



2017 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

POLICIES AND PRIORITIES



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COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
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ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND AGRICULTURE

Santa Cruz County has a long tradition of environmental protection and leadership on environmental issues, from banning fracking and offshore oil drilling to protection of riparian corridors and endangered species. Situated on the northern end of Monterey Bay and with an economy heavily dependent on tourism and agriculture, environmental protection remains a top priority. As a self-reliant County when it comes to water resources, the County has also been a leader in water conservation and protecting water resources.

Environment/Park Funding and Education

Recommended by the Department of Parks, Open Spaces and Cultural Education

- Protection and support of California’s renowned open spaces is one of the State’s greatest achievements, and requires continued investment to assure accessibility for all. The County **Supports** the principles of AB 2444, the California Parks, Water, Climate, and Coastal Protection and Outdoor Access For All Act, which, if approved by the voters, would have authorized issuance of \$3.5 billion in State General Obligation bonds to finance parks, water, climate adaptation, coastal protection, and outdoor access programs.
- The County **Supports** new grant programs increasing the ability of underserved and at-risk populations to participate in outdoor recreation and educational experiences.

Environment/Stormwater Runoff

Recommended by the Department of Public Works

- As state and federal water quality requirements have steadily increased, counties and cities have had to develop and implement plans to reduce the level of pollutants discharged into federal and state waters. These costly requirements strain local government budgets. However, under Prop 218 voter approval is required of almost all local taxes, including the assessments, charges, and fees stormwater management agencies had come to rely on. Water and sewer services are exempt from Prop 218, but stormwater does not qualify for those exemptions. The County **Supports** legislation to classify stormwater as a utility, allowing local governments to assess fees to manage and treat stormwater as required by current regulations.

Environment/Air Quality

Recommended by the Board of Supervisors

- During winter months, wood smoke poses air quality challenges in parts of the County, particularly the San Lorenzo Valley. In 2016, the County, the Board and the Monterey Bay Air Resources Board successfully sought added cap-and-trade revenues to expand a wood stove change-out program to reduce air pollution in the Valley. However, the revenues secured were far below initial proposals, and the County **Supports** additional cap-and-trade funds for this worthy cause.

Environment/Solid Waste

Recommended by the Department of Public Works

- The 2015-16 Legislative Session saw the demise of several bills which would have required recycled content in various packaging, such as plastic bottles. Due to changes in the market for recycled materials, 800 recycling center operations have closed in recent years. The County **Supports** bills to help stimulate demand for recycled materials and sustain and recycling operations.
- Santa Cruz County was one of the first in the state to ban polystyrene to-go products, and has since extended the prohibition to all polystyrene products. With polystyrene a significant ocean pollutant, numerous other California communities have taken similar steps. The County **Supports** a statewide ban on polystyrene products.
- Santa Cruz County's Safe Drug and Sharps Disposal Ordinance set the standard for similar ordinances statewide, representing an aggressive step toward addressing medical waste found in communities across the country. Similar Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs for pharmaceuticals, sharps and packaging are expected to be introduced next session. The County **Supports** these efforts.
- The County **Supports** additional funding for state-mandated organic waste diversion.

Environment/Flood Protection and Infrastructure

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- With the likelihood of increased coastal flooding, climate change represents a significant threat to coastal communities across California. The County **Supports** legislation and administrative actions for flood protection and enhancement financing, including bonds or budget appropriations. Additionally, the County **Supports** legislation and funding reimbursing the County for ongoing efforts to inventory aging infrastructure and for County oversight. The County also **Supports** efforts to provide a source of funding for the repair or improvement of unsafe or outdated infrastructure where maintenance has been deferred.

Water/Economic Vitality

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- Agriculture and economic development are vital to a sustainable Santa Cruz County, but can be constrained by periodic water shortages that impact surface and groundwater sources. An equitable method of conveyance and storage for agricultural water needs should be a priority of any long term statewide or local plan. The protection of vital agricultural crops in the Santa Cruz region through an equitable solution will ensure areas throughout the state may continue to thrive. The County **Supports** federal, state and regional bond measures that continue planning and development of regional water goals and policies.

