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# SONOMA COUNTY



## 2015 STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

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# Sonoma County 2015 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 level, resulting in the accomplishment of legislative priorities and positioning Sonoma County to receive significant financial resources.

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

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

## ***Guiding Principles***

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

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

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

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## **State Priorities**

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## State Priorities

### S1. Sonoma Developmental Center

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

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

### S2. Pension Reform

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

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

### S3. Regulation of Marijuana

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

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

#### **S4. Vote by Mail**

Over 68% of the registered voters in Sonoma County choose to participate in the Permanent Vote by Mail program, and roughly 70-80% of the ballots cast in Sonoma County for statewide elections are cast via the Vote by Mail program. Despite the high number of Permanent Vote by Mail voters, state law requires counties to establish, outfit and staff polling places, which is costly.

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

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

The revenues received from taxing fuel suppliers are deposited in the State Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA). These revenues are allocated to the state, counties, and cities. More than 80% of the state road miles are owned and operated by the cities and the counties, and yet 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 counties have average Pavement Condition Indexes that are at risk or poor. Sonoma County is one of these counties. Existing funding levels to Cities and Counties is \$1.65 Billion/year. Funding needed to just maintain existing road conditions for Cities and Counties is \$3.33 Billion/year.

Sonoma County is further disadvantaged by the allocation of the HUTA revenues to the unincorporated counties which is based upon registered vehicles within the geographic county and, to a smaller extent, maintained mileage within the unincorporated county. Urbanized counties with large incorporated populations and areas benefit from the formula even though the unincorporated portion of the county may have few road miles to maintain. Currently, Sonoma County receives approximately \$9,846 per mile from HUTA funding while some bay area counties receive over \$51,000 per mile.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation and budget action that increases State revenues to the County (possibilities include a State Gas Tax increase, and new revenue generation from Cap and Trade or Vehicle Miles Traveled Charges), and any actions which review the current HUTA distribution formula and establishes an allocation formula that weights road miles more heavily that applies to HUTA as well as all existing and future road funding sources.

#### **S6. Proposition 1 Implementation**

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

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

Specific priorities include development of grant criteria that will benefit:

- Projects to enhance forecasting capabilities to track atmospheric rivers and other storms and that provide opportunities for Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations at Lake Mendocino;
- Sonoma County's sanitation upgrade projects;
- Recycled water projects, including storage and delivery of water;
- Development of groundwater resources, including costs associated with implementation of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and for groundwater recharge;
- Expansion of water-use efficiency programs, including opportunities for rural well-owners;
- Recovery and monitoring of endangered or threatened Russian River salmon and steelhead including the meeting the required state match for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund;
- Projects which reduce flood risks through enhanced stormwater management at Copeland Creek, Sonoma Valley, Petaluma and other locations;
- Programs that facilitate stormwater regulatory compliance through the use of offset mechanisms that improve effectiveness and reduce cost;
- Allocation of bond funds designated for flood control and wildlife conservation to projects needed to restore and preserve the Laguna de Santa Rosa; and
- Development of programs at the Wildlife Conservation Board that contribute to increased instream flow in natural streams.

### **S7. Sweetened Beverage Tax to Support Anti-Obesity Efforts**

Overweight children and childhood obesity constitute a preventable public health crisis. In Sonoma County, 8% of the children ages 2-11 are overweight or obese. The problem is even greater among Hispanic children and children from low-income households. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of low income children are overweight or obese and their future health may suffer, as three out of four children who are overweight will remain overweight as adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The connection between obesity and consumption of sweetened beverages has been clearly established. A tax on sweetened beverages would generate over \$17 million in Sonoma County, which could be used to fund upstream community-based childhood obesity prevention programs; early recognition, monitoring and weight management intervention activities in medical settings; and for educational, policy and other public health approaches that promote nutrition and physical activity in elementary and secondary schools.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislative efforts to pass a sweetened beverage tax to fund anti-obesity efforts at the local level.

### **S8. In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)**

The County's interest is to sustain the 2012 funding methodology for IHSS as established in the 2012-13 Budget. The county contribution for IHSS has increased each year until the current year when 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 the County to fund the IHSS program and support the community at a lower cost.

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

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

### **S9. 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.

### **S10. California Children’s Services Program**

The California Children’s Services (CCS) program provides diagnostic and treatment services, medical case management, and physical and occupational therapy services to children under 21 with CCS-eligible medical conditions. CCS also provides medical therapy services that are delivered at public schools.

Historically, the CCS program has operated as a public health program for the benefit of medically fragile children. Services have been paid for by a combination of state, federal, and county funds and provided on a fee-for-service basis rather than through a capitated financial agreement. In 2015, the law that requires CCS services be provided on a fee-for-service basis, outside of managed care, will sunset.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation for CCS inclusion under Medi-Cal managed care plans and other options to remove barriers to provide services in an integrated health care delivery system.

