

# SONOMA COUNTY



## 2017-2018 STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

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# Sonoma County 2017-2018 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 vice versa. 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 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.

## **State Priorities**

# State Priorities

## S1. Increasing Tax 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 cities and 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. Despite dedicating local funding to pavement preservation, 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).

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

- Increase and stabilize 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;
- Reduce the voter threshold for local special sales tax measures; and
- Increase the cap on the total sales tax rate allowed within a jurisdiction.

## S2. Pension Reform

The Public Employee Pension Reform Act of 2012 (PEPRA) made significant changes to pension law for Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) contracting agencies as well as 1937 Act counties. Reducing Sonoma County's pension system costs is an ongoing and top priority of the Board of Supervisors as the County strives to ensure a fair, equitable, and sustainable pension system **for taxpayer and employee alike**. Sonoma County supports pension reform efforts consistent with the 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 for retirees under the County Employees Retirement Law (CERL) for application with PEPRA; implementation of defined benefit plans with lower benefit formulas than PEPRA for active and new employees; and implementation of "hybrid" retirement plans for active and new employees that would include both defined benefit and defined contribution components.

### **S3. Anti-Poverty, Affordable Housing, and Homelessness Assistance**

Sonoma County's real estate market is experiencing escalating rents and vacancy rates as low as 1.5% (REIS, Inc. 2015). Rent increases in Sonoma County are some of the highest among metropolitan areas in California as well as communities throughout the Country. A majority of renters earning less than 50% of area median income pay more than half their income toward rent, whereas the accepted affordability standard is 30% or less of household income (Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2014). These conditions are exposing more lower-income households to the risk of becoming homeless and pushing out working families. Rental assistance, and funding and policies to increase affordable housing stock would help to alleviate these impacts.

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 2016, 2,906 people were without permanent housing, with 1,906 of those sleeping outdoors. There are now 7,464 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.

For those who receive rental 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.

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

- Enhance the state Earned Income Tax Credit;
- Provide a permanent source of funding or affordable housing bonds for development of affordable housing;
- Increase funds for operation of homelessness assistance programs;
- Sustain the Emergency Solutions Grant funding to Sonoma County homeless service providers;
- Normalize the new California Emergency Solutions Grant program funding in the baseline budget;
- 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 funds and new programs equally available to both rural and urban areas;
- Eliminate discrimination against tenants or landlords based on the use of Section 8 vouchers or other government assistance; and
- Target funding to those already providing by-right housing and support legislation that would:
  - Encourage by-right density bonuses exceeding those required by Government Code 65915;
  - Encourage the use of combining zones that make affordable higher-density housing projects a by-right use subject only to design review; and
  - Encourage the limitation of design review discretion to design elements only (no discretion as to land use or density).

#### **S4. 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: solidify and support comprehensive health services to adequately meet the needs of the I/DD population in Sonoma County, including primary, specialty and crisis services; retain expertise in delivering comprehensive health services locally for the I/DD population; develop future plans for the SDC site leveraging locally-informed priorities; and preserve critical environmental and recreational resources on the SDC site.

#### **S5. Regulation of Cannabis**

The cannabis industry has long had a significant presence in Sonoma County, and regulating the industry has been a designated work priority of the Board of Supervisors for a number of years. These efforts resulted in the passage of a comprehensive local framework for medical cannabis in December 2016. Nearly 20 years after California voters legalized medical cannabis via Proposition 215 (1996), the State legislature passed the Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act (MCRSA) in 2015 to license, regulate, and address the impacts of commercial medical cannabis businesses. Then in November 2016, voters passed Proposition 64, the “California Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Initiative,” also known as the “Adult Use of Marijuana Act” (AUMA). State government agencies are now charged with developing regulations to implement these two new State laws.

As the State develops regulations and makes amendments to MCRSA and AUMA, it is important to retain and strengthen components of the laws that are critical to Sonoma County and other local governments, such as local control and taxation authority, environmental preservation, public safety, and public health protections. Further, as local governments implement local and State regulations, funding assistance will be critical to ensuring successful integration of the cannabis industry into the legal economy while protecting residents and the environment against negative impacts.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation, regulations, and budgetary actions that would:

- Increase funding for environmental protection and clean up, code enforcement, public safety, and health and human services programs;
- Retain or enhance local control over regulating the medical and nonmedical cannabis industries, particularly in the areas of land use and health;
- Reconcile differences in MCRSA and AUMA as well as discrepancies between cannabis laws and existing California Code that create challenges for local implementation;
- Ensure adequate funding to local governments for implementation of state programs, including pesticide regulation, pest prevention, and nursery, direct marketing, and organic regulatory programs;

- Establish regulations for edible cannabis products that mirror food safety regulations, including local enforcement authority;
- Increase funding to strengthen and enhance substance use disorder (SUD) outpatient treatment programs, DUI and Drug court programs, student assistance programs like Project Success Plus, and field-based outreach programs at high schools and colleges such as the Mobile Support Team (MST) and the Crisis Assessment Prevention Education (CAPE) team; and
- Implement state-wide outreach and media campaigns to educate the public on what the law permits, the risks of cannabis use, and safe cannabis consumption.

#### **S6. 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 that are beginning to fail. The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) is in the process of developing and adopting a Pathogen Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and an Action Plan to identify and reduce bacteria levels in the Russian River that are in part caused by these underperforming and failing septic systems. Pursuant to the TMDL, many property owners will be required to repair or replace their 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. The County, the Community Development Commission and the Regional Water Board have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding under which the parties have committed to seeking funding and financing mechanisms to assist these homeowners with repairing and replacing onsite septic systems.

Additionally, 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.

**S7. 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. The County works closely with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), which protects against wildfires and provides fire and emergency services to counties throughout the State. State and Federal assistance to local governments and CAL FIRE 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.

## **State Issues**

## State Issues

Following are the County's general state advocacy issues for 2017-2018. 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

#### **S8. Prevent Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults**

Despite progress made in reducing the number of tobacco users over that last 20 years, tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the US, with almost half a million deaths and \$170 billion in health care expenses annually. In Sonoma County, tobacco use contributes to all of the top four leading causes of death (cancer, heart disease, stroke and lower respiratory disease). Health behavior practices formed in adolescence play a crucial role in health throughout life. This is particularly true for tobacco use, where 90% of current smokers started before the age of 18 and 95% 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.

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 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recently reviewed the issue, and its 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, more than doubled among middle and high school youth from 2013 to 2014 and continues to rise. Prohibiting flavored tobacco products would decrease the attraction of these products to youth.

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

- Establish a minimum price and discount ban for all tobacco products;
- Increase the state tax on tobacco products;
- Establish local authority to tax tobacco products; and
- Restrict the sale of flavored nicotine-containing products.

### **S9. 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, similar to 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.