Water/Land Use Coordination

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- Santa Cruz County **Supports** legislation that would require coordination between land use and water regulatory agencies in California, as well as legislation that would mandate increased coordination and collaboration among cities and county agencies when it comes to water and land use management.

Water/Private Wells

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- The County **Supports** State and federal programs designed to assist individual property owners with financing and loans for replenishment of private, domestic wells that have gone dry as a result of the current drought.

Water/Groundwater

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- Groundwater quality continues to be an area of concern for environmental planners and regulators. The County **Supports** legislation that would fund and provide incentives to agricultural growers and manufacturers that have complied with clean water goals and took additional efforts to improve groundwater integrity.

Agriculture/Vector Control and Pest Management

Recommended by the Commissioner of Agriculture

- A number of significant invasive species threaten California on an ongoing basis, and pest prevention is critical to preserving our agricultural industry and the environment. The County **Supports** legislation funding Pest Exclusion, Pest Detection Trapping and Survey Activities, Rapid Response, Pest Management/Eradication and Public Education and Outreach Programs. The County **Opposes** any state or federal legislation or budget actions proposed to reduce funding to these critical programs.
- The County **Supports** efforts to restore funding for agricultural border stations.

Agriculture/Land Use

Recommended by the Commissioner of Agriculture

- The proximity of agricultural fields to schools has created concerns regarding the impacts that the use of agricultural pesticides near schools may have on children. These issues can be mitigated by evaluating proposed locations where schools will be built. Legislation that aims at mitigating these issues will not only help to protect agriculture but also ensure that new schools are built in zoned areas that minimize impacts on educational activities. SB 313 would have required school districts to notify and consult with City, County and Agricultural Commissioners prior to acquiring real state property to build a schoolsite in areas zoned for agricultural use and agricultural production. The County **Supports** State and federal legislation that protect agriculture and prevents the loss of agricultural land, and **Supports** State and federal legislation that requires school districts to consult with local planning officials, agricultural commissioners and agricultural organizations prior to purchasing and/or acquiring donated property zoned for agricultural use and agricultural production to build a schoolsite.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND LAND USE

Roads, alternative transportation infrastructure and public transit are some of the top priorities of Santa Cruz County residents. Neighborhood vitality is also key to our quality of life, though housing shortfalls have led to rising housing prices that have disproportionately impacted lower-income residents and made it difficult to attract and retain jobs and businesses. The County's history of leadership on land use issues by focusing development in the urban core also poses new challenges, as a scarcity of undeveloped lots has fostered debate about the best use of available land and created complex neighborhood issues.

Transportation/Roads, Bridges and Alternative Transportation

Recommended by the Department of Public Works

- Santa Cruz County currently has tens of millions in unmet annual funding needs for the maintenance and preservation of local streets, roads and related facilities. The recent “2016 California Statewide Local Streets and Roads Needs Assessment Report” found that the Pavement Condition Index of roads in the unincorporated area averaged below 50, or “poor.” The County **Supports** new ongoing funding to be allocated to counties by formula, with maximum flexibility for local transportation maintenance and improvements. The County seeks legislation or budget actions that: 1) designate a dedicated and secure source of funding to support the maintenance and rehabilitation of the state and local road and transit systems; 2) expedite delivery and provide administrative flexibility for transportation projects; 3) promote and expand alternative financing programs; and/or 4) improve mobility options for the public.