### **S11. Drug Medi-Cal**

Drug Medi-Cal (DMC) operates as a “carve out” from managed care plans, meaning that the Medi-Cal managed care plans that deliver primary health care services are not responsible for providing and arranging for substance use disorder treatment services for their members. Counties have identified a number of both major and minor impediments to their ability to properly manage the DMC program and maintain access to evidence-based substance use disorder (SUD) treatment services for Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

Currently, CA DHCS is proposing an amendment to their 1115 waiver to change the organization of DMC services, requiring counties to opt-in. DHCS’s proposal is intended to provide greater rationalization and expansion of services. Challenges remain regarding the financing models and much uncertainty remains over how much fiscal exposure exists for counties.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation to expand and further regulatory requirements of the Affordable Care Act to provide SUD services and support the “carve in” of DMC services to the Managed Care Model. Support sustainable financing for the support of SUD services and ensure parity of services for Medi-Cal beneficiaries, consistent with SB 1161.

### **S12. Anti-Poverty, Affordable Housing, and Homelessness Assistance**

Sonoma County’s residential rental market, long considered to be one of the least affordable in the nation when comparing rent levels to the area median income, did not share in the downward price adjustment that created a more affordable for-sale housing market since the Great Recession. The fair market rent for a 2-bedroom unit jumped 47.4% between 2000 and 2010, going from \$886 to \$1,306. For workers earning the current minimum wage, the fair market rent in 2013 required a household with at least three full-time workers. The affordability situation is only worsening, as the average apartment rent rose to \$1,521 in 2014, a jump of 13.3% from the

prior year. The rate of Sonoma County's increase was the greatest of 23 metropolitan areas in California studied by Real Answers, a Novato-based rent research firm. Axiometrics, a rent research firm based in Dallas, reported in May 2014 that Sonoma County tied for fifth, with the Vallejo area, among U.S. communities with the fastest yearly rent increases.

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

The lack of affordable housing stock in the County helps to fuel the rate of homelessness for local residents. During the last biennial point-in-time homeless count conducted in January 2013, 4,280 people were without permanent housing, with 3,300 of those sleeping out-of-doors. There are now 7,800 local households on the Sonoma County Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program waiting list, many of which are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless as they are forced to pay up to 50% or more of their income just for housing costs.

Additionally, housing is not currently a Medi-Cal benefit. However, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is proposing providing Medi-Cal funded shelter as part of their 1115 Waiver Renewal submission to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). This could enable the testing ways in which Medicaid-funded shelter could contribute to better health outcomes and reduced total cost of care for beneficiaries. DHCS will be introducing ideas, such as subsidized housing, which can support the goal of a whole-person approach to care for vulnerable populations.

Finally, the resources available to the County to assist in the development of more affordable housing to mitigate the affordability trends and rate of homelessness have been severely diminished over recent years. Local impact fee revenue dedicated to affordable housing, which decreased dramatically along with decreases in development activity during the recession, is only now beginning to rebound.

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

- Increase the minimum wage in California (such as SB 3);
- Create a state Earned Income Tax Credit (such as SB 38);
- Provide a permanent source of funding for development of affordable housing;
- Increase funds for operation of homelessness assistance programs;
- Restore Emergency Solutions Grant funding to Sonoma County homeless service providers;
- Support efforts to effect meaningful reform on the policy of housing insecurity to achieve better outcomes for vulnerable populations;
- Evaluate options for targeted populations including homeless individuals who utilize Emergency Rooms and hospitals, and nursing facility residents who can be cared for in a community setting; and
- Make available funds and new programs equally available to both rural and urban areas.

### **S13. 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.

**Action:** Sponsor or 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 and tie downs for mobile homes and other structures.

**S14. 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:**

- Sponsor or support legislation that requires a program of a comprehensive service delivery approach over a period of at least a 10 year duration for underserved and tenant based individuals and communities;
- Sponsor or support legislation that incentivizes property owners to accept permanent improvements to property through housing and energy programs that will permanently improve the finances of tenant residents and businesses;
- Sponsor or support legislation to combine program funding to retrofit housing and shift family transportation to zero emission vehicles; and
- Sponsor or support legislation that integrates workforce development for building performance and zero emission vehicles into the system of service delivery created through comprehensive program design.

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## **State Issues**

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## State Issues

Following are the County's general state advocacy issues for 2015. General advocacy issues differ from priority advocacy issues in that the County's legislative advocates will primarily support the efforts of others to enact legislation to address these concerns, which are most often shared concerns of multiple counties. The State Issues are categorized by functional area within the County organization.