### **S10. 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 made worse by the downturn in the economy, which 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 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.

### **S11. 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.

### **S12. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Planning and Local Control**

In 1980, the California Legislature enacted the EMS Act, which empowers counties to establish local EMS agencies (LEMSAs) to develop and implement EMS systems (Health & Safety Code, §1797.200). The formation of LEMSAs was and continues to be needed to oversee the varying special interests of both public and private providers, hospitals, and tertiary resources to ensure a coordinated systems approach to the delivery of emergency medical services for the people of California in their most vulnerable moments. As specified in the EMS Act, LEMSAs are empowered to create an EMS system to provide for a “specially organized arrangement” involving “personnel, facilities, and equipment for the effective and coordinated delivery” of EMS in “emergency conditions”. (Id., §1797.78) Legislation that reduces county control over local planning and emergency medical services by requiring local policies and procedures to be reviewed and approved by the State Emergency Medical Services Authority would fail to reflect California’s diverse geography and population and would negatively impact local emergency medical services agencies.

**Action:** Support legislation and regulatory measures that would:

- Maintain or strengthen the authority and governing role of counties and their LEMSAs to plan, implement, and evaluate all aspects and components of the EMS system;
- Enhance the ability of the LEMSA medical director to assure medical control of the EMS system;
- Improve the quality and delivery of EMS and prehospital patient care;
- Protect the confidentiality of the quality improvement process and promote information sharing between providers, hospitals and LEMSAs;
- Encourage the participation of EMS system providers and hospitals in evidenced based research;
- Continue general fund support for multi-county regional EMS agencies;
- Provide for adequate and stable funding for LEMSAs and EMS systems components, including, but not limited to: EMS administration, trauma systems, specialty centers (e.g., trauma, pediatric, cardiac, stroke), ambulance transport, and uncompensated care by emergency department physicians and on-call specialists.

Oppose legislation and regulatory measures that would impose State reviews of county policies for EMS planning and delivery, including measures that would:

- Weaken the authority and governing role of counties and their LEMSAs to plan, implement, and evaluate all aspects and components of the EMS system;
- Weaken the ability of the LEMSA medical director to assure medical control of the EMS system;
- Result in fragmentation of the EMS systems and the delivery of prehospital emergency medical care;
- Allow cities and special districts to provide EMS independent of County/LEMSA administration and medical direction.

### **S13. Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption Among Youth**

Overweight and obese children constitute a preventable public health crisis. According to the California Department of Education, 37% of students in 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade in Sonoma County are 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.

Overweight, obesity and physical inactivity cost Sonoma County hundreds of millions of dollars per year, attributable to health care costs and 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 through a sweetened beverage tax or fee or 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.

#### **S14. 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 2017, 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 efforts to review and update the 2007 Interagency Agreement (CCS Information Notice No.: 07-01) (IAA) between California Department of Health Services, CMS Branch and California Department of Education (CDE), Special Education Division and clarify the roles and responsibilities of each state agency. As stated in the IAA, this document will be reviewed by CDE, Special Education Division and DHS CCS at least every three years and modified as necessary. This review is needed to assist the counties in evaluating the responsibilities between the Local Education Agency (LEA)/Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) and the CCS Medical Therapy Program.

#### **S15. 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.

Communicable disease control not only involves activities related to humans but also includes vector control to prevent spread of pathogens. Recent years have seen an increase in mosquito-borne diseases that must be researched and controlled.

**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;
- Address public health laboratory workforce shortages including the availability of training programs; and
- Support funding for disease response, control and research including laboratory identification, vector control, and treatment/management of infected individuals that does not come at the expense of other public health programs.

#### **S16. CSU flexibility and increased access to Psychiatric Hospital Beds**

In 2016, California Behavioral Health Directors Association initiated many activities and worked on deliverables related to this goal. Staff laid the ground work in 2016 by successfully opposing AB 1300 (Ridley-Thomas) and building out the SB 82 (Steinberg) crisis grants by California Housing Finance Agency. This work will continue to be developed into additional policy strategies and initiatives for the next two year legislative cycle starting in 2017. Next steps in the planning process are identifying potential sources and funding levels, articulating the desired roles for private health plans, Medicare, and Medi-Cal managed care plans (making a strong case for the shared responsibilities for medically complicated cases), and advocating for flexibility in the use of crisis stabilization units, for example, changing Crisis Stabilization Unit’s from 23 hour programs to 72 hour programs.

**Action:** Support legislation that would expand the number of hours of crisis stabilization services that are reimbursable from 20 hours to 72 hours.

### **S17. Inpatient Psychiatric Services**

The Medicaid Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion prohibits the use of federal Medicaid financing for care provided to most patients in mental health and substance use disorder residential treatment facilities larger than 16 beds. The exclusion applies to all Medicaid beneficiaries under age 65 who are patients in an IMD, except for payments for inpatient psychiatric services provided to beneficiaries under age 21, and has long been a barrier to efforts to use Medicaid to provide nonhospital inpatient behavioral health services.

In late April 2016, the federal government issued its managed care final rule on managed overhauls of the Medicaid program for the first time in more than 10 years. For many behavioral health providers, the most significant provision allows—for the first time ever—for Medicaid to pay for inpatient treatment in a facility with more than 16 beds, by tempering the IMD exclusion.

However, the new Medicaid rule does not apply to California’s Mental Health Plan, including Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Behavioral Health Division’s Medi-Cal Mental Health Plan, because it is paid on a fee for service basis and not under a risk-based contract. Therefore, it is necessary to allow a carving out of the inpatient benefit as a capitated or risk based claimed service resulting in relief from the IMD exclusion due to the Medicaid final rule. This would allow for the utilization of free standing psychiatric hospitals for adults funded through Medi-Cal.

**Action:** Support legislation that would require the State to carve out the inpatient psychiatric services and reimburse California Medi-Cal Mental Health Plan’s on a risk-basis.

### **S18. 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) introduced in 2015, for example, would have required 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 included 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 have enabled 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 allowed 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.

### **S19. 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% 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;
- 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 CURES database; and
- Promote links between the CURES, State (CDPH/DHCS) mortality data, and EHR systems.

### **S20. Microbiological Contamination of Freshwater Beaches and Recreational Waters**

One of California's biggest industries is tourism, and beaches are a significant tourist attraction as well as an integral part of California's culture and economy. Beaches, or more precisely waters adjacent to the beach, must be safe for swimming and other recreational use. When certain bacteria are present in sufficient concentrations, they pose a health hazard for swimming. County health officers issue various types of warnings when certain kinds of bacteria are found in the water at levels that exceed standards. These indicator bacteria imply the potential presence of microscopic disease-causing organisms originating from human and animal wastes. In addition, they indicate the presence of toxins presented by cyano-bacteriological algal blooms. Not only does beach contamination pose real health risks to beach goers, the negative publicity that comes with postings and closures undermines the tourism industry.