Housing/Homelessness

Recommended by the Board of Supervisors, Department of Planning, Health Services Agency, Department of Human Services and the County Administrative Office

- The County has a long history of countywide collaboration with cities, non-profit organizations and the Homeless Action Partnership Continuum of Care to prevent and end homelessness through the provision of housing and services to persons already without shelter and those at-risk of becoming homeless. Each of the State's counties are in need of increased resources to address needs, including housing, case management, supportive services for families and children, and mental health disorder and substance abuse services. The County **Supports** legislation that would increase the ability of persons who are homeless to access the resources and assistance needed to end their homeless situation.
- The County **Supports** legislation that creates additional permanent supportive housing services for people who have been homeless for a significant period of time and have a disabling condition.
- Many states and local governments have demonstrated the efficacy of the “housing first” model toward ending homelessness, including Santa Cruz County. The “No Place Like Home” initiative provides funding for the construction and rehabilitation of permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals with mental illness. Most of the money will be allocated through a competitive process, and the County **Supports** efforts to assure that smaller counties with large homeless populations, such as Santa Cruz County, receive their fair share of funding.

- With the shift away from temporary housing support toward the “housing first” model, an unfortunate side effect is a lack of funding for temporary shelter programs, such as the winter shelter formerly established at the Armory building in Santa Cruz. The County **Supports** the restoration of temporary shelter funding, or, in the alternative, legislation seeking a waiver of Armory fees for the purposes of providing temporary shelter to homeless persons.
- At the federal level, the County **Supports** legislation that will provide increased funding for programs that address the needs of homeless persons and contribute to ending homelessness, including an increase in housing vouchers and funding specifically targeted towards preventing and ending veteran and youth homelessness. The County also **Supports** updating the McKinney-Vento funding formula to more equitably distribute funds to places disproportionately impacted by homelessness.

Housing/Affordable Housing

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- Land Use planning is a core priority of Santa Cruz County and the development and implementation of policies, programs and regulations that encourage a balance between employment, transportation and housing are major strategies of the Santa Cruz Sustainability Program. The County **Supports** initiatives that increase all housing, but particularly our stock of workforce housing along major corridors and roadways. One of the key elements of growing our economy is our ability to attract and retain a skilled workforce. Current housing costs make this a difficult goal to achieve and the County needs funding, incentives and administrative actions that encourage private sector development of housing.
- The County **Supports** legislative actions or programs that mandate priority processing of affordable housing through density bonuses and similar measures aimed at addressing the housing shortfall to the local workforce.
- The County **Supports** legislation that provides incentives or funding grants and loans for the use of alternate methods and materials for the construction of affordable housing to meet local housing goals.

Housing/Regional Housing Bonuses

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- The County **Supports** legislation or an administrative actions that would return additional sales taxes or other funding or provide other budget incentives for counties that construct housing totals that exceed the eight-year regional housing goals amounts.

Housing/Senior and Dependent Adult Eviction Protection

Recommended by the Department of Human Services

- Adult Protective Services program clients require stable housing in order to benefit from services, reduce their risk of incidents of abuse, neglect, and self-neglect, and achieve better health outcomes. However, a recent survey of counties statewide found that counties have limited resources available to assist victims of elder and dependent adult abuse who are marginally housed or at risk of homelessness. Survey respondents also expressed difficulty in identifying

and accessing appropriate housing and supportive residential options for vulnerable APS clients. The County **Supports** legislation and funding that would develop, test, and support preservation and eviction prevention services among seniors and dependent adults who have been victims of abuse or neglect, or self-neglect.

Land Use/Cannabis

Recommended by the Board of Supervisors

- Under the Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act, local control over the cultivation and distribution of cannabis was preserved so that local governments have a say in the time, place and manner of local cannabis operations, an important step given the potential land use, natural resource and public safety concerns the industry presents. With the passage of Proposition 64, California voters have chosen to approve cannabis for recreational use as well. The County **Supports** efforts to protect and preserve local control over local cannabis operations.

Land Use/Commercial Improvements

Recommended by the County Administrative Office

- The loss of redevelopment left many communities struggling for funds to invest in revitalization and economic development. Across the country, local governments have found novel ways to incentivize revitalization, such as tax deferrals or tax abatement programs. The County of Santa Cruz **Supports** legislation allowing local governments to defer property assessment increases on commercial building improvements for a set period of time, with phased increases to follow up to the fair market value of the completed improvements.