### **Health & Human Services**

#### **S15. Dental Health**

Many Californians, including hundreds of thousands of children, have unmet oral health needs. 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. In 2011 it was estimated that 63% of California's water supply is fluoridated, reaching over 23 million residents. That number is steadily increasing: San Jose, once the only large city in the U.S. without this public health benefit, will be fluoridating its municipal system in the next few years. The Healthy People Oral Health 2020 goal is to increase the proportion of U.S. population served by community water systems with optimally fluoridated water to 79.6%.

#### **Action:**

- Support proposals to expand access to dental health services for low-income Californians;
- Support efforts to increase Denti-Cal reimbursement levels to encourage qualified dentists to participate in providing care to low-income children; and
- Support and develop funding for water fluoridation efforts. Encourage dental health education program expansions including adequate funding.

#### **S16. 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.

#### **S17. 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 has been made worse by the recent downturn in the economy, which has resulted in a significant decrease in revenue and a lowering of baseline funding levels. As a

result, when the economy rebounds, any growth in revenues above the new lower baselines will go disproportionately to the Social Services Trust Fund, thereby further reducing available funding for health and mental health realignment funded programs. Furthermore, Governor Brown has indicated his interest in opening up the 1991 Realignment to shift more services from the state to counties. This causes the concern that the share of realignment funds that currently flow 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.

### **S18. Emergency Medical Services Planning and Local Control**

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

**Action:** Oppose legislation that would usurp local control over emergency medical services planning and delivery.

### **S19. 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 funding sources and the realignment of 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 to manage 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.

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

The concept of realignment calls for the shift of funding and financial risk along with the shift of authority and responsibility. Unfortunately, as the State is implementing this realignment, the transfer of authority and responsibility is being withheld. For example, the State retained its Alcohol and Drug Program Department to provide oversight to counties and continues to control rate setting. The State has also retained the certification of providers and the ability to establish contracts with new providers even if the county would prefer to not contract with the provider. By shifting funding and fiscal risk to the counties without the requisite authority to manage the programs and risk, the State is renegeing on the promise of realignment. The State could make a decision that would increase costs to the county, forcing the county to fund the excess costs with '91 realignment or other local funds. The counties would have no ability to manage their provider networks, utilization or quality. The counties' ability to make system improvements would be hampered.

**Action:** Support legislation and regulations that provides counties the authority and processes needed to manage the new responsibilities shifted to them by the State; support legislation or budget action that indexes the allocation of mental health managed care funding to cover the costs of psychiatric hospitalization and other

mandated mental health services; and oppose any efforts to reduce Sonoma County's share of funding from 2011 Realignment.

### **S20. CalWORKs Homeless Assistance**

Homeless Assistance (HA) is a non-recurring special need that is available to CalWORKs families who are considered homeless. A homeless family must be seeking permanent housing in order to qualify for payments. There are two types of Homeless Assistance payments that a client may get, temporary or permanent.

Temporary shelter payments are available to cover up to sixteen days of the costs of shelter while the client seeks permanent housing at a rate based on the family size. While receiving temporary shelter payments the client must verify that they are seeking permanent housing and that they have spent the payments for shelter. Permanent housing payments are available to pay for the initial costs of renting or leasing a place. The costs covered can include security deposits, the last month's rent, and utility deposits.

There are limits to the amount of rent a client can pay in order to qualify for a permanent housing payment. In addition, there is a limit on the amount that can be paid toward the initial costs for rent. Families can receive each of these types of payment only once in a lifetime.

**Action:** Increase the daily amount of temporary shelter and remove the cap of receiving only one temporary shelter payment and one permanent shelter payment in a lifetime.

### **S21. 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.

## **Natural Resources**

### **S22. Fishery Restoration Programs and Funding**

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

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

**Action:** Support UCCE efforts to:

- Support funding for Coho salmon issues which will allow UCCE and California Sea Grant to continue their work on critical natural resources throughout the county;

- Support legislative or budget action that would appropriate \$10 million in Proposition 84 funds and \$10 million in General Fund money for salmon restoration programs managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife;
- Advocate for the Department to use the funds for projects that fulfill requirements of the State's Coho Salmon Recovery Strategy; and
- Advocate for allocation of future water bond or water infrastructure dollars for coastal salmon restoration.

### **S23. 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.

### **S24. 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:**

- Advocate for guidelines for implementation of Proposition 1 that provide funding for groundwater banking or aquifer recharge programs in areas such as Sonoma Valley; and
- Support or sponsor legislation and regulatory policy to expedite regulatory approval and permitting for groundwater banking and aquifer recharge programs.

### **S25. 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:** Participate in developing recycled water legislation to advocate for language that facilitates implementation of recycled water projects in ways that are protective of public health and surface and ground water quality. Support legislation and regulatory policy that promotes efficient implementation of recycled water projects throughout California.

