energy Efficiency**

The speed and scale of renewable generation and energy efficiency deployment continue to lack the magnitude required to mitigate the impacts of fossil fuel generated emissions. The fossil fuel industry still benefits from system wide economic advantages not shared by renewable generation and the “nega-watts” of energy efficiency.

Extension of the Federal solar tax credit and reinstatement of energy efficiency tax credits will support job growth and work force expansion in these areas, elevate the priority of taking action for taxpayers, and balance the support of the federal government across competing industries.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Extend and expand the Residential Renewable Energy Tax Credit / Solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC);
- Extend and expand the Business Energy Investment Tax Credit (ITC); and
- Restore and expand the Residential Energy Efficiency Tax Credit.

### **F17. Climate Protection and Energy Efficiency Legislation**

Legislative measures to implement nationwide reductions in greenhouse gas emissions failed passage in the prior legislative session. The 112<sup>th</sup> Congress is likely to consider less expansive measures that would make incremental progress toward increased energy efficiency, implementation of renewable portfolio standards, and other items. Staff and Board members have monitored and participated in Climate Communities efforts to establish revenue streams to support local government addressing climate change.

Climate protection and energy efficiency program legislation offers an opportunity to advance local efforts by providing federal funding and policy support. Authorization language would help establish long-term program with federal cost-share.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to seek the introduction of legislation that authorizes a competitive grant program that addresses energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation programs; and support implementation language of renewable portfolio standards and revenue streams to support local governments that are addressing climate change.

**F18. Sonoma County Transit Modernization and Enhancements**

Urge support for federal funding that will enable continuing efforts to modernize and upgrade Sonoma County Transit with eight clean-energy replacement transit coaches, transit facility capacity and energy-efficiency improvements and the development of a Sonoma County Transit/Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) transit center at the region are committed to a comprehensive effort to improve the air quality. To this end, the County has replaced its diesel buses with clean-fuel buses powered by natural gas. The County is scheduled to replace twelve buses over the next year to maintain service on all routes and accommodate anticipated ridership growth upon introduction of SMART passenger rail service in late 2016.

**Action:** Support efforts for inclusion of funding for these projects in the next federal transportation re-authorization bill.

**F19. Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) Projects**

As a quorum of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors helps constitute the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, and regional transportation priorities reflect County residents' needs, this Platform recommends working, where feasible, in collaboration with SCTA staff and advocates to seek transportation funding from the federal government on the following focus areas.

- Monitor the federal process related to new federal transportation legislation – development of the successor to MAP-21 or any changes, extensions or clean up to MAP-21.
- Monitor any efforts at the federal level to implement funding or financing mechanisms that could impact transportation.
- Engage in administrative deliberations on project delivery and implementation at the federal and state level. Advocate for efficiencies in project delivery and cost cutting measures that enable more projects to be built.
- Advocate for legislative or administrative proposals to increase overall funding levels for transportation infrastructure, operations and maintenance in Sonoma County. Options may include: Cap and trade revenue; Statewide bond; Vehicle miles traveled tax; Fuel tax; Carbon tax; Vehicle registration fee; and Vehicle license fee.
- Advocate for reduction of the voter threshold for special sales tax measures.
- Oppose efforts to reduce or divert funding from transportation projects, and support efforts to protect and preserve transportation funding.

**Action:** Support Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) efforts for inclusion in the next federal transportation re-authorization bill and support, where feasible, the SCTA 2015 Legislative Platform.

**F20. Russian River Biological Opinion**

The Water Agency is required to implement the Recommended Prudent Alternatives and Measures and the other terms and conditions of the Biological Opinion (BO) and continue to coordinate with US Army Corps of Engineers on obtaining currently identified funding needs, identifying long-term funding needs, determining the appropriate review and approval process and federal authorization needs, and ultimately to jointly implement the alternatives and terms and conditions. Russian River Project authorization was included in the proposed 2014 House Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) legislation. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding and additional Operations funding has been received to initiate some of the alternatives and measures. Over the remaining 11 year term of the BO, millions of dollars of annual funding beyond the operations and maintenance needs of the existing Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino facilities will be needed to meet the timelines and project needs identified in the BO.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to:

- Seek legislation that would implement the Recommended Prudent Alternatives and Measures and terms and conditions of BO; and
- Support continued appropriations for Corps authorized BO requirements in Energy and Water appropriations bills.

#### **F21. Russian River Project: Warm Springs Dam and Coyote Valley Dam Operations**

Operations and Maintenance funding varies annually, and is not always adequate to fully fund hatchery operations. The Sonoma County Water Agency has pursued additional funding annually to support existing Coho broodstock program.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to acquire full funding of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) needs and to implement an existing and expanded Coho broodstock program; and support SCWA efforts to pursue statutory or report language directing the Corps to use O&M funding for ESA purposes.

#### **F22. San Francisco Bay Restoration**

San Francisco Estuary Project is part of the National Estuaries Program but receives considerably less funding than other regions. Increased funding would benefit reuse and wetland restoration projects and monitoring and research needs in the San Francisco Bay Watershed.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to secure funding for the San Francisco Bay Estuary Project.

#### **F23. Collaboration with USGS and NOAA**

The Water Agency has an ongoing need for better information regarding stream flows, water quality and quantity in both ground and surface waters, and near and long-term weather predictions. This information will help with all aspects of the Water Agency's responsibilities to provide water, reduce flooding, and provide sanitation services. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are two federal agencies that provide technical services to analyze, monitor, and model these areas of Water Agency interest. Any opportunity to work with such agencies, support funding for such programs, and assist in development of programs that would provide more detailed and accurate information to the Water Agency should be supported.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to:

- Monitor and support federal appropriations for research, modeling, and data collection in the areas of water quality, ground and surface water supplies, streamflows, and weather and climate predictability for related programs with USGS and NOAA; and
- Collaborate with USGS and NOAA to develop and implement such programs.

#### **F24. Agricultural Water Enhancement Program**

The Northern California Wine Country Agricultural Water Conservation and Water Quality Improvement Program is funded out of the federal Agricultural Water Enhancement Program and focuses on construction of off-stream ponds and other water conserving infrastructure to reduce direct diversions. This particular program was approved for \$5.7 million in July 2009, and includes the Russian River and Sonoma Creek watersheds along with the Navarro and Napa Rivers.

**Action:** Support SCWA efforts to acquire ongoing funding of this program to assist agricultural interests in implementing projects that benefit fisheries, water conservation, and other watershed improvements in the Russian River Watershed and in the SCWA's service area.

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## **General Issues**



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## General Issues

Following are the County's general advocacy issues for 2016. General advocacy issues differ from priority advocacy issues in that the County's legislative advocates will primarily support the efforts of others to enact legislation to address these concerns, which are most often shared concerns of multiple counties. General advocacy issues have connections to both State and Federal legislative or funding action. The General Issues are categorized by functional area within the County organization.

### Health & Human Services

#### **G1. Health Coverage for All Children and Adult Californians**

The Affordable Care Act dramatically reduced the number of uninsured; however, there remain 4 million Californians without insurance. Many of the uninsured work for employers that do not offer insurance, and those who are offered insurance often cannot afford their share of the premium. Young adults, racial and ethnic minorities, and those who are non-citizens are more likely to be uninsured. Lack of insurance has a significant impact on an individual's ability to access health care services. Uninsured adults are more likely to postpone or forego health care altogether, are less able to afford prescription drugs, and less likely to follow through on treatment plans. Reduced access to quality health care results in poor health, preventable hospitalizations, and premature death.

Similar to the efforts that have been made to provide insurance coverage for uninsured children, the County supports the development of a long term solution that will provide health care coverage for all residents of California. Toward that end, the County urges the State and Federal governments to build upon the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) with the goal of expanding a system of health care coverage and medical care delivery for all children and adults. Expansion should preserve the strengths of the current system, including the unique qualities of county operated systems, such as the County's Healthy Kids program, but also address areas of concern such as correctional health services.