Land Use/Neighborhood Vitality

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- Many communities throughout Santa Cruz County have seen an increase in property maintenance issues over the past few years, and this trend is particularly evident in the rural town areas of the County. The County **Supports** legislation providing resources for new and existing property maintenance related violations and property enforcement programs to help protect property values and quality of life for individuals. Funding, training budgets or reimbursement to assist smaller counties will ensure that industry and visitors continue to view Santa Cruz County in a favorable light.

Land Use/Walkable Communities

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- The County is home to several sustainable “walking communities” that contribute to reduced carbon monoxide, particulate matter and nitrogen oxides air pollutant concentrations. The development of interconnected “Safe Walking Pedestrian Routes” for use by school age children and seniors is an important step that will improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and increase walking and bicycling. County **Supports** funding to help mitigate potentially dangerous walking and biking.

Land Use/Town Plan Updates

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- The County **Supports** legislation that encourages development of main street or town-centered plans that create local jobs, encourages tourism and create opportunities for residents.
- The County **Supports** funding to develop and update outdated town plans that are were based on the growth of tourism. Funding of plan updates and studies will ensure that the County adopts a General Plan that allows for tourism while respecting our small town quality of life.

Land Use/Community Development Block Grants

Recommended by the Department of Planning

- The County **Supports** legislation or an administrative action that would change the Community Development Block Grant criteria to increase the amount and frequency of application/funding cycles for communities similar to Santa Cruz.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Lifting Santa Cruz County residents from the margins and providing them opportunities to succeed is a top priority, and one in three County residents depend on County services in some form or another. The County looks forward to continued leadership in providing a range of health and human services to residents regardless of status, particularly among vulnerable populations. The County also seeks to be a public health leader by working to assure healthy neighborhoods and populations across all socioeconomic boundaries.

Human Services/Program Funding

Recommended by the Department of Human Services

- The County **Supports** proposals that would provide full funding of County-administered human services programs and **Opposes** cuts and negative policy changes to these programs in the budget process.
- The County **Opposes** any efforts to reduce federal funding for Medicaid administration or benefits, including efforts to place a per-capita cap on funding or limiting the ability of states to leverage funds through assessments on providers.

Human Services/CalFresh Eligibility

Recommended by the Department of Human Services

- Former foster youth are often challenged to meet their most basic security and health needs. Access to food assistance through CalFresh benefits can greatly improve these youth's health outcomes. However, few former foster youth take advantage of this benefit; in Fiscal Year 2010-2011, only 22% of former foster youth even applied for CalFresh benefits. In response to this low application rate, the State provided direction to county Department of Human Services to increase CalFresh outreach to foster youth before they exit care. The County **Proposes** legislation that would grant CalFresh eligibility to all former foster youth, age 26 and under, that receive Medi-Cal. By making these individuals eligible for CalFresh through a simplified process, the proposed legislation, when combined with their existing Medi-Cal benefits, would provide these youth with a complete package of health and nutritional assistance, regardless of income, student status, or other requirements. The Department of Human Services is working with potential legislative co-sponsors to determine the appropriate minimum level of benefit.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that only 57 percent of eligible Californians are participating in CalFresh, significantly lower than the national average of 79 percent for equivalent programs. CalFresh not only allows low-income families to afford healthier food, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, but also has a positive impact on local economies. To help facilitate an increase in the CalFresh participation rate, the County **Supports** legislation that would direct the California Department of Social Services to seek a federal waiver that would: 1) exempt Veteran's Benefits as an income source when calculating CalFresh eligibility; and 2) index the CalFresh shelter deduction to regional rents to qualify additional persons who pay high housing costs for benefits or additional benefits.
- The County **Supports** legislation to direct the California Department of Social Services to seek a federal waiver to allow county human services agencies to process CalFresh applications of jail

inmates and suspend, rather than terminate, CalFresh eligibility when a recipient is detained in county jail for a period of less than a year.

