

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

PURPOSE

Established in 1991, the Legislative Program Committee is an advisory body to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. A dynamic program of County sponsored legislative actions is developed and tracked by the Committee with the assistance of county departments and legislative advocates in Washington, DC and Sacramento. The Committee meets almost monthly and public comment is welcome. Committee membership includes two members of the Board of Supervisors appointed by the Board.

Each year, the Committee drafts a Legislative Platform of prioritized legislative principles, specific issues, projects and programs (priorities) that warrant targeted advocacy, funding requests and/or legislation. The proposed Legislative Platform is recommended to the Board of Supervisors for subsequent review and approval. Once the Legislative Platform is adopted by the Board, a variety of advocacy strategies are used to advance the identified principles and Legislative Platform Planks with regular reporting to the Legislative Program Committee. Pending legislation of interest to Santa Barbara County is tracked and updates of the status are provided continuously by legislative advocates to the Legislative Program Committee and the Board of Supervisors.

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Legislative Program for Santa Barbara County, in conjunction with its State and Federal advocates, successfully advanced the 2020 Platform Principles, including, but not limited to the following:

Federal:

- \$86.6 million allocated to the County of Santa Barbara through the State and Local Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Fund.
- \$27 million in Emergency Rental Assistance to Santa Barbara County.
- \$5.2 million for County of Santa Barbara Federally Qualified Health Centers for pandemic response.
- \$6.1 million from the Emergency Solutions Grant program for the County's COVID-19 homelessness response efforts.
- \$2.2 million in Continuum of Care awards for ongoing projects in the County serving the homeless.
- Housing and Urban Development funding to the County of \$7.3 million through programs such as Community Development Block Grants and the HOME Investment Partnership, including \$4.6 million provided for pandemic response.
- Payments in Lieu of Taxes funding to the County of \$2 million.
- Enactment of the American Rescue Plan to provide to assistance to individuals and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through direct payments, SBA forgivable loans and enhanced unemployment benefits.

State:

A Budget

- Santa Barbara County Pipeline Clean-Up – Successfully secured funding for the decommissioning of the County's abandoned pipelines. The County and the City of Carpinteria worked with Senator Monique Limon on including \$1,050,000 in the state Budget for the old Venoco abandoned pipeline cleanup. Trailer Bill - SB 170 clarified that the County will receive \$550,000 and the City will receive \$500,000 for the abandoned pipeline clean-up, which will be allocated by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.
- Telehealth – Successfully supported the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to extend telehealth flexibilities, including telephone visits, that were in place during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The language was placed in AB 133, the health trailer bill. AB 133 requires DHCS to seek any federal approvals it deems necessary to extend the approved waiver or flexibility implemented pursuant to those provisions as of July 1,

2021, that are related to the delivery and reimbursement of services via telehealth modalities in the Medi-Cal program, and requires DHCS to implement those extended waivers or flexibilities for which federal approval is obtained for a specified period of time ending December 31, 2022. The bill also requires the DHCS to convene an advisory group to provide recommendations to inform the department in establishing and adopting billing and utilization management protocols for telehealth modalities to increase access and equity and reduce disparities in the Medi-Cal program. The bill authorizes DHCS to enter into contracts, or amend existing contracts, for the purposes of implementing these provisions and would exempt those contracts or amendments from specified provisions of law. AB 133 was chaptered into law on July 27th.

- **Broadband** – The County supported the passage of broadband infrastructure funding in SB 156, which was chaptered into law on July 20th. The trailer bill provides for a historic \$6 billion investment in broadband infrastructure. The bill will benefit residents across the state, connecting families and businesses by providing \$2 billion for last-mile network construction in both rural and urban centers of California. Within those designations, the funds will be allocated by the number of unserved and underserved residents, ensuring the funds flow where they are needed most. The County advocated along with CSAC to receive this funding.
- **County Coroners Budget Request** - Santa Barbara County supported Sacramento County’s state budget request for the training and equipment needed to support the work of county coroners. The \$1 million budget request would be for interested counties to participate in training in how to use the rapid DNA tests and to help coroners have a more coordinated response to mass fatalities. The budget included \$1 million in one-time funding for the 2021-22 budget year to the Office of Emergency Services to facilitate mass casualty trainings for coroner offices.
- **340B Program** – The County has been concerned with the potential loss of state 340B funding for county clinics, as a result of the Governor’s executive that creates a single-purchaser system for prescription drugs in California. We have been working to secure a backfill to prevent the loss of 4.2 million dollars. We have worked with the Administration and other stakeholders to get the backfill funds in the State Budget, but the distribution formula remains unresolved.
- **Criminal Justice Administrative Fees** – Advocated for the County to receive a proper backfill in response to Chapter 92, Statutes of 2020 (AB 1869) which eliminated the ability of state and local agencies to impose certain administrative fees for criminal offenses. AB 143, the courts trailer bill included an allocation methodology for the distribution of the \$65 million included in Chapter 92, Statutes of 2020 (AB 1869).