In California there are currently four types of warnings about ocean beach water conditions: postings, closures, rain advisories, and permanent postings. Postings are the most common type of warning. Postings are triggered when a water sample fails to meet the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Ocean Water-Contact Sports Standard (California Health and Safety Code Sections 115875-115915). A beach posting is a warning to the public that the bacteria levels in the beach water may cause illness, and local health officers are recommending the public stay out of the water in areas where the signs are visible. The most common cause of postings is the dry weather discharge of urban runoff from storm drain systems.

In 1997, AB 411 passed, which through definition of recreational beaches and storm water, limits the requirement for counties to create a sampling/monitoring program only if state funds are available. Currently, state funds are only available for the ocean beaches. Therefore, many jurisdictions have highly populated freshwater beaches (rivers, streams, lakes) that are not being monitored for bacteriological contamination.

Since 1987, the County's Department of Health Services (DHS) has conducted a bacteriological sampling program, utilizing the CDPH guidance documents, at the 10 most populated freshwater beaches along the Russian River. Recently, across California and along the Russian River, environmental conditions have changed with restricted flows due to drought conditions, water conservation and fish habitat renewal. These conditions have created an environment that is capable of supporting the growth of harmful algal blooms. These algal blooms can release harmful toxins, which potentially put the beach goers and their pets at harm.

In 2015 and 2016, DHS created a pilot project to monitor the algal conditions along the Russian River, utilizing the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) guidelines and the most current information available. Sonoma County and many other counties are encountering increased awareness of the potential risks associated with the toxic blooms, have been testing the waters for the presence of algal toxins, posting cautions and warnings, and keeping the public informed about the river conditions and best practices.

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

- Establish a funded State program for the microbiological sampling and monitoring of freshwater beaches;
- Increase testing laboratories, analysis and research for cyanobacterial toxins. Work with local jurisdictions to fund the development of laboratory research facilities and expand resources; and
- Develop set standards and methodologies for microbiological testing at freshwater beaches similar to those established in the guidance documents.

### **S21. Funding for Continuum of Care Reform**

The Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), also known as AB 403, which was signed into law in October 2015, comprehensively reforms placement and treatment options for youth in foster care. In order to support the successful transition of foster care to the model outlined by the CCR, the State must fund counties to take on the extra responsibilities that are required to effectively implement this transition and ongoing treatment.

County Mental Health Plans (MHPs) are responsible for the successful implementation of CCR. The MHPs must hire more staff to ensure quality of care, quality assurance, site certification, and ongoing monitoring of treatment. MHP Quality Assurance/Compliance staff will be responsible for: certification of Specialty Mental Health Services provided in Resource Family Homes (formerly group homes); monitoring the provision of services in Resource Family Homes; certification of Fosters Family Agencies (FFA); oversight of FFAs to ensure appropriate provision of Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) and ongoing training to foster families; and, monitoring compliance for the provision of specialty mental health services in FFAs and Resource Family Homes. Additionally, MHP licensed clinical staff are required to attend and participate in Child Family Teams (CFT) for the purpose of obtaining feedback, reporting progress, hearing suggestions, and coordinating treatment for specialty mental health treatment from CFT members.

MHPs also offer the best oversight for monitoring the use of psychotropic medications. MHPs will need to expand their pediatric psychiatrist time to ensure psychotropic medications are appropriate and medically necessary for all foster children receiving specialty mental health services.

**Action:** Support legislation and budgetary action that increases funding for implementation of the Continuum of Care Reform and County Mental Health Plans.

## **S22. 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.

## **S23. 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 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; since 2014-15, the county MOE increases 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 increase local funding.

#### **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. Resource Family Approval for Relative Caregivers**

California is starting statewide implementation of a new, unified process of approving foster families called Resource Family Approval (RFA) that will apply to both relative and non-relative foster homes. By 2017, the only way to be approved as a new foster parent will be to go through RFA; families already approved prior to January 2017 will have additional time to convert to the new RFA standards. While RFA has positive facets, the new approval standards were not written with relative caregivers in mind which could lead to unintended consequences, such as a reduction of the number of relative caregivers overall. Under RFA, relatives – like non-relative foster parent applicants – will be required to complete training hours, a psychosocial assessment, and risk assessment. Unlike non-relative foster parents, many relatives will be attempting to meet these requirements while simultaneously responding to the needs of a traumatized child already residing in their home, and navigating the complexities of the foster care system, courts, schools, and health care systems. Compounding these difficulties, caregivers are not eligible for foster care payments until they have been approved as a resource family, which can take many months.

**Action:** Support legislation that removes barriers to obtaining Resource Family Approval for relative caregivers of foster children.

#### **S26. Aging Services Long Term Care**

The delivery of long term care in California must be vastly improved. Senator Carol Liu published the report titled "A Shattered System" which resulted from the work of the Senate Select Committee on Aging and Long Term Care. The report describes the lack of coordinated long term care services and supports for seniors in California. California's system of service delivery is dysfunctional in a number of areas due to the fragmentation of responsibility and funding for interrelated services. The structure of state government provides barriers to coordinating and delivering services to millions of aging people. Most programs and services are scattered through many state departments which creates inefficiencies and barriers to strategic planning.

Long-term care delivery must be suited to each individual's functional needs and financial situations. Consumer preferences for community-based care are a standard for service delivery. A coordinated support system would better utilize state resources and provide a greater benefit to those receiving services. As California confronts the growing number of issues resulting from millions of additional older people who are more diverse in their needs, values and backgrounds, our current system is clearly lacking in both coordination and funding.

**Action:** Support legislative and budgetary efforts to reduce fragmentation within the long term care delivery system and adequately fund a system of care for seniors in California.

## **Natural Resources**

### **S27. 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; and
- Support the preemptive status of State pesticide laws and authority provided to the DPR and California Agricultural Commissioners.

### **S28. 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, 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.

### **S29. California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act)**

The Land Conservation 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 or open space 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 Land Conservation Act subventions to counties.

### **S30. 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.

### **S31. 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.

### **S32. 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.

### **S33. Sustainable Groundwater Management**

In September 2014, Governor Brown signed into law the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), historic legislation requiring that California's critical groundwater resources be sustainably managed by local agencies. SGMA requires the formation, by June 30, 2017, of new Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) tasked with assessing the conditions in their local basins and adopting locally-based Groundwater Sustainability Plans for medium- and high-priority groundwater basins, as designated by the California Department of Water Resources. Groundwater Sustainability Plans must be completed by January 31, 2022, and implementation of these plans must bring the basins into sustainability within 20 years of adoption.