Human Services/In-Home Supportive Services

Recommended by the Department of Human Services

- The County **Supports** legislation that provides the California Department of Social Services the authority to define an authorized representative function for the In-Home Supportive Services program. This function would allow an In-Home Supportive Services applicant/recipient to designate an individual to act on their behalf for purposes of program eligibility and as employer of the care provider.
- In 2013 the United States Department of Labor published the Final Rule on the application of the Fair Labor Standards Act to domestic service workers, including persons working as In-Home Supportive Services providers. To ensure the IHSS program conformed to the federal ruling, California implemented new rules regarding the program's payment structure and schedules and allowable overtime hours. However, the resulting requirements are cumbersome and confusing to both IHSS recipients and providers. As a result, the County **Supports** legislation that would simplify and create greater flexibility in the State's implementation of the federal FLSA rules including, but not limited to: authorizing IHSS tasks by the week and paying IHSS providers on a bi-weekly basis; amending the cap in overtime work by providers to make it more equitable; ensuring that the most vulnerable IHSS recipients are exempted from weekly assistance caps; and providing greater flexibility in counties' ability to address pending violations and violations issued in error.

Human Services/CalWORKs

Recommended by the Department of Human Services

- Existing regulation limits adults' eligibility for CalWORKs benefits to 24 months unless the adult meets either the CalWORKs Federal Work Participation Requirements (WPR) or criteria for having their time extended; this is known as the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) 24 Month Time Clock. These regulations have both hindered the ability of CalWORKs clients to participate in needed educational and training activities and created significant administrative cost burdens on counties. The County **Supports** legislation that would revise CalWORKs program regulations to eliminate the WTW 24 Month Time Clock and instead restore the maximum amount of time that parents can access WTW services to 60 months in order to increase their chances of securing stable employment.
- The County **Supports** raising the CalWORKs grant amounts to a level that at least lifts children out of deep poverty, as well as eliminating the "asset test" to qualify for CalWORKs assistance, which discourages low-income families from saving.
- CalWORKs families who are homeless are eligible to receive 16 days of hotel/motel assistance at a rate of \$65 per day for a family of four or fewer, with an additional \$15 per family member, up to a maximum of \$125 per day. Since this rate was established in 2006, the cost of staying in a hotel/motel has increased significantly. As a result, families struggle to find a hotel/motel within the available assistance amount resulting in their inability to meet one of their most basic health and safety needs. The County **Supports** legislation that would increase the daily assistance rate to enable CalWORKs families who are homeless to secure temporary respite in a hotel/motel.

Human Services/Child Welfare

Recommended by the Department of Human Services

- The County **Supports** requests to the federal government to provide adequate federal funding for services and income support needed by parents seeking to reunify with children who are in foster care.
- The County **Supports** requests to the federal government to increase financial support for programs that assist foster youth in the transition to self-sufficiency, including post-emancipation assistance such as secondary education, job training and access to health care.
- The County **Supports** requests to the federal government to retain the entitlement nature of the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance programs and eliminate outdated rules that base the child's eligibility for funds on parental income and circumstances.
- The County **Supports** funding to address the needs of youth who are victims of, or at-risk of becoming victims of, commercial sexual exploitation.
- The County **Supports** legislation allowing certain payments to continue to a successor guardian of a foster youth whose relative guardian is unable to care for the child due to death or incapacity. Such a provision would mirror current law for successor adoptive parents.
- The County **Supports** legislation which would allow for the videoconferencing (i.e., 'Skyping') of monthly caseworker visits for foster youth in the extended foster care program who are in another state attending college or living with relatives. Since many states have not yet implemented the option to extend foster care to youth up to age 21, California is unable to establish reciprocal agreements for visits, thus exposing the state to sanctions for not meeting federal requirements.

Human Services/Adult Disability Services

Recommended by the Department of Human Services

- The County **Supports** requests to the federal government to restore full funding for the Social Services Block Grant, which in California is used primarily to augment County- and State-funded In- Home Supportive Services for elderly and disabled persons, and to coordinate services to children with disabilities.
- The County **Supports** requests to the federal government to appropriate additional funding to support State and county adult protective services programs.