Any health care reform process must take into account historical, current, and future county costs for treating those who are, and those who may remain, uninsured. Finally, health care reform must include mental health parity provisions that provide coverage for mental health services equal to coverage for medical and surgical benefits and ensure adequate ongoing funding for both expanded and core mental health services.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts to provide health insurance for all children and adults regardless of immigration status and a stable source of funding for all residents of California consistent with the *Health Care Reform Principles of Action* adopted by the Board. Support funding of Medi-Cal to enable expansion to adults over 19 regardless of immigration status. Support legislation like H.R. 2646 (Murphy), H.R. 2850 (Edwards), and S. 1945 (Murphy & Cassidy) that enhance comprehensive mental health services.

#### **G2. Dental Health**

Many Californians, including hundreds of thousands of children, have unmet oral health needs. Nearly 5 million children in the state are enrolled in DentiCal and theoretically have access to dental services, yet with an average ratio of 1 DentiCal dentist for every 700 children, access remains a serious impediment to optimal dental health. Untreated dental problems result in days missed at school or work and increased susceptibility to other more damaging health problems such as meningitis, lung and heart disease. More than half of pediatric ER visits in one year were for dental problems, with half of those children between 1 and 5 years of age. Evidence-

based prevention strategies with the highest return on investment include community water fluoridation, school sealant programs and teeth brushing programs. In California, 63.7% of the population receives fluoridated water, ranking 34<sup>th</sup> in the U.S., reaching an estimated 24 million residents. That number is steadily increasing: San Jose, once the only large city in the U.S. without this public health benefit, will be fluoridating its municipal system in the next few years. The Healthy People Oral Health 2020 goal is to increase the proportion of the U.S. population served by community water systems with optimally fluoridated water to 79.6%.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Expand access to dental health services for low-income Californians;
- Increase Denti-Cal reimbursement levels to encourage qualified dental clinicians to participate in providing care to low-income children and adults;
- Ensure Denti-Cal reimbursement for preventive dental services provided in the primary care setting;
- Ensure funding and enforcement of the school entrance examination requirement (California Education Code 49452.8);
- Develop funding for water fluoridation efforts; and
- Encourage dental health education program expansion including adequate funding.

### **G3. Identify Solutions to Address the Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences**

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic experiences, such as abuse and neglect, which can result in toxic stress and have a profound effect on a child's developing brain and body. Childhood exposure to adverse experiences increases risk for lifelong health and behavior problems, such as cancer, stroke and depression.

Research over the last two decades confirms that children carry the effects of childhood experiences into adulthood. The challenges they face in school, life and ultimately, the state of their health are often the symptoms of toxic stress. Toxic stress, unlike manageable stress, refers to the long-term changes in brain architecture and organ systems that develop after extreme, prolonged and repeated stress goes untreated. Exposure to ACEs puts our children at higher risk for learning difficulties, emotional problems, developmental issues and long-term health problems.

**Action:** Consistent with ACR 155 (Bocanegra), which passed in 2014 and urges the Governor to identify evidence-based solutions to reduce children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences, support initiatives to improve and enhance screening for ACEs, address impacts of those experiences, invest in preventive health care and mental health and wellness initiatives, support legislation that carries forward this imperative, and provide local support for community partnerships addressing ACEs.

### **G4. Health Disparities and Health Inequities**

Health disparities and inequities result from numerous interactions between community environments, social pressures, lifestyle factors and economic conditions. In California, minority populations have a higher incidence of chronic diseases, higher mortality rates and worse health outcomes. In addition, low-income residents, regardless of race, lack access to regular medical care and lack adequate health insurance coverage, if any at all. The Health Department has emphasized these programs to reduce these disparities; however, resources, staffing, and community awareness must be increased in order to be effective.

**Action:** Support legislation that seeks to reduce health disparities and inequities by working to eliminate barriers to good health for Sonoma County and California's diverse population.

### **G5. Built Environment and Climate Change**

Historically, public health has played a role in community design. Public health professionals are involved in the design of smart growth, transportation, and air pollution reductions. If residents are not able to easily engage in daily physical activity due to unsafe play areas, limited access to recreational facilities and substandard

pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure throughout the State, they can experience higher rates of heart disease, hypertension, asthma, bronchitis, stroke, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis and depression.

The California Department of Public Health started to address climate change in 2011 by opening a Climate Change Portal that tracks changes in water, air, food quality and quantity, ecosystems, agriculture and economy. Local health departments may be required to devise new strategies that address the changes in the environment and living conditions.

**Action:** Support legislation and funding that encourages consideration of public health impacts in the design and planning of healthy communities. Support efforts to develop climate change mitigation strategies to help protect against potential impacts on human health.

#### **G6. Expand Access to the Nurse-Family Partnership Program**

The Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program provides voluntary home visiting and support services for first-time expectant mothers, their children and their families. NFP is an evidence-based program with proven outcomes in: reducing healthcare costs; improving pregnancy outcomes and child health and development; and improving family economic self-sufficiency.

NFP provides lifelong health and economic benefits to both the mother and children served in the program, thereby producing substantial savings to federal, state and local governments. These savings far exceed the cost of the program. Currently, only a small percentage of families that qualify for NFP receive this service. Expanding access to NFP for the highest need populations would greatly improve the health and wellness of families and would reap substantial benefits in reduced costs to public programs.

**Action:** Support legislation which seeks to develop the means to leverage public and private dollars to substantially expand evidence-based home visiting programs across the State.

#### **G7. Perinatal Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program**

A significant number of Sonoma County women presenting for delivery at local hospitals test positive for alcohol or other drugs. The implication of this rate of toxicity among pregnant women reflects a need for further treatment interventions and a comprehensive systems approach to meet the needs of newborns who may be impacted by the mother's drug use. With the success of the Perinatal Alcohol and Other Drug Action Team's effort to develop universal screening protocols for pregnant women seen by medical providers, and the hiring of the County Perinatal Placement Specialist, referrals to perinatal residential and especially Perinatal Day Treatment programs have increased beyond capacity. Specifically, Drug Abuse Alternative Center's (DAAC) Perinatal Day Treatment Program has operated at its enrolled capacity of 33 women and 20 children for the last three years. Due to a lack of funding, the program has had to maintain a waiting list of 15-20 women (and their children) during this same time period. The Perinatal Day Treatment Program has proven to be extremely successful over the last 20 years.

**Action:** Support legislation to fund the expansion of the Perinatal Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program.

#### **G8. Reduce Overuse of Nontherapeutic Antibiotics in Livestock**

The overuse of antibiotics in livestock production has been proven by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to promote the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria that can pose a risk to human health. The cost of antibiotic-resistant bacteria to human health and the healthcare system as a whole is significant.

In December 2013, the FDA issued voluntary guidance to livestock producers regarding the nontherapeutic use of antibiotics. This guidance is unlikely to reduce the use of antibiotics because of broad exemptions for their use in disease prevention.

**Action:** Support efforts to restrict the use of medically important antimicrobial drugs in livestock to specific treatment purposes, require a veterinarian prescription for antibiotics, and require the California Department of Food and Agriculture to develop both a program to track antimicrobial use in livestock as well as judicious use regulations.

### **G9. Service Delivery System and Funding for Individuals with Cognitive Disorders**

Individuals with cognitive disorders such as Alzheimer’s, HIV, dementia, and traumatic brain injuries often require extensive, costly long-term care and other mental health treatment services. Currently, there is no mental health services delivery system or funding for programs and services to address the needs of individuals with cognitive disorders. As a result, these individuals often end up in mental health crisis centers and inpatient psychiatric hospitals requiring significant mental health realignment dollars to fund needed services.

**Action:** Support legislation or budget language that identifies new resources to fund services, including long-term care services for individuals with cognitive disorders.