In Sonoma County, three of the County's 14 basins and sub-basins are designated as medium-priority: Santa Rosa Plain, Sonoma Valley and Petaluma Valley. No Sonoma County basins are currently designated as high-priority. The County and the Water Agency are in the process of working with other GSA-eligible entities to form these GSAs and develop governance structures and financing and staffing plans. Support from the State is needed to defray costs of implementing SGMA, and to provide clarity on issues related to implementation while preserving ability of local agencies to best implement in their specific areas.

**Action:** Support legislation or budgetary action that would:

- Increase funding for implementation of SGMA; and
- Provide for clarity in implementation while preserving local ability to tailor actions to basin-specific conditions.

Monitor legislation that impacts SGMA implementation and groundwater sustainability.

## **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 county 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. 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.

### **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 Recognized Obligation Payment Schedule (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 RDAs' housing assets. The County Successor Agency has joined with other local jurisdictions to appeal this staff level decision to the Courts.

Health and Safety Code (HSC) 34183 sets forth the process by which Non-Housing Successor Agencies receive an annual administrative allowance to unwind the Oversight Board's approved projects of the Agency enumerated on the ROPS. HSC 34183 currently allocates tax increment revenue, to the extent that funds are available in the RPTTF under ABX1 26 to meet obligations, in the following order: pass-through payments, ROPS payments, Successor Agency administrative costs, and residual distributions. This "waterfall" of funds poses a problem to Successor Agencies in that, when the ROPS obligations for project delivery expenses exceed tax increment revenue available for distribution, the Agency does not receive administrative costs associated with performing the work. All available funding is allocated to advance and complete approved projects, eliminating any available funding for administrative costs, which effectively prevents necessary administration associated with completion of enforceable obligations. To remedy this, the distribution of RPTTF to Successor Agencies should be reordered, placing Successor Agency administrative costs before ROPS payments, allowing Successor Agencies to collect administration costs necessary to fund the organizational infrastructure needed to complete approved projects.

**Action:** Support 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 (Atkins) to a Housing Successor that is a separate legal entity from the community that created the redevelopment agency;
- Creates new programs or financing mechanisms that could be used in Sonoma County to support redevelopment, infrastructure, and economic development activities; and
- Reorders the distribution of RPTTF to Successor Agencies, placing Successor Agency administrative costs before ROPS payments.

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 the Community Redevelopment Law 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. This program should be available to all mobile home park residents, regardless of income.

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

The Water Agency and the County engaged in feasibility studies for development of a Community Choice Aggregation program (Sonoma Clean Power) that provides local residents and businesses with an alternative source for electric power. A joint powers authority was formed to develop and implement Sonoma Clean Power, including an independent Board of Directors that is currently governing the entity. Sonoma Clean Power has been serving customers including the Water Agency since May 2014, and all eligible cities within Sonoma County have voted to join the County in participating. From its inception Community Choice has been subject to legislative and regulatory schemes intended to weaken these programs and restrict consumer choice. Active participation in the legislative and regulatory processes is essential to continuation of Community Choice in Sonoma County.

**Action:**

- Monitor future community choice legislation and oppose bills that have negative impacts on Sonoma Clean Power or on further expansion of Community Choice programs;
- 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 and 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 air 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 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 that would allocate aviation fuel taxes in compliance with FAA policies and provide additional funding for aeronautical purposes.

**S41. 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% of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) from landfills. Collectively, these waste streams are costing the County and ratepayers 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 require 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; and
- Oppose unfunded mandates that increase program costs for local government HHW programs or diminish the flexibility of local programs.

**S42. 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 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.

**S43. 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 HES 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 HES 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 HES 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 California Home Energy Rating System (HERS II) rating.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

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

#### **S44. 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 regulation to increase the term limit of JOC contracts beyond one year.

#### **S45. 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.

#### **S46. 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.

#### **S47. 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.

#### **S48. Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)**

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs are innovative local government financing programs that allow a property owner to apply for funds to pay for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements that will reduce their energy and water cost and consumption. Participation in the program is voluntary and repayment is accomplished through a property tax assessment on the participating home or business. An increasing number of local jurisdictions have implemented PACE programs as an economic development strategy, an environmental protection strategy, and as a means of helping homeowners and business clear the primary barrier to efficiency upgrades: steep up-front costs.

In August 2015, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced that it intended to allow Federal Housing Administration (FHA) financed properties to use the PACE program if certain conditions were met. In July 2016, the Obama Administration made good on that promise, allowing homeowners with Veterans Affairs (VA) and FHA insured mortgages to participate in PACE programs in order to install energy efficient and water retrofits in their homes. In addition, the Department of Energy issued revised PACE financing guidelines.

To date over 400 local governments in California have voted to authorize PACE programs in their communities and over 70,000 participating homeowners have PACE liens.

PACE financing does not constitute a loan, but instead is built on traditional tax assessments, which local governments have managed for over 100 years. PACE does not increase risk to homeowners, business owners, lenders, or the financial system. However, the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) has yet to recognize PACE financing as a local property tax lien.

In September 2016, the Governor signed AB 2693 (Dababneh), which adds consumers protections to California's PACE Program. Still, additional consumer protections and oversight are needed to ensure proper operation by the various PACE program operators.

**Action:** Support legislation that increases consumer protections and oversight of PACE financing programs.

#### **S49. 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 agritourism 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, while maintaining protections for participants and consumers.

#### **S50. Small-Scale Poultry Producers**

Currently, even small-scale poultry producers in California are required to obtain a license from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) in order to sell poultry products to hotels, restaurants, institutions, distributors and retail stores and to cure and smoke meat, putting a strain on these small businesses. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides for exemptions from some of its requirements for those growing and producing less than 20,000 units, including allowing for a full range of meat processing and sales. Seven states currently allow the full rights and privileges granted by the USDA exemption without requiring a state license. Additional states require licenses, but essentially mirror USDA regulations and exemptions. In order to provide viable economic opportunities for small-scale producers, California should recognize the USDA exemptions and replace the requirement for a CDFA license with CDFA registration and fully allow for processing and sales. Regulations on CDFA registrants should include sufficient protections to address public health and environmental concerns.

**Action:** Support legislation that would replace State requirements for small-scale poultry producers to obtain a State license with a registration requirement, while ensuring protection of the public health.

#### **S51. Climate Protection**

The County and the Water Agency are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change on extreme weather, sea level rise and water reliability. Both entities have made significant investments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare climate adaptation plans. The State recently enacted SB 32 setting a goal to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. It is critically important that the State continue to lead in the areas of both climate mitigation and adaptation.

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

- Support legislation and regulatory policy to achieve SB 32 climate goals including continuation of the State's successful cap-and-trade program;
- Continue to urge the State to invest funds from cap-and-trade and other sources in local programs to reduce emissions and improve climate resilience;
- Support development of statewide administration of energy efficiency and renewable power programs funded by the Public Utilities Commission and other state agencies preferably in a form independent of investor-owned utilities; and
- Work with local, regional and statewide partners to advance programs that significantly improve climate protection and water resilience in California and Sonoma County.