Health Services/Federally Qualified Health Centers

Recommended by the Health Services Agency

- Although many FQHCs and other community health clinics have been working toward clinical integration of physical, mental health, and substance use disorder services, FQHCs cannot bill Medi-Cal for same day visits for both primary care and mental health encounters, though they can bill for both a medical and dental visit. Medicaid currently pays for a mental health visit on the same day as a medical visit in FQHCs in 32 states, including Washington, Oregon, Nevada and Arizona. California should follow these states to further support integration and improve person-

centered services. Therefore, the County **Supports** legislation requiring Medi-Cal reimbursement to Federally Qualified Health Centers for mental health services provided on the same day as medical services.

- Currently, it takes the Department of Healthcare Services (DHCS) approximately three years to reconcile previous reimbursements to make final payment to FQHCs. The County **Supports** legislation establishing reasonable timelines for DHCS to complete the annual payment reconciliation process for FQHCs, and apply a statute of limitations to not require the local FQHCs to go back more than 3 years to reconcile data and payment. This means it would require the State the annual reconciliation within 18 months of the last date of the fiscal year for which the State is conducting the review.
- Our vulnerable communities need additional substance use disorder treatment and medically necessary specialty mental health services. By providing FQHCs and Rural Health Clinics (RHC) with an option to be reimbursed on a fee-for-service (FFS) basis rather than a prospective payment system (PPS) basis, SB 1335 would have made it easier for community health centers to provide these services. The County **Supports** expanded substance use disorder treatment and specialty mental health services at FQHCs and RHCs.
- California currently faces a primary care workforce crisis that undermines health centers' ability to meet the needs of the local community and puts the health of our most vulnerable populations at risk. AB 2216 would have made it easier for health centers to educate and train providers in California, and the County **Supports** legislation to continue these efforts.

Health Services/Behavioral Health

Recommended by the Health Services Agency

- Using relationships to move out of old roles and patterns is the foundation peer-supported behavioral health care. Learning from those who have experienced change, and to learn new responses through relationships with each other, can be a powerful tool for those undergoing treatment. In 2015, SB 614 would have created a certification process for Peer Support Services and made those services eligible for Medi-Cal reimbursement. The County **Supports** similar efforts.

Health Services/Public Health

Recommended by the Board of Supervisors and the Health Services Agency

- The County **Supports** legislation focusing on preventive health services or activities that improve community health outcomes and encourage the enhancement of funding to support these efforts at the county level and seek to improve nutrition, obesity and fitness education programs as well as health literacy in California's population.
- The County **Supports** legislation reducing health disparities and inequities, including universal health coverage for children and additional funding to get children insured under existing programs.
- The County **Supports** legislation and regulatory efforts that protect and ensure the safety of California's food and water supply, without shifting cost from the State to counties and with additional funding provided to counties.