### **G10. Local Foods Efforts**

The need exists to enhance the economic development of local farms and ranches, while coordinating food systems work in the community to increase food access and public health. There is not an adequate and reliable source of funding to support these efforts by County departments (Department of Agriculture, UC Cooperative Extension, Health Services, and other departments).

Initiatives to support local agriculture and healthy communities are components of the County Strategic Plan. These initiatives are in alignment with USDA’s mission and the funding made available through the Farm Bill, including the areas of: food and nutrition; food safety, including promoting the growing and access to healthy foods; agricultural product marketing and regulatory programs; rural development, including farm worker housing; education, including job training and resources for new farmers and green economy; and protecting natural resources and the environment through sustainable management.

#### **Action:**

- Secure federal funding, through the Farm Bill and other avenues, to support County work to enhance the economic development of local farms and ranches, and coordinate food systems in the community to increase food access and public health.
- Support legislation and proposals that enhance funding and resources to support an effective regulatory program for direct agricultural marketing at both the state and local level.

### **G11. Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems**

Existing law defines an electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS), or electronic cigarette, as a battery operated device that provides an inhalable, vaporized dose of nicotine. Besides nicotine, the solution that is vaporized includes flavors and other chemicals and toxins. The negative health effects of nicotine are well documented. In terms of the second hand “smoke” or vapor that is exhaled, while further long-term research is needed to determine the full health risks posed to those exposed, preliminary studies suggest there are significant potential risks to health from these products.

This past year, the FDA put forth a proposal to extend their regulation of tobacco products to include electronic cigarettes and other new devices. While the FDA’s proposal is a good start, the proposed regulations do not cover many of the concerns raised in the public health community regarding ENDS; particularly those regarding the advertising and marketing of these products to youth.

In the absence of a strong Federal initiative on the topic, states and localities have been left to address the use of e-cigarettes. Locally, the Board passed an update to the County’s smoke-free public places ordinance to now include secondhand vapors. At the State level, SBX2 5 (Leno – D, San Francisco) and ABX2 6 (Cooper – D, Elk

Grove) were introduced during the California Legislature's Special Session on Health (2015-16). These bills would change the Stop Tobacco Access to Kids Enforcement (STAKE) Act's definition of tobacco products to include electronic devices, such as electronic cigarettes, requiring retailers to obtain a state license with the Board of Equalization (BOE). These bills also include electronic cigarettes in California's smoke-free laws and require child-resistant packaging for these products. The Board previously supported SB 140 (Leno) to regulate electronic cigarettes as tobacco products.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts, such as SBX2 5 and ABX2 6, that seek to treat ENDS the same as conventional tobacco products.

### **G12. Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Act**

The Child Care and Development Services Act is enacted for, among other purposes, the purpose of providing a comprehensive, coordinated, and cost-effective system of child care and development services for children from infancy to 13 years of age and their parents, including a full range of supervision, health, and support services through full- and part-time programs. Necessary legislation would establish standards with respect to nutrition and physical activity for early childhood education programs, infant care programs, and after school programs conducted under the Child Care and Development Services Act, and would express legislative intent to encourage all child care providers to implement educational programs for parents that provide parents with physical activity and nutritional information relevant to the health of their children. It would strengthen early childhood education program requirements for physical activity, specify allowable beverages, and limit television time.

#### **Action:**

- Support legislation to create new nutritional and physical activity education for caregivers and families, and establish new standards for nutrition and physical activity for early childhood education programs;
- Support local, state, and national legislative efforts to promote physical education in schools, including sustained funding for physical education and enforcing compliance with state physical education code; and
- Support local, state, and national policies that aim to encourage active transportation among students (e.g. walking, biking, or other human-powered methods), including sustained funding for safe routes to school efforts and the inclusion of public health impacts in the design and planning of communities.

### **G13. Workforce Development: Healthcare Reform, and "Green" Jobs**

Major legislative efforts have created an opportunity for local governments to support workforce development efforts that will benefit strengthened labor markets. In particular, healthcare reform and "green" technology have created such opportunities. The health care workforce of the future will be highly focused on prevention, care coordination, care process re-engineering, dissemination of best practices, team-based care, community-based care, continuous quality improvement, and the use of data to support new care delivery models. There is a shortage in most local labor markets of individuals to implement these models, even as we are moving toward a health care system based on effective care coordination and prevention.

Similarly, the emerging green economy requires a trained "green" workforce and AB 3018 (Nunez) was passed recognizing that this is a necessity. AB 3018 sets forth a plan to develop a green-trained work force but does not provide program funding, thus becoming an unfunded mandate. The training programs are available and desperately needed, but there is no funding appropriated for the program.

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) included Workforce Development in its 1115 Waiver Application "Medi-Cal 2020". Funding can be expected under this umbrella in the coming year 2016.

**Action:**

- Support legislation and local partnerships which would provide the support and training programs needed to meet the workforce demands that will come with health care reform. Federal funding can be directed through existing programs, such as in the Department of Labor, and/or programs can be combined with funding in the Prevention and Public Health Fund;
- Advocate for state budget action to fund green-trained work force development;
- Advocate that Proposition 39 funds be utilized appropriately to train the workforce in this field; and
- Support regional efforts to submit applications to DHCS that would attract State funding for workforce development.

**G14. Implementation of Federal Healthcare Reform**

In March 2010, President Obama signed into law comprehensive health care reform, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). Since the opening of the Marketplace, more than 10 million Americans have gained insurance coverage.

The Expansion of Medicaid coverage has allowed California to offer Medi-Cal to adults who are not disabled and have no dependents. As of May 2015, 3,392,500 Californians had attained Medi-Cal coverage. As of August 2015, over 103,000 people in Sonoma County were served by Medi-Cal alone.

The ACA continues to provide important funding for community health centers, and funds a variety of public health and workforce development programs. As comprehensive health care reform continues to be implemented, it is important that all components of the ACA and funding sources be protected. Toward that end, the County supports legislative and regulatory efforts that implement the ACA in a manner that promotes high-quality, cost-effective care; stabilizes and maintains the local health care safety-net; maintains a strong public infrastructure; strengthens prevention-focused primary care; addresses health disparities; supports and preserves the strengths of the current system, including the unique qualities of county-operated systems that specialize in serving vulnerable populations; and protects the funding provided for in the ACA.

**Action:**

- Monitor any new State or Federal legislation that would modify funding or responsibilities related to the County's role in implementing the ACA. Oppose any legislation that would redirect County funds, beyond what was agreed to as part of the 2015-2016 Budget, for the State's share in the ACA;
- Oppose federal efforts to place a per-capita cap on funding or limiting the ability of states to leverage funds through assessments on providers; and
- Oppose legislation that would reduce the benefits or programs created by the ACA or withdraw funding for implementation.

**G15. Title IV-E Waiver Project**

The Title IV-E Waiver Project provides stable and guaranteed federal funding for foster care payments and program administration and provides counties with the flexibility to use funds for upstream interventions and services. The objective of the Title IV-E Waiver is to decrease the reliance on foster care for children and to shorten the length of time children have open child welfare and probation cases. Children and youth are placed in foster care when their safety cannot be maintained in their own homes or when they are ordered into foster care due to acts of delinquency (probation). The IV-E Waiver Project is estimated to increase federal revenue to Sonoma County by nearly \$11 million over five years, October 2014 – September 2019. The Board approved the County's participation in the IV-E Waiver Project in September 2014.

The Title IV-E Waiver is a five-year project that provides an alternative way to fund foster care. It will provide a guaranteed federal allocation with an annual increase to Sonoma County and will eliminate the restrictions on how and on whom the funds can be spent as long as funds remain invested in the child welfare and probation

systems. Essentially, the IV-E Waiver transforms Federal IV-E revenue into a capped block-grant for Sonoma County to administer its foster care program, assuming responsibility for all benefits and risks thereof.