B Delegation – Worked directly with the County’s Legislators on legislation that would directly affect the County, including:

- **SB 47 (Limon)** – Successfully supported SB 47 by Senator Monique Limon, which authorizes, starting in fiscal year 2022-23, the Geologic Energy Management Division to make expenditures up to \$5 million to plug and abandon hazardous or deserted wells or hazardous or deserted production facilities and extends related reporting requirements. The bill was chaptered into law on September 23, 2021.
- **AB 941 (Bennett)** – Successfully supported AB 941 by Assemblymember Steve Bennett, which requires the Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) to establish a grant program for counties to establish farmworker resource centers that provide farmworkers and their families with services related to, among other things, labor and employment rights, education, housing, immigration and health and human services. The bill was chaptered into law on September 22, 2021.

C Legislation – Reviewed and assessed all of the introduced legislation and worked with the County to determine which legislation fit in the County’s Platform. Below is legislation that the County was successful in:

- **AB 361 (Rivas)** – Successfully worked with the Governor’s Office, the Author’s office and CSAC on helping pass AB 361. The bill provides flexibility to state and local agencies and boards to conduct their business through virtual public meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic and will give them the ability to carry out their work while keeping decision-makers, staff and the general public safe. The bill was signed by the Governor on September 16th.
- **AB 843 (Aguar-Curry)** – Successfully worked with the Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) to help pass AB 843, which authorizes Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) to submit eligible bioenergy projects for cost recovery from electric utility ratepayers, pursuant to the Bioenergy Market Adjusting Tariff (BioMAT) program,

if open capacity exists within the 250 megawatts (MW) program limit. The bill was chaptered into law on September 23rd.

- SB 493 (Bradford) – Successfully opposed SB 493 (Bradford), which would have redirected Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funds, revised the composition of local Juvenile Justice Coordinating Councils, and recast various elements of required multiagency juvenile justice plans. In alliance with CSAC, the County of Santa Barbara supports the continued evaluation of the best and most effective ways to address the therapeutic needs of youth in our community but were in our opposition to diverting meaningful and long-standing investments in local systems. The bill did not meet the legislative deadline and became a two-year bill.
- Worker’s Comp – Santa Barbara opposed two worker’s comp bills in alliance with the California Coalition on Worker’s Compensation (CCWC), CSAC and a number of other organizations. SB 335 (Cortese) would have fundamentally altered longstanding rules and timeframes for determining eligibility for workers’ compensation claims and moves California outside of the mainstream when compared to other states. AB 1465 (Reyes) would have reduced the quality of medical care in California’s workers’ compensation system, increase costs on employers as they struggle to expand California’s economy as we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic, and wipe away important prior reforms that were the subject of negotiations between labor and management. Both bills did not meet the legislative deadlines and are now two-year bills.

2022 LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

The Legislative Platform aligns with the County’s legislative principles. These principles serve as a guide for the County in developing a position on any forthcoming federal and state legislation.

❖ **JOB GROWTH AND ECONOMIC VITALITY:** Continue to support the development of employment opportunities, and support efforts to promote local business and job growth in an endeavor to decrease the unemployment rate and heighten individual and community economic vitality. Support federal funding for local education and workforce training investment that matches the requirements for growing and emerging industries. Champion equity-oriented workforce development strategies that dismantle structural, economic and cultural barriers to employment. Foster interaction and dialogue with public, private, and nonprofit sectors, with a focus on the pursuit of and advocacy for economic vitality and innovation. Support housing development and necessary infrastructure development projects as job creators and economic engines that increase economic vitality across multiple industries and markets. Support economic vitality through regional partnerships including broadband efforts, economic development efforts, and support funding relating to housing development in order to create capacity for job growth in the County.