#### **S52. Water-Related Revenue Allocations for Water Suppliers**

The State has from time to time looked to the water sector to capture additional revenue through reallocation of property tax revenue or application of statewide fees on water use. Enactment of Proposition 1A largely restricted the State's ability to seize local property tax revenue to fund other needs. However, going forward it is critically important to oppose other efforts to reallocate property taxes locally or to impose additional statewide fees on water use. Water Agency customers currently pay a watershed related charge that funds implementation of the Biological Opinion. Additional State fees on water use would be an added burden on ratepayers. Any reduction in the property tax allocation to the Water Agency would severely impact the Agency's non-enterprise activities in fishery restoration and flood protection.

**Action:**

- Oppose legislation or regulatory policy that would apply statewide water use fees on local water users unless those revenues are directed to meet local needs;
- Work to ensure that any legislation or initiative reallocating local property tax revenue does not reduce the share of these revenues currently allocated to the Water Agency; and
- Provide information and testimony where needed and work with other agencies and associations to further these goals.

**S53. 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.

**S54. Storm Drain Maintenance Assessment Districts**

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.

**S55. 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 remove the requirement to install and maintain truncated domes.

### **S56. 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% 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% of the actual cost. Occasionally, a permit takes many hours of staff time to ensure the transport will occur safely.

**Action:** Support legislation or regulation that would:

- 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 permit fees that reflect the cost of processing these permits; and
- Effectuate the Caltrans Transporter Permits Advisory Council proposal to increase transportation permit fees by 19% and support efforts to move toward eventual full cost recovery for these permits.

### **S57. Statewide General Obligation Bonds for Water or Parks**

The State has a practice of funding major water or parks related needs through voter approval of statewide general obligation bonds. Most recently Proposition 1, approved by the voters in 2014, provided \$7.5 billion in funding for water related projects. 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. The legislature and other organizations are now developing language for both a new water bond and a new parks bond that if approved would appear most likely on the 2018 general election ballot.

**Action:**

- Participate in the development of future bond initiatives to ensure that local priorities, including integrated regional water management plans, are included and that the County and region are eligible for funding;
- Support language that gives the Sonoma Youth Ecology Corps the same priority for funding as given to the California Conservation Corps; and
- If needed, activate the Water Bond Coalition or other local or regional coalitions to support equitable allocate of bond funding to northern and coastal California.

### **S58. Proposition 218 and Stormwater and Water Fees**

A recent court decision strictly limited the authority of water providers to implement water conserving tiered rate structures based on an interpretation of the California Constitution as amended under Proposition 218. In Proposition 218, 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, the need to protect listed species, and the need to capture stormwater for aquifer recharge and other purposes.

**Action:** Support legislation that would:

- State clearly that tiered water rate structures for conservation purposes 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.

### **S59. 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%. The County currently taking action to increase our diversion to achieve 80% waste diversion.

Tipping fees on waste in Sonoma County are \$116.00/ton for self-haulers, which make up about 22% of haulers at the landfill. The rate for the County is 123.86, and 127.95 for cities. Currently, \$1.40 is paid to the State on every ton disposed to fund the activities of CalRecycle. Proposals have been brought forward that 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**

### **S60. Jail Alternative Model Recognition**

The Legislature passed and the Governor signed SB 863 as part of the 2014-2015 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:** Support the establishment of a funding source that allows counties to propose construction of Day Reporting Centers to accommodate offender programming and services in a non-custodial setting.

### **S61. 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:** Support legislation 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.

### **S62. 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 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 must 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 ensures 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.

### **S63. Mental Health Treatment for Criminal Offenders**

Adequate mental health treatment for criminal offenders and those charged but not yet convicted is a necessary component of the criminal justice system. Approximately 30% of the current inmate population has been diagnosed or treated for mental illness. Mental health assessments for treatment and for the determination of trial competency are important for a client's criminal defense and general well-being. Successful mental health treatment also reduces recidivism as misdemeanor charges may result from inappropriate behaviors while treatments are lapsed.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts that provide mental health assessments and treatment programs while incarcerated or under court/probation supervision.

### **S64. Jail Diversion Programs**

Jail diversion programs incorporate pre-trial services and supervision as well as transitional housing for homeless individuals with behavioral health disorders. Pre-Trial Services include providing assessment, discharge planning, clinical services and case management to individuals with behavioral health disorders who, because they are homeless or otherwise not connected to treatment and supports, score too high on the Sonoma Pretrial Risk Assessment Tool (SPRAT) to take advantage of the pre-trial program. Resources are needed to lower SPRAT scores and allow individuals with serious behavioral health issues to await their court date in the community instead of in the jail.

Transitional housing program for homeless individuals with behavioral health disorders who have been released from custody is an important part of the pre-trial program. Individuals would be allowed to live in the house for up to 60 days while they identify other housing resources and access treatment services. Each individual housed would be connected with a case manager who would help with system navigation and direct services. The house would have a live-in "peer" house manager with prior experience in the mental health system.

**Action:** Support legislation and budgetary efforts that would fund jail diversion programs for individuals with behavioral health disorders.

### **S65. Court Fees, Fines and Penalties**

Revenue from filing fees, fines and penalties assessed by the Courts are distributed broadly to support the criminal justice system in 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. Other entities, such as the Public Law Library are also impacted by the reduced revenue from Court filing fees.

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 the county obligation to fund court support operations or increased revenue from the State. 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**

### **S66. 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).

### **S67. 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. In summary, the 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. Previously, use of sick leave was generally limited to care of self, child, spouse, domestic partner, or parent. The new law added 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:** Support legislation or regulations that would:

- Clarify whether interns are considered temporary employees and therefore eligible to accrue sick leave;
- Clarify whether the interpretation of “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...*) means regular hours worked, as opposed to overtime hours;
- Clarify whether conditions and protections in the new law pertaining to the use of accrued time apply to all accrued sick leave, or whether it can be applied to a subset of accrued sick leave hours that meet the minimum amount requirements; and
- Allow employers to address excessive, unsubstantiated, use of leave, by requiring medical certification or limiting the no-documentation-required provision to the first 48 hours of sick leave used per year.

#### **S68. 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’s and Auditor’s offices, as well as potentially reducing the County’s cost for the program.

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

#### **S69. 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 governments 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 the 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.

#### **S70. 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.

## **Federal Priorities**

## Federal Priorities

### **F1. Anti-Poverty, Affordable Housing, and Homelessness Assistance**

Sonoma County's real estate market is experiencing escalating rents and vacancy rates as low as 1.5% (REIS, Inc. 2015). Rent increases in Sonoma County are some of the highest among metropolitan areas in California as well as communities throughout the Country. A majority of renters earning less than 50% of area median income pay more than half their income for rent, whereas the accepted affordability standard is 30% or less of household income (Center for Neighborhood Technology, 2014). These conditions are exposing more lower-income households to the risk of becoming homeless and pushing out working families. Rental assistance and funding and policies to increase affordable housing stock would help to alleviate these impacts.