The Sonoma County allocation was determined based on an average of actual IV-E expenditures during 2008-2012, when federal revenue was higher, and adds a small growth factor based on the California Necessities Index. While other counties have experienced recent increases in caseload, Sonoma County has observed caseload reductions. Sonoma County caseloads for children under 18 have decreased over the last ten years and are at the lowest level since 2003. The IV-E Waiver locks in a federal allocation that is greater than what is currently received and detaches funding from caseload size. Without the IV-E Waiver, Sonoma County would continue to lose federal revenue due to reducing caseloads.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts that would:

- Prescribe a federal allocation formula that maintains advantageous funding for Sonoma County;
- Leverage newly available state funding to pay relatives caring for children a rate commensurate with licensed foster homes;
- Expand relative searches for children to shorten length of time spent in foster care; and
- Engage in multi-system collaboration to serve the needs of and prevent commercially sexually exploited children.

#### **G16. Limits of Liability for the Public Guardian**

The Conservatorship Act of 2006 changed state law giving the court authority to order the Public Guardian to apply for conservatorship in situations that the court determined necessary. This change in the law increases the responsibilities of the Public Guardian, and it amounts to an unfunded mandate. In such cases, the county Public Guardian does not have any option but to comply with the Court. Additionally, the County and the Public Guardian are not immune from personal or civil liability arising from conservatorship duties.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts that would allow the Public Guardian discretion to respond to the court by conducting an investigation into the appropriate case management for the conservatee; limit liability for counties and for the Public Guardian; and provide a federal and/or state funding stream for public guardian services.

#### **G17. Child Care, Programming, and Licensing**

There has been a marked increase in the number of income eligible children/families waiting for a subsidized child care slot to become available in Sonoma County. The County and the Child Care Planning Council of Sonoma County are concerned about protecting funding for The After School Education and Safety Program Act of 2002 (Proposition 49) and 21<sup>st</sup> Century After-School Programs as these directly impact the quality of life for Sonoma County residents.

There is currently a shortfall of almost 9,700 child care spaces and almost 12,000 child care subsidies across all age groups in Sonoma County. There are significant shortages for infants and school age children. Family child care providers and child development centers continue to face regulatory barriers for expansion or new facilities development.

To help ensure health and safety compliance in local licensed child care programs, it is critical that the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing (CCL) completes annual visits for inspection. In addition, it is imperative that CCL has staff members that are knowledgeable about child development and care provider engagement. AB 74 (Calderon) speaks to this and was vetoed on September 30, 2015, by the Governor who stated "Increasing the frequency of these inspections is a worthy goal, but the cost of this change should be considered in the budget process."

**Action:** Support legislation and budget action that would:

- Ensure continuity of child care for children and families;
- Preserve, protect and increase funding for subsidized and other government-funded child care;
- Reduce state regulatory barriers and increase opportunities for child care capacity expansion; and
- Ensure that CCL is adequately funded by the State, to provide reliable and meaningful services as well as keeping parents informed about CCL functions and limitations.

### **G18. Youth Employment Program**

In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided \$1.2 million for a youth summer jobs program to provide jobs, environmental education, and workforce skills to young people aged 14-24. The Sonoma County Water Agency, Workforce Investment Board, Human Services Department, the Office of Education, and the nonprofit New Ways to Work combined forces to create the Summer Youth Ecology Corps. Since 2010, a variety of funding sources have been used to operate the program including Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF), Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA), Services for Transitional Age Youth, Parks Alliance and various grants. The program was expanded to operate year-round in 2012, and has served over 600 youth. New sources of funding are needed to carry this program into future years.

**Action:** Support funding for the Youth Employment Program.

### **G19. Dental Clinic for Foster Youth**

Funding is being requested to support a public-private oral health infrastructure that provides dental care for all children entering emergency foster care at Sonoma County's emergency shelter, the Valley of the Moon Children's Center (VMCC). VMCC serves approximately 450 children a year. The American Academy of Pediatricians estimates that about 35% of children enter foster care with high prevalence of undiagnosed or under-treated acute and chronic dental or oral health conditions. Limited local dental resources for low-income and at-risk youth have made it difficult for these children to receive appropriate and timely dental care. The services provided through the VMCC dental program include: dental evaluations and teeth cleanings of all children; follow up care such as fillings and extractions; dental emergencies such as tooth pain; developing community resources to address higher level dental needs (i.e., surgeries); and implementing an oral health prevention program by providing dental sealants and educating children and youth about oral health. The partnership uses the services of volunteer dental professionals from the local community. Funding is needed for a Dental Program Director, a Dental Assistant, equipment, and supplies.

**Action:** Seek federal appropriations of \$175,000 for the Valley of the Moon Dental Clinic.

### **G20. CalFresh Outreach**

California has the nation's lowest participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly called "Food Stamps." California's low uptake for the SNAP program, called CalFresh in California, is likely affected by the relatively high numbers of immigrants compared to the rest of the nation. Legal immigrants may fear that accepting government benefits will adversely impact their immigrant status. Only 36% of California's working poor are estimated to participate in the SNAP. California Food Policy Advocates use three CalFresh eligibility criteria to calculate that only 35% of most potentially eligible Sonoma County residents were actually receiving SNAP benefits in 2010. The Sonoma County poverty rate decreased from 12.1% (2012) to 11.5% (2013).

Federally-funded SNAP benefits directly stimulate the local economy. The Department of Agriculture estimates that for every dollar spent there is a return to the local economy of \$1.84. Funding is needed for outreach services particularly among seniors, Spanish-speaking residents, agricultural workers, and the working poor.



**Action:** Work with the federal government and national partners to increase outreach and enrollment for SNAP/CalFresh. Provide additional flexibility for states to align SNAP/CalFresh eligibility and processes with state TANF/CalWORKS programs.

### **G21. Senior Transportation**

Improving access to transportation resources for seniors and adults with disabilities has been identified as a high priority in the Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) senior needs assessment. The AAA implemented a special initiative on senior transportation. Transportation is critical to seniors' ability to access social and medical services that enable them to remain safely in their homes. Funding is needed to support and expand the current volunteer driver programs implemented by Sonoma County and to establish new ones throughout the County. Because public transit agencies must confront multiple priorities, it is vitally important that separate funding for senior transportation continue and expand. Additional funds could result in local grants for senior transportation alternatives and mobility management.

**Action:** Support funding and seek appropriations of \$1,000,000 to improve senior transportation services.

### **G22. Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors**

The United States is currently experiencing an unprecedented wave of children traveling alone through Mexico, without parents or other family members, and arriving at our southern border. The number of these children detained by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has increased from an average of 6,500 per year prior to 2011 to 66,000 in 2014. Although mostly teenage boys in 2011, the number of girls, including pregnant and parenting teens, and younger children has steadily increased. Due to the growing humanitarian crisis caused by the rapid increase seen in this population, the National Association of Counties (NACo) adopted a resolution calling on the Obama Administration and Congress to address the crisis by providing adequate federal funds for shelter and care.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts to address the growing number of unaccompanied children crossing the border.

## **Natural Resources**

### **G23. Pesticide Regulatory Activity Funding and Early Pest Detection, Surveillance, and Management Programs**

The costs of operating county programs are not being adequately funded in order for counties to provide the level of pesticide enforcement activities expected by the public. Specific public concern and attention is focused on air and water quality, worker safety, and endangered species.

County early pest detection, surveillance, and management programs are critical to Sonoma County, and the entire State, as a means of preventing the introduction and spread of exotic pests. These pests can range from Sudden Oak Death, Light Brown Apple Moth, European Grape Moth, Asian Citrus Psyllid, Diaprepes Root Weevil, and Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter, Marmorated Stink Bug, Spotted Wing Drosophila, to various noxious weeds and Vine Mealybugs. With an 80% reduction of funding to perform these activities, the State and counties have reduced or eliminated these programs, putting the program and entire State at risk. These programs are administered in conjunction with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and USDA.