❖ **EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY AND OPERATIONS:** Striving to balance the diversity of needs countywide, support efforts to streamline regulatory processes and promote operational enhancements, including advancements in technology that provide more efficient service to customers, relevant to County departments’ missions and core services, including disaster prevention & response, by thoroughly evaluating legislation, and if warranted, consider opposition to legislation that creates undue fiscal, regulatory and operational burdens on individual departments.

❖ **FISCAL STABILITY:** Support efforts to generate new intergovernmental revenue and/or enhance existing revenue/reimbursement levels and oppose the loss of, or redirecting of, existing revenue and/or the creation of additional unfunded mandates to the County. This may include specific direct federal funding to local governments to address issues across multiple departments. Such efforts also include supporting a majority state budget vote requirement and a timely adoption of the state budget before the new fiscal year begins.

❖ **INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION:** Partner with neighboring cities, special districts, regional stakeholder groups and other local agencies on infrastructure, planning and other large-scale projects when possible. Support the advocacy efforts of such organizations as the: California State Association of Counties (CSAC), National Association of Counties (NACO), Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG), First 5 Santa Barbara, and other local, regional and federal agencies/associations. Collaborate with other jurisdictions, institutions and entities on mutually beneficial issues such as disaster prevention, response and recovery, transportation, housing, technology and broadband, protection of children, the elderly and other “at risk” populations while upholding the principles of efficient service delivery and operations, fiscal stability and local control.

❖ **LOCAL CONTROL:** Ensure local authority and control over governance issues, land use policies and the delivery of services, including flexibility and customization in designing and implementing policies and services that are responsive to the community’s preferences. Secure where appropriate, direct distribution of federal funds to local governments rather than a state/regional pass-through.

❖ **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES:** Support efforts to maintain and enhance “safety net” services that protect the most vulnerable within a community, including children, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, homeless and other “at risk” populations. Such services in the area of health and human assistance include, but are not limited to, preventive and emergency health care

to the uninsured and underinsured; mental health and substance use services; HIV/AIDS programs; maternal and children health; adult protective services; supportive housing; dependent care; child welfare services; adoptions and foster care; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and unemployment assistance and workforce development. Continue to support seeking federal and state funding to address long term services for homeless and “at-risk” populations. The County supports collaboration between the federal, state and local governments in the delivery and funding of such services. The County opposes the further erosion in federal and state funding of these vital services.

❖ **COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** Support efforts to foster communitywide sustainability by promoting economic stability and environmental protection and stewardship through participation in the growing green economy. Continue to engage in federal and state deliberations to ensure that local government receives the economic and financial benefits associated with new policies including disaster prevention, response and recovery and pandemics. Support efforts to catalyze community renewal, redevelopment and reinvestment, incubate and support innovative businesses, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and incentivize energy efficiency, water conservation, and the use of renewable energy. Recognize the need to promote mutually beneficial partnerships with public, private, and nonprofit sectors to maintain and protect agricultural and rural resources, housing, coastal areas, and bio-diversity. Support actions to secure sustainable water supplies throughout the region through ensuring both reliable quality and quantity, and promoting best practices for water conservation measures. Encourage actions to address climate change, reduce pollution, prevent and respond to disasters, protect the environment, develop new revenue sources for today’s fossil fuel-based revenue, and build countywide resiliency to prepare for future potential disaster or climate impacts. These collective efforts aim to engender healthy communities by balancing social well-being, economic prosperity, and environmental responsibility.

❖ **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION:** Eliminate disparities with an equity approach by creating equal and fair avenues for success and access, such as improving distribution of resources for marginalized populations. Support legislation with opportunities for diverse individuals to participate fully in decision-making processes and procedures and create equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. Advance funding mechanisms that advocate for disability rights, engage disadvantaged populations, create equality for all language and education barriers, and incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into organizational practices. Strive to promote equality and increase accessibility and inclusion efforts to reduce inequities in health and mental wellness, education, employment, economic development and public safety. Support legislation for funding professional growth opportunities and workforce training such as implicit bias.