Sonoma County's rent increases cannot keep pace with the Fair Market Rent (FMR) established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In 2016, HUD's FMR for a 2-bedroom unit was only \$1,414, whereas actual market rent was upwards of \$1,600, making it difficult for households to find rentals that they can afford. HUD develops FMR for metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas utilizing Area Community Survey estimates (ACS) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index data. There is a two year delay between HUD's receipt of survey estimates and the implementation of FMRs. To bridge the two year gap, HUD then uses a national trend factor of annual growth over the past five years. This methodology does not capture steep rent increases that may happen during the two year lag-time and using national trend data does not accurately capture the local rental market.

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 2016, 2,906 people were without permanent housing, with 1,906 of those sleeping outdoors. There are now 7,464 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. 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. There are several states throughout the Country and some local jurisdictions within California that do have laws to protect tenants against discrimination based on the use of public housing assistance.

**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 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 funds and new programs equally available to both rural and urban areas;
- Address the historic inequities to homeless assistance funding across the nation, not just with basic funding formulas (which will take many years to impact local funding) but with new funding to directly address these inequities;
- 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;
- Eliminate discrimination against tenants or landlords based on the use of government assistance;
- Increase the Fair Market Rent for the Housing Authority's jurisdiction to give voucher holders increased odds in finding safe, decent, and affordable housing;
- Accelerate the procurement of each year's Area Community Survey (ACS) data to capture more recent, relevant rent information so that FMRs do not have such a large lag time between HUD's receipt of data and the implementation of area Fair Market Rents;
- Localize the trend data used to set Fair Market Rents; and
- Provide resources for housing developments with higher density, speedier permitting and fewer restrictions on accessory dwelling units, incorporating the framework from the White House's 2016 Housing Development Toolkit.

## **F2. Tribal Affairs**

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. 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 that deals with these issues on regional, 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's position, in coordination with CSAC, as legislation is developed to address the *Carcieri* decision or otherwise affect the trust land acquisition process.

## **F3. Adverse Childhood Experiences and Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice (CTIPP)**

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:** Support evidence-based solutions to reduce children’s exposure to ACEs, 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.

#### **F4. Evidence-based Home Visiting**

The Affordable Care Act included a provision establishing the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program by amending Title V of the Social Security Act to provide funds for evidence-based home-visiting to families in at-risk communities. Funding began in 2011 to provide services to high-risk and pregnant mothers to improve their health care and that of their children. The County’s Public Health Division was awarded an allocation of \$375,000 in FY2016-2017 via the California Home Visiting Program (CHVP) to support the County’s implementation of the Nurse Family Partnership program.

Home visiting programs provide 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. Expanding access to home visiting programs 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.

#### **F5. 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.

Legislation was introduced into Congress in 2016 that contained \$4.285 million. In the new session and in light of a new administration, the County must ensure that funding is retained, although it is still insufficient to complete dredging of the entrance channel. An additional \$2.815 million will be sought through the Army Corps of Engineers Federal Fiscal Year 2017 work plan or the Federal Fiscal Year 2018 budget in order to dredge the entire federal channel.

**Action:** Add necessary funding to Bodega Bay Operations and Maintenance dredging to Army Corps Federal Fiscal Year 2017 work plan or the President’s Army Corps budget.

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

In July of 2016, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016 extended federal aviation funding near existing levels through September 2017. 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 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 and increase 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 Runway Safety Areas (RSA) project, ramp rehabilitations, land acquisition, a new aircraft rescue and firefighting facility building, and terminal expansion (which 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.
- 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 plans 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 (which included Sonoma County). 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.
- Protect the Public Interest in Air Traffic Control. Previous reauthorization proposals in the legislature proposed to separate the Air Traffic Organization from the FAA and create a not-for-profit corporation to operate and modernize the Air Traffic Control system. Any new system should guarantee a voice for public interest.

## **F7. 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 \$2.1 million.

## **Federal Issues**

## Federal Issues

Following are the County's general federal advocacy issues for 2017-2018. 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

#### **F8. 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 more Californians access to health insurance. As of August 2016, nearly 10.5 million Californians had attained Medi-Cal coverage. In Sonoma County, over 112,000 people were served by Medi-Cal in August. This expansion is part of historic levels of insured individuals. In 2015, 91.4% of Californians had health insurance and in Sonoma County, 93.2% of all residents were insured.

The ACA continues to provide important funding for community health centers, and funds a variety of public health and workforce development programs and 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.

Unfortunately, the new Congress has expressed a strong interest in repealing all or part of the ACA. In addition to other impacts, repeal of the Medi-Cal expansion components of the ACA and/or coverage under Covered California would impact nearly 60,000 individuals in Sonoma County. Sonoma County has made tremendous gains since 2014 in reducing inequities in access to health insurance. With repeal of the ACA, the historic progress throughout the County and nationwide would be reversed.

#### **Action:**

- Oppose legislation that would reduce the benefits or programs created by the ACA or withdraw funding for implementation;
- 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
- Monitor any new State or Federal legislation that would modify funding or responsibilities related to the County's role in implementing the ACA.

#### **F9. 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 PPHF 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, 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 actions could 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.

**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. Health Centers face a funding cliff as 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 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. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Reauthorization**

Authorization of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (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 5,100 Sonoma County residents receive TANF (CalWORKs).

**Action:** Support reauthorization of TANF including a revised definition of WPR.

**F12. 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 were proposed by President Obama, which left the most provisions of this law unfunded. The EJA 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. Additionally the law provides for the establishment of Forensic Centers on Elder Abuse and training in abuse investigation standards. The County urges full federal funding to support the Elder Justice Act as it was originally designed.

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

**F13. Older Americans Act (OAA)**

The Older Americans Act (OAA) was reauthorized in 2015 on its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The OAA is vitally important to Sonoma County because the State funding for Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) is limited to annual one-time only appropriations included in the State budget. Seniors age 60 years and older account for 24% of the total population in Sonoma County. By 2030, seniors age 65 years and older will account for a projected 25% of the County's population. Public services for older adults are limited, with the majority of services only 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 AAAs which oversee a variety of social services for seniors, including nutrition, elder abuse prevention, legal services and advocacy, and caregiver resources. The OAA is not adequately funded and does not reflect the need for senior services or the population growth of people over age 60. With the limited state funding to support California's Area Agencies on Aging programs, it is critical that the federal funding expand to support senior services. The County urges the support of OAA funding to expand services and advocate for increased flexibility in federal regulations.