**Action:** Support legislative and budget proposals that would provide adequate funding to provide a robust level of service at the county level, and obtain broad support for programs and funding for these programs at federal, state and local levels. Support legislative and budget proposals that would provide resources for counties to perform early pest detection, surveillance, and management programs; and obtain broad support for programs and funding for these programs at federal, state, and local levels.

#### **G24. Sudden Oak Death Outreach and Management Program**

The County remains concerned about the ongoing threat of Sudden Oak Death (SOD) in county parks and open space. SOD threatens the survival of tanoak and several oak species in California, and has afflicted tree populations along the coast since 1995. In January 2008, the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) released the Sonoma County SOD Strategic Response Plan, citing threats ranging from falling trees to habitat and economic losses. This followed the 2006 launch of a successful education and outreach program designed to mitigate the spread of the disease, and to manage the increased fire hazard resulting from the disease. Early detection is crucial to management.

Losing oaks and tanoaks can have a huge negative impact on the forest ecology, forest fires, wildlife survival, and landscape aesthetics. Sonoma County has more SOD than any other county in California with over 20% of its forests and urban landscapes affected by this introduced pathogen (*Phyophthora ramorum*). Monitoring for oak and tanoak tree losses is accomplished through two methods. The first is in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service to conduct an aerial survey each year that documents tree losses in Sonoma County forests and woodlands from the air. Ground monitoring is conducted each spring through the SOD Blitz where Master Gardeners and other community volunteers fan out throughout the County collecting samples of potentially infested California bay laurel trees. Bay laurel trees are the indicator species that show where the disease has invaded. Samples are sent to the UC Berkeley Forest Pathology Lab for analysis and newly infested areas are noted on a county map.

**Action:** Seek federal and state appropriations to support Sudden Oak Death monitoring, education, fire fuel mitigation, hazardous tree removal, and research for innovative control strategies for all affected County departments and agencies.

#### **G25. Drought Management in Agriculture and Urban Landscapes**

The 2011-2015 drought in California is one of the worst in recent memory with Governor Brown declaring a state of emergency in January of 2014. Last year, 2014-15, was the driest on record. Many cities have issued mandatory or voluntary conservation orders of between 20-25%. Reducing water usage in the urban landscape is a critical part in meeting the desired conservation levels. Farmers have had to import water, purchase livestock feed, and reduce irrigation or dry-farm in order to stay in business, making farming less profitable.

Proper grazing systems can assist with improving ecosystem services provided on range and forest lands. Sonoma County is comprised of 50% range and forest lands which can contribute to sequestering carbon, capturing water, and other ecosystem services for public benefit.

The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) conducts research and educational programs to help commercial crop and livestock producers in Sonoma County remain economically viable while facing the challenges of drought and climate change. More research needs to be conducted locally to evaluate methods for making the most of local water resources through increased irrigation efficiency; evaluation of drought tolerant crops, cultivars, and rootstocks; measuring production under non-irrigated conditions; and by evaluating cultural practices that help maintain soil moisture. Water conservation programs are also directed toward the urban gardener. UCCE has partnered with the Sonoma County Water Agency and various cities to help urban users reduce their water use. UCCE has also partnered with Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to develop an evaluation tool to document ecosystem services increased through conservation easements and proper rangeland management. These efforts work to address climate change in Sonoma County and could be implemented in other parts of California.

**Action:** Seek federal and state appropriations for continued research and public education through UCCE and other appropriate County departments to address climate change, especially drought mitigation and sound water use, for public and ecological benefits.

## **G26. Management of Riparian Corridors and Surrounding Upland Watersheds**

Numerous federal, state and local efforts have recognized the importance of riparian areas and wetlands for providing community benefits such as water quality, habitat for endangered species, groundwater recharge, in stream flows and carbon sequestration. Greater pressure is upon private landowners to maintain appropriate conditions of their natural resources; however, few tools are available for use by common landowners and agricultural producers without extensive involvement, fees or permits from government agencies.

Informed landowners and land managers are able to plan, prioritize, implement and maintain improvements to water quality and riparian habitat using conservation, ranch planning, and best management practices. UCCE is assessing the economic value of the livestock and dairy industries and is working with the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to evaluate the ecosystem services provided by conservation easements on these agricultural lands.

### **Action:**

- Support legislative and budget proposals that would provide resources for counties to perform ranch planning for riparian areas and management programs; and obtain broad support for programs and funding for these programs at federal, state, and local levels;
- Support legislation to develop community scale riparian area and wetland improvement projects and programs;
- Prioritize projects that improve ecosystem services on conservation lands, open space, agriculture and working lands, and important watersheds;
- Promote projects that enhance natural system functions whereby ecosystem services are improved at a greater rate than the status quo;
- Achieve a portfolio of rural and urban investment projects to maximize statewide coverage;
- Promote new and innovative programs and projects that improve water quality, habitat for endangered species, groundwater recharge, in-stream flows and carbon sequestration, including grazing management, urban greening and land use planning; and
- Identify synergies or multi-benefit attributes of coordinating or leveraging other federal, state, local, and private funding sources including the upcoming State Water Resources Control Board Grazing Regulatory Action Plan.

## **G27. Ecosystem Services from Rangelands**

Rangelands comprise the largest land mass (40%) in the western states and 50% of the land mass in Sonoma County. Rangelands owners and managers are familiar with the economic value that rangelands provide – specifically grazing opportunities for livestock; however, this large land mass can provide so much more, thus the term ecosystem services. Having functioning ecosystem services relies on good soil health. Soil health is an assessment of how well soil performs all of its functions now and how those functions are being preserved for future use. Funding that addresses educational opportunities and research based projects would lead to increased soil health in California grazing lands and build the skillset of resource professionals and land owners/managers to incorporate soil health assessment tools into their management practices.

Promoting improved soil health in grazing lands through regional training sessions will increase awareness of practices that improve soil infiltration rates and water holding capacity to promote sustainable use of water resources. Educational opportunities will inform public, adults and youth, on the importance of managing these lands; and help direct future analysis of the effects of climate variability, drought, and management practices on the productivity of California grazing lands and the increase of ecosystem services. The importance of soil health in developing resilient ecological systems and will demonstrate to policy makers and the public the importance of these services in addressing climate change.

**Action:**

- Seek federal and state appropriations for continued research and public education through the University of California Cooperative Extension and other appropriate County departments to address climate change, especially increasing soil health on rangelands for public, private and ecological benefits; and
- Advocate for research opportunities that create a direct link to various environmental and agricultural activities that reduced greenhouse gas emissions in order to qualify for Cap and Trade and other funding sources. A study produced would assist with the creation of a framework for an ecosystem service decisions support matrix, which would provide tools for agricultural and rangeland owners to assess economic, social and policy impacts of increased ecosystem services on agricultural and range lands.

**G28. Habitat Conservation Plans and Other Efforts Necessary to Comply With the ESA's "Take" Prohibition**

The federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) prohibits "taking" any endangered species without specific authorization. Obtaining this authorization, whether through the ESA Section 7 process for projects with federal funding, a federal permit, or through Section 10 for other projects, typically involves an extensive conservation planning effort. Once "take" authorization is granted, significant financial commitments are required to implement conservation programs. The cost of the comprehensive conservation planning effort can make individual projects financially infeasible. Public funding sources for conservation planning efforts under the ESA are very limited.

**Action:** Support legislation that would make state and/or federal funds available for comprehensive conservation planning efforts under the ESA.

**G29. North Bay Water Reuse Program**

The North Bay Water Reuse Program is a regional cooperative program in the North San Pablo Bay Region that includes as partners the Sonoma County Water Agency, Napa Sanitation District, Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, the County of Napa, Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, North Marin Water District, and Novato Sanitary District. The purpose of the Program is to promote sustainability and environmental enhancement by expanding the use of recycled water. The United States Bureau of Reclamation is the federal partner in this program and has already provided millions of dollars in funding toward 50% of the Feasibility Study for Phase 1.