- The County **Supports** legislation adding nurse home visits as an authorized Medi-Cal benefit. The evidence-based Nurse Family Partnership program and other nurse home visiting programs are already available in 21 California counties. Communities with nurse home visiting programs have consistently seen major reductions in child abuse and neglect, emergency room visits, child arrests at age 15 and behavioral and intellectual problems at age six. Nurse home visiting programs help families and the communities they live in become stronger while saving money for State, local and federal governments. Adding nurse home visiting to the Medi-Cal scope of services would make sure that all moms and babies throughout the state have access to these effective, transformational programs.
- The County **Supports** legislation advocating for and supporting a simplified administrative process of contracting with the California Department of Public Health to allow local health departments to develop a system for the delivery of comprehensive and coordinated public health services to their community.
- The County **Supports** legislation protecting and optimizing funding for county/city health services, avoid the creation of “winners and losers” among the counties when evaluating the allocation/subvention of funds or state benefits, formula development and adjustments to existing allowances. The County also **Supports** concepts or funding allocations that are equitable and fair so that county consensus is possible – both short term and long term.
- The County **Supports** legislation expanding access to dental health services for low income Californians, as well as efforts to increase Denti-Cal reimbursements levels to encourage qualified dentists to participate in providing care to low income children. The County also **Supports** water fluoridation efforts and dental health education program expansions.
- The County **Supports** breastfeeding by streamlining the enrollment process for the WIC Program, as well as new metrics to track breastfeeding rates and health outcomes and requirements for the state to regularly review their equipment standards and reimbursement rates.
- Smoking is the single-largest preventable cause of death - killing more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders and suicide combined - and it is critical to make every effort to dissuade people from smoking. California voters recently approved higher taxes on cigarettes to reduce smoking, and the County **Supports** allowing local jurisdictions to vote on increased tobacco taxes in order to discourage smoking and potentially fund programs that improve the health of residents.
- Amid a nationwide opioid epidemic, the State of Vermont has taken important steps to confront and address this issue. The County **Supports** requiring prescriber education on the risks and benefits of opioids and their alternatives, as well as adopting prescribing guidelines that encourage physicians to incorporate alternative non-opioid treatments for pain, and provide the lowest effective doses and the fewest number of pills when prescribing opioid medications.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Residents expect effective local government, and the County works to meet those expectations through the provision of fair and equitable services, positive customer interactions and prudence when it comes to spending public funds.

Government Operations/Informal Bidding

Recommended by the Board of Supervisors

- The County **Supports** legislation raising the formal bidding threshold to \$25,000. County Service Area projects are currently bid under Sec. 20150 of the California Public Contract Code, which allows that public projects between \$4,000 and \$10,000 be let to contract by informal bidding procedures and public projects of \$10,000 or more, in all instances, be let to contract by formal bidding procedures. These threshold limits have not been increased since 1971. By increasing the limits to \$25,000, Public Contract Code Sec. 25150 would be in compliance with Public Contract Code 20394, which provides a formal bid threshold of \$25,000 for county road projects. Formal bid projects are expensive to prepare and bid and have stringent requirements that eliminate smaller contractors and require considerable time to process. The Local Agency Formation Commission and all County Service Area representatives support such an increase.

Government Operations/Unfunded Mandates

Recommended by the Board of Supervisors

- Through Board leadership, the County was previously successful in securing pre-2004 unfunded mandates from the state. While there have been discussions about reimbursements for post-2004 State mandates, the suggested repayments have been a small fraction of the full amounts. The County **Supports** action to recover the full amount of post-2004 mandates.

Legal Process/Public Records Act

Recommended by County Counsel

- California Government Code Sec. 6250 (the California Public Records Act, or “PRA”) authorizes any person to attain any public record from governmental entities for any purpose, while the California Code of Civil Procedure Sec. 2016.010 (the Civil Discovery Act) authorizes parties to civil litigation to secure evidence and documents pertaining to their case. The Civil Discovery Act has a series of built in protections, time limitations, and procedural requirements designed to ensure that the parties in a civil case operate on a level playing field. The County has seen efforts use the PRA to secure evidence from governmental entities in civil litigation matters brought against the government effectively undermining the procedural safeguards contained in the Civil Discovery Act and prejudicing government entities in their ability to defend cases brought against them. While there is a litigation exception to the PRA, it has been very narrowly construed. The

County **Supports** amending Code of Civil Procedure Sec. 2024.020 to add a new subsection (c), which would read: “(c) Where pending litigation involves a public agency as a party, the parties shall not be entitled to use Government Code Sec. 6250, et seq., as a means to obtain information that could otherwise be obtained through the methods of discovery as set forth in this chapter.”

Legal Process/Grand Juries

Recommended by County Counsel

- Under California Government Code Secs. 26520 and 27642, County Counsels provide legal services and opinions to the County and all County officers. However, under California Penal Code Sec. 934, Civil Grand Juries may also request the advice of County Counsels on civil matters. As Civil Grand Juries frequently serve an oversight role for local government operations, the two statutes can create ethical conflicts for county counsels. The County **Supports** new legislation establishing and funding a process for Civil Grand Juries to be represented by outside counsel.