**Action:** Support the OAA and increased federal funding for the OAA programs.

#### **F14. Close the Readiness Gap with Investments in Early Care and Education**

A multitude of longitudinal studies shows that investments in high-quality early childhood education for three- and four-year-old children and access to quality child care 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. Multiple barriers that restrict full access to high quality early care and education include a lack of adequate system infrastructure and outdated eligibility criteria for subsidized preschool and 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.

#### **F15. 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.

## **Development Services**

### **F16. 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. In December of 2015, Congress passed H.R. 22, the FAST Act (Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act), establishing funding levels and federal policy for our nation's highways and public transit systems for fiscal years 2016 through 2020. Legislation that supports FAST Act implementation should improve project streamlining and highway safety, and expand on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reciprocity pilot program.

**Action:** Support legislation to aid in implementing the FAST Act or other actions that include the following components:

- Funding. Support legislation that increases funding levels with adjustment for inflation for road, bridge, and transit programs.
- 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-of-way to be substantially streamlined.
- Safety Initiatives. Rural roads have a disproportionate number of highway fatalities in the U.S., 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.

### **F17. Federal Tax Credits: Solar and 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.

The Federal solar tax credit was extended in December 2015. Maintenance and expansion of that tax credit along with 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:

- Maintain and expand the 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.

### **F18. Alternative Fuels Programs**

Despite the recent drop in gasoline prices, prices still remain volatile and the United States continues to spend \$300 billion a year on oil from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other countries. More than 70% of the oil imported is used as transportation fuel. Gasoline is used for our national fleet of 250 million cars and light trucks and diesel fuel for our 8 million heavy-duty trucks and off-road equipment.

Technological innovations have enabled vehicles using electricity, natural gas, propane, biodiesel, ethanol and hydrogen to take hold in the market place. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), there are nearly 1.2 million alternative fuel vehicles in use in the United States and more than 38,000 alternative fueling stations, but unfortunately this represents a small fraction of the total American fleet.

In addition to enhancing our energy security, the clean transportation industry is also critical to our economic growth and global competitiveness:

- The more than 400,000 plug-in electric vehicles on the road are a highly visible point in the larger, and expanding, electric supply chain. The global market for lithium ion batteries in the light duty fleet will grow from \$3.2 billion in 2013 to \$24.1 billion in 2023, and the revenue in the infrastructure segment is projected to grow to \$5.8 billion in annual revenue by 2022.
- The ethanol industry contributes more than \$52 billion to our nation's economy, including nearly 400,000 American jobs.
- Biodiesel has grown into a 2-billion-gallon per year industry with nearly 200 plants across the country supporting more than 60,000 jobs.
- On U.S. roads, there are nearly 150,000 buses, delivery trucks and vans, taxicabs, and other vehicles running on clean-burning propane. With an extensive propane distribution network in place, consumers are able to access record-high stocks of propane to meet their vehicle fueling needs.
- The U.S. is the number one producer of natural gas in the world, and American businesses and consumers continue to embrace natural gas vehicles. Approximately 155,000 NGVs operate on U.S. roads today. These vehicles are supported by 1,750 fueling stations that are connected by 1.5 million miles of natural gas pipelines. Projections indicate that the transportation sector will consume 1.2 trillion cubic feet of clean burning, domestic natural gas by 2030 and that 50% of the light and heavy duty vehicle markets could be powered by natural gas by 2050.

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

- Extend tax incentives for alternative fuels, vehicles and infrastructure, including: tax credits that support 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; special depreciation allowances for cellulosic biofuel plant property; tax credits for conversion to plug-in hybrid vehicles; and tax credits for purchases of alternative fuel vehicles (maintain credit for electric vehicles and reinstate credit for natural gas and propane vehicles);
- Ensure adequate Federal funding for Key Alternative Fuels Programs, including \$50 million for the *DOE Clean Cities program*, with \$25 million in competitive grants for new alternative fuel and vehicle deployment strategies, and \$70 million for the *EPA Clean Diesel Grants program*; and
- Preserve and expand the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) to ensure that the Country diversifies the fuels market with clean alternatives that create new jobs and reduce pollution.

**F19. Biodiesel Tax Incentives**

The current biodiesel tax credit allows a mixture credit available to the blender of the fuel which is supporting the growth of renewable diesel in California and other western states. Legislation was introduced in July 2016 to reform the biodiesel tax credit and extend the new policy for three years, which supports only domestic biodiesel producers. Renewable diesel is a true “drop in” alternative fuel that requires no changes to infrastructure, vehicles fuel systems or the operation and maintenance of vehicles and equipment. Renewable diesel reduces emissions by between 65% and 90% and reduces particulate matter by up to 33% over conventional petroleum based diesel fuels. It meets industry group standards and all of the California Air Resources Board’s diesel specification standards.

The current tax credit is allowing the renewable diesel producers to expand their market share and justify the investment in larger scale production facilities in the United States to meet demand. The proposed changes to the tax credit would discourage investment in infrastructure that has a higher cost than biodiesel production facilities.

**Action:** Support legislation that would extend the current tax credit in its current form for another three years, which would provide regulatory stability that promotes investment in renewable diesel domestic infrastructure production facilities.

**F20. Sonoma County Transit Modernization and Enhancements**

Urge support for federal assistance that will facilitate continuing efforts to modernize the Sonoma County Transit fleet with clean-energy, low/no emission replacement transit coaches. Since 2006, Sonoma County Transit has been the only Bay Area transit system to operate an all-natural gas powered heavy-duty bus fleet. Federal assistance is also sought to make necessary capacity and energy efficiency improvements to Sonoma County Transit’s fixed-route and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit operating facility constructed in 1984.

**Action:** Support efforts that lead to the provision of needed transit capital assistance for these projects.

**F21. 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 support for local projects and initiatives.

**Action:** Support, where feasible, the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) Legislative Platform, including the following:

- 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; and
- Oppose efforts to reduce or divert funding from transportation projects, and support efforts to protect and preserve transportation funding.

**F22. State Licensed Meat Processing Facilities**

Under current federal law, meat from livestock harvested by state licensed facilities cannot be sold. Only meat harvested at a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspected facility can be sold to the public. Throughout California, there are few options for ranchers and they are often forced to drive hours to a USDA facility when a state licensed facility is much closer. A change to these federal laws is needed to support small farmers who currently lack reasonable access to processing facilities, to improve consumer access to locally raised meats, and to help revitalize rural communities. In addition to being able to sell “amenable” species, such as cattle, swine, sheep and goats, producers should be able to sell “non-amenable” species, such as bison, elk and deer. These locally raised, “exotic” meats would present new opportunities for restaurants and markets and provide an additional viable option for local livestock ranchers and ultimately help sustain agriculture and preserve open spaces in Sonoma County.