There is an existing federal authorization for a \$100 million dollar construction program with up to \$25 million federal cost share and the ability to expand into additional phases of another \$100 million dollar construction program. Phase I construction works are already underway with an award of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds of \$7.3 million in 2011 for design and construction of multiple projects in Napa, Sonoma, and Marin Counties. Phase II financial feasibility of the program to increase storage and distribution of recycled water beyond Phase 1 projects is currently underway with cost share being provided by the Bureau of Reclamation and the local partners.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to request additional funding for a Phase II Feasibility Study, including engineering and economic analysis and amendments of existing environmental documents, if project partners determine a desire to enter into this phase pending the results of the scoping analysis.

**G30. Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund**

Appropriations of \$80 million per year were approved in fiscal years 2009-2012, and funding for fiscal year 2013 was \$65 million. Funds are allocated among the Pacific states based on applications submitted by the states. California has captured more than \$200 million in federal funding from this program. Recent California funding levels are in the range of \$14 to \$17 million per year. California disburses the funds to local projects through the California Department of Fish and Game Fishery Restoration Grant Program.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to maintain future years funding and advocate for an equal share allocation among states. Funding for this program, which is restoration oriented, should be kept separate from reparations for losses in fish harvest.

### **G31. San Pablo Bay Ecosystem Restoration**

The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2007 authorized \$40 million for restoration projects in the San Pablo Bay watershed, but no appropriations have been allocated. There is a need for funding allocation in an appropriations bill. Existing authorization and future funding could possibly be utilized to offset costs for storage and wetland restoration for water reuse projects in the San Pablo Bay watershed.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to obtain federal funding for the San Pablo Bay Ecosystem Restoration effort.

### **G32. Quagga/Zebra Mussel Statewide Fee and Inspection Program**

The quagga and zebra mussels (collectively referred to as Dreissenids) are among the most devastating invasive species to invade North America fresh waters. The mussels create severe ecological and economic impacts because, once established, they can clog water intake and delivery pipes, infest hydropower equipment, adhere to boats and pilings, foul recreational beaches, and damage fisheries. Invasive Quagga mussels are present in several California lakes and represent a threat to water supply and fish hatchery operations at Lakes Sonoma and Mendocino; both lakes are susceptible to a mussel invasion because of the high amount of year round watercraft recreation traffic and the lack of mandatory inspection.

There is no effective eradication method and the cost to remove the mussels from water intake screens and pipes could have substantial costs. Prevention of contamination and spreading of mussels is an effective way to preserve an invasive-free waterway. Proper and thorough inspection is a necessary component in the ongoing effort to eliminate the spread of mussels. Dedicated permanent funding to support permanent staff and programs is necessary to effectively prevent infestation in local water supply facilities. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates and manages the recreational functions of both lakes and their support and cooperation is essential for implementation of programs to prevent mussel infestation. To date, the Corps is not operating any mandatory inspection programs at either lake. The Corps has posted public outreach signs and is relying on voluntary, self-imposed inspections of watercrafts entering the reservoirs.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to:

- Obtain increased Operations & Maintenance funding for the Corps to develop and implement a mandatory Boat Inspections Program at Lakes Sonoma and Mendocino for Invasive Species Eradication/Control;
- Support specific Energy and Water appropriations bill report language directing the Corps to implement boat inspection programs to prevent mussel infestation in Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino; and
- Support state legislation to increase funding levels from the Department of Boating and Waterways and make other improvements to the grant allocation process.

### **G33. USDA/California County Cooperative Wildlife Services Program**

Increased urbanization and suburbanization has led to a reduction and fragmentation of wildlife habitat. At the same time wildlife populations continue to expand because of reduced hunting, changes in animal protection status, and the loss of various control mechanisms. Conflicts between people and wildlife are all too frequent. Funding for USDA's Wildlife Services (WS) program has traditionally been through a cooperative agreement between the federal, state and county governments. Since 2002 California Agricultural Commissioners have seen increasing costs from the California WS Program passed onto the counties due to limited or no increases to the Program budget. Additionally, WS contracts with California counties have been challenged based on their lack of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

**Action:**

- Support analysis of the current allocation formulas used to distribute available resources to states in the Wildlife Services Program;
- Advocate for the maintenance of the WS budget at least at the FY 2013 level, and to distribute any additional funding according to need;
- Support wildlife management tools and/or methods that have proven effective; and
- Support collaborative efforts to fund and complete CEQA documentation for all Wildlife Services in California.

**G34. Integrated Watershed Restoration, Stewardship and Climate Adaptation Program**

These funds will support the development and implementation of a comprehensive acquisition and stewardship plan for Sonoma County watersheds, which will build upon existing efforts and utilize the best available data from the scientific and agency community. A foundational element of this planning process is a fine scale habitat map which will enable targeting of acquisition and habitat restoration projects, resulting in more efficient utilization and higher return on investment of acquisition, restoration, and public access funds in the future.

A second key element of the plan will include the identification and evaluation of new tools and strategies to reduce conflicts among agricultural operations and ecosystem protection, such as new legal and policy tools to retain in-stream flows, expand riparian corridors, and incentivize best management practices. It is expected that this plan will be exportable to other watersheds and provide technology transfer to other groups.

Implementation of this plan will support the protection, restoration, and enhancement of biological diversity and open-space resources of regional importance; preservation of working landscapes; improvements in water quality, habitat, and other coastal resources; and natural resource-based climate mitigation and adaptation. Key partners in this effort would include Resource Conservation Districts, agricultural landowners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and watershed groups.

**Action:** Support Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District efforts to obtain funding for the Integrated Watershed Restoration, Stewardship and Climate Adaptation Program.

**G35. Documentation and Analysis of the Multiple Benefits of Conservation**

The Agricultural and Open Space District creates and maintains a variety of datasets and performs analyses to support the objective, science-based evaluation and prioritization of land protection and stewardship activities. Often, the data collected by the District for land conservation are valuable to other County agencies and partners for other uses. These data include recent countywide acquisition of LIDAR in collaboration with NASA, Sonoma County Water Agency, Permit and Resource Management and other partners, the development of a Sonoma County Vegetation and Habitat map, mapping of carbon sequestration in natural and agricultural lands, and active participation with PRMD and SCWA and others on data and analyses on sea level rise and climate adaptation issues. The District is actively participating with the Regional Climate Protection Authority to develop a modeling tool called Urban Footprint that will analyze the greenhouse gas emissions implications of different land use scenarios. Another District initiative *Healthy Lands and Healthy Economies* seeks to document the multiple benefits (including economic benefits) of conservation investments. This initiative is evaluating the benefits of keeping land in a working or natural state (“natural capital”) countywide as well as in specific geographies, including urban open space, riparian corridors, coastal and south county agricultural areas, the Sonoma Coast and Sonoma Mountain.

**Action:** Support Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District efforts to obtain funding for the documentation and analysis of the multiple benefits of conservation.

**G36. Plan and Implement Agricultural & Open Space Center**

The Board has supported the Agricultural and Open Space District General Manager's request to explore an Agricultural & Open Space Center in an underserved area of Santa Rosa. The Center would provide a farm site for the District offices, which would reflect the District's mission to protect agricultural lands, urban open space and natural resources. Programming – which would be achieved by others via a competitive RFP process – may include Farm to Institution programs, youth training, farmers markets, agricultural business incubators, community gardens, and education regarding the importance of agriculture and natural resource protection in Sonoma County. The Center would be funded by a combination of the following: 1) avoided District lease costs, 2) acquisition funding that is consistent with the District Expenditure Plan focused on agriculture, urban open space and natural resources, and 3) outside agency, foundation and major donor funding. The General Manager is tasked with bringing a detailed business plan to the Board that will include a budget, schedule, programming and preliminary site criteria.