**Action:** Support legislation that would remove the Federal ban on the sale of amenable and non-amendable meats from custom meat harvesters and producers within a state and instead make these sales and operations subject to state law.

## **General Issues**

## General Issues

Following are the County's general advocacy issues for 2017-2018. 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 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) 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 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. 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 or budgetary efforts that would:

- 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;
- Enable expansion of Medi-Cal to adults over 19 regardless of immigration status; and
- Enhance comprehensive mental health services.

Oppose legislative or budgetary efforts that would repeal or weaken the Affordable Care Act.

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

Half of all children and one-third of adults in California are now eligible for the State's Medi-Cal and Denti-Cal programs, however the State continues to struggle with providing adequate access to dental care. According to a recent State audit, 56% of enrolled children did not receive any dental care in 2013 and the majority of counties have an insufficient number of Denti-Cal providers. A recent report by the Department of Health Care Services found that since 2008, the number of Denti-Cal providers has declined 15%, while 5 million more Californians have enrolled in the program. Additionally, the State's Little Hoover Commission recently completed

a review of the Denti-Cal program and calls it one of State government's "greatest deficiencies" that has "thoroughly alienated the dental profession with reimbursement rates among the nation's lowest, an abundance of restrictive rules and reliance on outdated paper-based administrative processes."

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.

Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) are the single largest source of added sugar in the American diet and a primary cause of dental decay – the most common chronic childhood disease, experienced by more than two-thirds of children in California. Soda is the most consumed beverage in the U.S. and 41% of California children 2-17 consumed at least one SSB a day, including 65% of teenagers. The frequency of consumption, along with the combination of high levels of sugar and acid, make these beverages exceptionally damaging to teeth. SSBs are also displacing consumption of milk, the principle source of calcium in the diet, which is critical to the development of healthy teeth.

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 2017. 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:

- Provide local support for efforts to expand dental services to schools and preschools, and to integrate dental health into primary care;
- 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;
- Expand access to dental health services for low-income Californians; and
- Encourage dental health education program expansion including adequate funding.

### **G3. 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 Services 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 and budgetary actions that seek to reduce health disparities and inequities by working to eliminate barriers to good health for Sonoma County and California's diverse population.

#### **G4. 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 budgetary efforts that would:

- Encourage consideration of public health impacts in the design and planning of healthy communities; and
- Develop climate change mitigation strategies to help protect against potential impacts to human health.

#### **G5. 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.

#### **G6. 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.

### **G7. 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.

### **G8. 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, which include the Department of Agriculture, UC Cooperative Extension, Health Services, among other departments.

Initiatives to support local agriculture and healthy communities are components of the County Strategic Plan. These initiatives are in alignment with United State Department of Agriculture'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; and
- 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 levels.

### **G9. 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. 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 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 legislative, regulatory and budgetary efforts at the local, state and national levels 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;
- Promote physical education in schools, including sustained funding for physical education and enforcing compliance with state physical education code; and
- 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.

### **G10. 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.

#### **Action:**

- Support legislation and local partnerships which would provide the support and training programs needed to meet the workforce demands that 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 the Department of Health Care Services that would attract State funding for workforce development.

### **G11. 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 at 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 commercial sexual exploitation of children.

### **G12. 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.

### **G13. 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 Governor Brown 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.

**G14. 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.

**G15. Legal Protections for Immigrant Residents and Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors**

Approximately 8% of Sonoma County residents are undocumented immigrants. Undocumented immigrants are an important part of our community and the local economy, providing significant labor to the farming, construction, and production industries that are vital to Sonoma County. Studies have found that between 50-70% of agricultural workers are undocumented. Undocumented immigrants do not have adequate access to information and services to uphold their legal rights. In light of the prospect of changes to immigration laws and enforcement at the federal level, additional legal protections for immigrants and increased resources for the provision of legal services and deportation defense by public defenders and local nonprofit legal service organizations is even more critical.

Undocumented immigrants in our communities also include children and teens that often have fled from crises in their home countries without their parents or other family members. The United States has experienced an unprecedented wave of children traveling alone through Mexico and arriving at our southern border. The number of these children detained by the Department of Homeland Security has increased from an average of 6,500 per year prior to 2011 to 60,000 in 2016. Although mostly teenage boys in 2011, the number of girls, including pregnant and parenting teens, and younger children has steadily increased. Adequate Federal and State funding is needed for shelter, care and legal services to address this growing humanitarian crisis.

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

- Enhance legal protections for undocumented immigrants;
- Increase funding for legal services and deportation defense, as in SB 6, which would expand State-funded legal services to undocumented adults, and AB 3, which would make grants available for nonprofits and public defenders offices to competently serve undocumented clients; and
- Address the growing number of unaccompanied children crossing the border, including increasing funds for immigration-related legal services, shelter and care.

**Natural Resources****G16. 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:

- Fund 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; and
- 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.

### **G17. Drought Management in Agriculture and Urban Landscapes**

The 2011-2015 drought in California is one of the worst in recent memory and 2014-2015 was the driest year on record. In January 2014, Governor Brown declared a state of emergency and many cities have issued mandatory or voluntary conservation orders of between 20-25%. Reducing water usage in the urban landscape is a critical part of 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.

### **G18. Ecosystem Services from Rangelands**

Rangelands comprise the largest land mass of any other totalling 40% of 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 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.

**G19. 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.

**G20. 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.

#### **G21. 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.

#### **G22. 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.

#### **G23. 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.

#### **G24. 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 United States Department of Agriculture'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.

#### **G25. Integrated Watershed Restoration, Stewardship and Climate Adaptation Program**

Funds from the Integrated Watershed Restoration, Stewardship and Climate Adaptation Program 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.

### **G26. 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 (SCWA), Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) 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.

### **G27. 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 proposal 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.

### **G28. 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;
- Support efforts to provide funding for habitat restoration, stream restoration, wildlife habitat protection, fuels reduction and invasive species management in order to accomplish key stewardship responsibilities in regional parks; 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;
- 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;
- Support legislation that would expand the IRS definition of medical expenditures to include physical activity as preventative medicine;
- Support legislation that 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);
- Support legislation that would provide local communities with low-cost loans to build networks of sidewalks, bikes lanes and paths, particularly in low income communities;
- Support legislation that would provide federal grants for park and recreation infrastructure in metropolitan areas; 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.

### **G29. 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.

## **Development Services**

### **G30. 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 most recent revisions to the California Building Code.

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.

### **G31. 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.

### **G32. 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 timeframe 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.

## **Justice Services**

### **G33. 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 requires all airsoft guns to have brightly colored or transparent markings. The bill allows 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**

### **G34. 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, 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 a reduction in library services including shortened 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. 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 and budgetary efforts to provide resources for library services, including restoration of California Library Services Act funding.

### **G35. 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.