**Action:** Support Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District efforts to obtain funding for the planning and implementation of the Urban Farm Center.

**G37. Regional Parks Funding, Access, and Improvement**

Sonoma County's robust financial strategy for growing Regional Parks requires securing grants from a variety of local, regional, state and federal sources. The stabilization of current funding grant sources and creation of new funding opportunities is key to the County's success in dramatically expanding the park and open space system and programs. Sonoma County is continually seeking funding to acquire and create access to priority open space and to also open thousands of acres of lands already purchased by the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. Creating public access is a high priority for public health, recreation, quality of life, and economic development in Sonoma County.

**State Action:**

- Support efforts to provide funding for the rehabilitation, development and capital improvements for local and state park improvements in order to enhance the active and passive recreational infrastructures in the state;
- Support the enactment of policies and encourage state funding opportunities to assist agencies in meeting sustainability objectives including energy and water efficiencies, active transportation enhancements, connectivity and mobility improvements and carbon sequestration through natural landscape management and protection;
- Support legislative and budgetary efforts to increase access opportunities for all Californians to physical activity, proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle options through the promotion of active transportation, complete street implementation, healthy foods, youth programming and maximizing the usage of green space in urban/suburban and rural settings for personal enjoyment; and
- Oppose legislation that has a negative impact on the administration of park and recreation services and resource management including the sale of park lands and open space, relaxations of park dedication fee requirements and the imposition of regulatory or statutory requirements that provide no added protections or benefit to California's recreational consumer.

**Federal Action:**

- Support the reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) with full and permanent funding and support legislative efforts which would require a minimum of 40% of the annual LWCF appropriations allocated to the State Assistance Program. LWCF expired on September 30, 2015;
- Support legislation to strengthen and expand environmental education in classrooms by providing funds to encourage partnerships between school districts and parks, as well as other community based organizations. Such efforts include No Child Left Inside (S.492 and H.R.882) which would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind);

- Support legislation to provide funding to states for the development of comprehensive strategies related to expanding environmental education through the school system and finding other means of getting kids and families more physically active in the outdoors, such as the Healthy Kids Outdoors Act (S.1078 and H.R.2014);
- Support legislation like the Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Act (H.R.1218) which would expand the IRS definition of medical expenditures to include physical activity as preventative medicine. This would allow individuals to use the pre-tax dollars in Flexible Spending Accounts and Health Savings Accounts on expenditures such as membership at a fitness facility, youth and adult sports league fees, exercise classes and other physical activities;
- Support legislation like the Moving Ahead for Progress In The 21st Century Act (MAP-21) which would dedicate funding for Active Transportation options, including trails and pedestrian projects primarily through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Combined, these programs, found in the federal surface transportation bill "MAP-21", provide approximately \$800 million annually for bike and pedestrian projects and to promote pedestrian and bicycling safety in local communities;
- Support legislation like the New Opportunities for Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Financing Act (H.R. 3978) which would provide local communities with low-cost loans to build networks of sidewalks, bikes lanes and paths as part of the federal transportation financing program known as TIFIA. 25% of the loan financing for this program must be used to help low-income communities.
- Support legislation such as the Community Parks Revitalization (CPR) Act (H.R.201) which would provide matching federal grants for park and recreation infrastructure in metropolitan areas. Specifically, CPR would authorize the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide funding to local park and recreation agencies, through three grant programs: Rehabilitation and Construction, the Innovation and Recreation Program and the Recovery Action Program. The bill also includes innovative financing for park infrastructure (known as PIFIA); and
- Seek funding from the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). CDBG is administered through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. These grants support local community development activities aimed at neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and improvement of community facilities, such as parks and recreation. Historically this program has provided up to \$100 million annually for park and recreation infrastructure.

## **Development Services**

### **G38. Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations**

The state and local agencies have an interest in increasing the available water supply from existing reservoirs operated by state or federal entities. Many of these reservoirs are operated under rules that were developed in an earlier era when advanced weather forecasting technology was unknown. Potentially significant increases in water storage may be achieved if more reliable quantitative precipitation forecasting technology is deployed statewide and if the operators of state and federal reservoirs can complete re-operation studies. SB 758 (Block) approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2015 created a state fund for Atmospheric River research, which will help better inform reservoir operations. The measure did not include funding.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to:

- Continue collaboration with the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the NOAA Office of Atmospheric Research and other organizations on technology for quantitative precipitation forecasting and forecast informed reservoir operations;
- Advocate for state legislation and regulatory policy and funding to move forward with re-operation of water reservoirs based on advances in weather forecasting technology; and
- Identify and advocate for funding source for implementation of SB 758.



### **G39. NOAA's Hydrometeorology Testbed Project Implementation**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) studies demonstrated the potential value of new hydrometeorology technology for improving water resource management in California. The program introduces advanced forecasting methods developed in the US mid-continent region for severe weather studies to the western US in an effort to provide more accurate and longer range precipitation forecasts. Water managers in California manage reservoirs in the winter season for flood prevention purposes. Water is released from storage as storms approach in order to increase capacity to capture runoff behind dams and reduce downstream flooding. Availability of more accurate and longer range precipitation forecasts could enable water managers to retain more water in storage and provide a larger water supply for the summer dry season. Improved precipitation forecasting also has critical importance for flood prediction and emergency response in Sonoma County. The Russian River Watershed is one of the most flood prone regions in the nation and Sonoma County receives more Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance than any other county in California. Implementation of the hydrometeorology program known as the Hydrometeorology Testbed (HMT) would be performed by the NOAA Physical Sciences Division and would require \$7.6 million in funding.

**Action:** Support Water Agency efforts to:

- Request federal appropriations for the NOAA Hydrometeorology Testbed program;
- Request for NOAA's senior management to direct any available discretionary funding for HMT programs; and
- Develop a coalition of local and regional agencies to participate in the HMT program and support additional federal funding.

### **G40. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure**

On March 23, 2012, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-16-12, which set a target of 1 million Plug-In Electric Vehicles (PEV) on the road by 2020, as well as 1.5 million PEV's on the road by 2025. Current grant funding opportunities for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure have assisted in reducing the overall cost of the charging station hardware but have not been sufficient to meet the rate of growth required by the Governor's Executive Order B-16-12.

Funding is needed for the build out of public facility workplace charging infrastructure to finance the planning, installation, maintenance, and upgrade phases of the network lifecycle. Sonoma County's experience with the installation of the supporting infrastructure for charging stations has shown an average cost of over \$18,000 per station, which does not include the cost of the charging station hardware itself. We are estimating an average cost per station for infrastructure alone of between \$21,000 and \$23,000 per dual port charging station to meet the currently proposed revisions to the California Building Code that will be released for local jurisdiction adoption in January of 2017.

Workplace charging infrastructure will enable local government to remain competitive in the employment market, and provide energy storage potential in the event of a long emergency, public facility demand management capability, and utility resources for grid stability and energy load management, accelerating the shift from fossil fuel to zero emission commuting. Sonoma County faces an additional hurdle related to increasing electric vehicle charging infrastructure. 40% of Sonoma County residents rent and building turnover and new construction rates are less than 2% each year, which results in extremely slow conversion to charge-ready residences. Workplace charging infrastructure would provide access to the many employees without home charging access.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- Support the build out of public facility workplace charging infrastructure and increase per charging station grant funding levels;
- Integrate public facility workplace charging infrastructure into emergency preparedness planning;
- Promote new and innovative programs and projects that integrate public facility workplace charging infrastructure into grid stability and energy load management planning;
- Support workplace charging incentives for public employees as a mechanism for local compliance with employee commute program requirements;
- Fund public facility workplace charging infrastructure; and
- Direct cap-and-trade revenues to the build out of public facility workplace charging infrastructure.

#### **G41. Transitioning Disadvantaged Communities to Alternative Fuel Technologies**

Current grant funding available through Air Districts in California assists in reducing transportation related emissions in communities that meet the definition of a Disadvantaged Community. These communities are geographically defined by zip codes and receive a higher amount of funding than a community that is not within a designated zip code. Most of the funds available are to support alternative fuel technologies that reduce emissions such as plug-in hybrid electric, all electric, and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. The additional amount of grant funding available for these communities fiscally justifies the transition to alternative fuel technologies over conventionally powered vehicles through a smaller vehicle procurement cost differential.

There are communities outside these areas that could transition if offered grant funding at the higher amounts that Disadvantaged Communities receive. The availability of the higher level of grant funding could also help prevent areas from becoming a designated Disadvantaged Community.

**Action:** Support legislation that would amend the definition of Disadvantaged Communities within the current grant program and support other legislative and regulatory efforts to increase grant funding to enable more communities to transition to alternative fuel technologies.

#### **G42. Tax Incentives for Alternative Fuel Vehicles, Government Fleets and Infrastructure**

Currently, the only way for a government fleet to take advantage of State and Federal tax incentives for alternative fuel vehicles is through a seller claiming the credit and then passing on a portion or all of the credit through a lower purchase price. There are a limited number of vehicle sellers that are willing or able to take advantage of this allowed process and pass on the credit savings to government fleets, especially in the case of larger quantity purchases. A simpler process and application of these incentives would help increase the number of government fleet vehicles being replaced with alternative fuel vehicles through a lower procurement cost.

Over the last five years, Congress has retroactively approved tax incentives for alternative fuels, vehicles, and infrastructure after they had already expired during the previous calendar year. The retroactive extensions create confusion and a lack of predictability for government and private transportation fleets to plan for and invest in alternative fuel technology and the infrastructure to support vehicles and equipment that utilize these technologies. Fleet purchases are based on a Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) that are calculated based on a utilization time frame of between three and up to fifteen years into the future.

Stability and predictability are needed in federal policies to allow for efficient long-term planning and investment. A period of stable policies and incentives will result in permanent changes to the transportation market, making government support ultimately unnecessary. Without certainty on these incentives, the industry will decrease investments, resulting in job losses and higher fuel costs for consumers.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts to:

- Enable government fleets to benefit from state and federal tax incentives for alternative fuel vehicles; and
- Enact a long-term extension of tax incentives for alternative fuels, vehicles, and infrastructure including: tax credits supporting electric charging, natural gas, propane and biofuels infrastructure; tax credits for sellers of natural gas and propane; tax credits for producers of biodiesel and cellulosic biofuels; a special depreciation allowance on cellulosic biofuel plant property; and tax credits for conversion to plug-in hybrids and for purchases of alternative fuel vehicles.

## **Justice Services**

### **G43. Gun and Replica Weapon Regulation**

Sonoma County has long supported the view that preventing gun and community violence is critical to its goal of achieving a thriving and healthy community. Related to this, the use of lethal force against persons carrying replica weapons, such as copycat BB guns, is a significant threat to public safety and health. Often marketed as looking “just like the real thing,” these replica weapons can easily be used in crimes as tools of intimidation as well as be a significant contributing factor in officer-involved shootings.

On September 30, 2014, Governor Jerry Brown signed SB 199 (de León), which will require all airsoft guns to have brightly colored or transparent markings. The bill will allow officers to more easily identify airsoft guns as imitation firearms instead of real guns in an effort to prevent officer-involved shootings based on a perceived safety threat.

**Action:** Support the expansion of sensible gun safety legislation, as well as additional legislation that will help prevent replica weapon tragedies, and other legislative efforts that will help prevent replica weapons triggering violence or being used to perpetrate violence.

## **Administrative Support & Fiscal Services**

### **G44. Libraries Funding**

Libraries are essential resources for all communities. The Sonoma County Library relies on property taxes and donations to fund services for all county residents. Services include, but are not limited to, maintaining, updating and expanding the size and quality of collections, determining hours of operation at all branches, qualifications of staff, acquiring and updating technology for public and staff use, operating an adult literacy program, and training volunteers to tutor individuals who lack basic reading ability.

Rising costs and reduced funding to the library system have caused reduced library services including reduced hours of operation at all branches. Despite improved property tax revenue estimates, current projections show that expenditures will continue to increase faster than available revenues for the future which will likely result in further reductions to services without additional revenue sources. These projections do not include provision for existing backlogs of maintenance needs nor do they include provision for increasing hours of operation at any branches.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts to provide resources for library services, including restoration of California Library Services Act funding.

### **G45. County Climate Action Initiatives**

The County of Sonoma is dedicated to combating the impacts of climate change. The County, in coordination with the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Cities in Sonoma County, and non-profits such as the Center for Climate Protection, have established the Regional Climate

Protection Authority (RCPA). The RCPA was conceived to strategically address the issues related to climate change regionally and to provide a coherent framework to harness the tools, resources, and energy needed to effectively implement climate change programs, measure success, and make course corrections. This model and the commitment of local municipalities has resulted in multiple program successes as recognized by the award of *Climate Action Champion* from the U.S. Department of Energy. A mechanism to aggregate state and local resources and funding into a performance based framework for the funding of impactful local government efforts is needed (like the Integrated Climate Funding Market / Integrated Community Resource Market concept as proposed to the California Public Utilities Commission and the California Energy Commission).

**Action:**

- Support legislation that aggregates both state and local resources into an *Integrated Climate Funding Market* model, using a performance-based approach, to expedite implementation, reduce administrative redundancies, optimize return on investment and achieve deeper savings;
- Support legislation and budget actions that support the continuation and expansion of the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority;
- Support legislation and budget actions that support the delivery of a center service point for the community;
- Support legislation that would improve accountability in allocation of utility public goods funds and ensure that local agencies have a voice in local allocation of these funds;
- Support legislation to develop community scale greenhouse gas reduction programs that are eligible for an allocation of carbon value from the State’s cap-and-trade program or other state or federal funding;
- Prioritize projects that reduce or prohibit development and vehicle miles traveled potential on conservation lands, open space, agriculture and working lands, and important watersheds;
- Promote new and innovative programs and projects that reduce or sequester greenhouse gases, including urban greening and land use planning;
- Advocate that any new State climate action mandates include full cost recovery by counties;
- Support budgetary action to fund local implementation of AB 32 (Nunez), SB 375 (Steinberg), and SB 350 (de León) requirements;
- Support focusing on parks and open space lands, as public natural resources, in the provision of offset credits; and
- Oppose efforts to redirect cap-and-trade revenues to unrelated budget program areas.

**G46. Elections Code**

Currently, there is inconsistency in the laws that govern how elections officials manage election services for central committees. The Elections Code contains several detailed chapters governing the size, membership, and other attributes of Republican, Democratic, and other “central committees.” (See Elec. Code §§ 7200 *et seq.*, 7400 *et seq.*, 7650 *et seq.*, and 7700 *et seq.*) Further, Article II, section 5(c) of the California Constitution mandates that the Legislature “*shall provide for partisan elections for presidential candidates, and political party and party central committees*” without clarifying what is encompassed by the term “provide for.” For decades counties have interpreted these authorities to mean that the counties have the responsibility to conduct membership elections for central committees as part of their larger ballots, free of charge. Current case law, however, has indicated that political parties are actually private organizations. The California Supreme Court has held that taxpayer funds may not be used for activities that do not have a public benefit, which could include elections services for private organizations. Additionally, more recent Elections Code provisions offer several options for selecting central committee members, aside from the public ballot process. As a result, many jurisdictions would like to bill central committees that choose to use the larger ballot for the associated costs, just as cities, schools and special districts are billed.

**Action:** Support legislation that would add provisions to the applicable Divisions of the Elections Code to expressly authorize counties to bill the central committees for elections services.