### **S26. Water Well Logging**

County entities are developing groundwater management plans for several groundwater basins in Sonoma County. These agencies are also required by state law to conduct ground water monitoring in all of the identified groundwater basins. Local efforts in both areas depend on access to geological information recovered by drillers and landowners when wells are drilled. The legislature recognized this need in approving a bill introduced by Senator Pavley in SB 263 (2011) and SB 1146 (2012), requiring that water well log data be made available to professionals conducting such studies. Both bills were vetoed and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 did not require well log data be made available.

**Action:** Support legislation and administrative policy to improve access to well log information for groundwater planning and monitoring.

## **Development Services**

### **S27. 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 has been challenged by the DOF. The initial ruling by the Court upheld the County's position that the projects are authorized legally enforceable obligations, but the DOF has appealed that ruling.

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 in February 2014. The cost allowance was established to provide adequate funds for administration of housing assets and obligations for situations in which the housing functions of the former redevelopment agency were not retained by the sponsoring community and therefore transferred to the local housing authority by operation of law. Successor agencies are required to list this cost on their ROPS and to pay the housing successor a minimum of \$150,000 annually for a period of five years (FY 14-15 through FY 18-19). The DOF asserts that the Sonoma County Housing Authority is the same as the County itself, and therefore not entitled to receive the cost allowance, despite the fact that it is a separate legal entity from the County. This position is not supported by the existing statute.

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

#### **Action:**

Support CDC efforts to seek legislation that:

- Prevents the State DOF from any retroactive application of the provisions of AB 1484 to cover a time period prior to June 28, 2012;
- Prevents the State DOF from retroactively revising or rescinding its decisions;
- Removes or reduces the State DOF's authority to overturn Oversight Board decisions that are made appropriately pursuant to the terms of the Dissolution Act;
- Enables Successor Agencies and Housing Successors to use bond proceeds from issuances through December 29, 2011 (the date on which the State Supreme Court upheld the validity of the Dissolution Act) for the purposes stated in the bond indenture;
- Requires the DOF to adhere to the provisions of the statute and approve RPTTF for Successor Agencies to pay the housing administrative cost allowance established by AB 471 to a Housing Successor that is a separate legal entity from the community that created the redevelopment agency; and

- Creates new programs or financing mechanisms to support redevelopment, infrastructure, and economic development activities.

Oppose passage of any legislation that:

- Allows the State DOF to retroactively apply the provisions of AB 1484 to cover a time period prior to June 28, 2012; and
- 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:

- Revises 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;
- Revises 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;
- Amends the housing provisions of CRL to reform the way in which Housing Successors are permitted or required to use housing assets, and future income from housing assets; and
- Creates new programs or financing mechanisms to support redevelopment, infrastructure, and economic development activities.

### **S28. New Funding Sources for Renewable Energy Projects**

In November 2012, California voters approved Proposition 39, an initiative which closes a corporate tax loophole and provides about \$550 million annually for clean energy and energy efficiency programs. The measure directs the funds to be used for energy efficiency retrofits and alternative energy projects in public facilities and for other purposes. The legislature will be responsible for determining the allocation of funds to eligible participants. Proposition 39 will be an important source of financial support for local clean energy and energy efficiency programs and may provide a source of funds for new programs like Sonoma Clean Power.

**Action:** Sponsor or support legislation or budget language that provides opportunity for local agencies to receive funding from the Clean Energy Job Creation Fund to be implemented under Proposition 39, and advocate for development of an effective local government program, especially with the Energy Commission and the Public Utilities Commission.

### **S29. Public Goods Charge**

The Public Goods Charge (PGC) on electricity bills is an important funding source for programs that reduce energy use and consumer costs. A cost-effective use of the PGC is to support conservation and efficiency programs that save Californians millions of dollars through reduced energy bills, reduce the demand for additional electricity generation and transmission capacity, and support a thriving sector of the clean economy. The County of Sonoma Energy and Sustainability Program coordinates the Sonoma Energy Watch Program (SEWP), a Local Government Partnership with Pacific Gas and Electric. SEWP is regarded as a leading Energy Watch program in the region having served over 270 customers, saving over 12,160,000 kWh per year (enough to power 800 homes), delivering some \$1.75 million in incentives to clients, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2,400 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year." Combined with the resources afforded by the local Energy Independence Program and Energy Upgrade California, local government input on the use of PGC would leverage the success of these programs and the one-stop-shop model of service delivery.

**Action:** Support legislation and language in regulatory action which:

- Includes local government input on Public Goods Charge uses to increase the success of energy efficiency programs;
- Increases direct funding of local government energy efficiency programs from the Public Goods Charge decisions before the CPUC and in legislation;

- Extends the utility Public Goods Charge for energy efficiency, energy storage, load shaping, and fuel switching programs; and
- Direct the CPUC to factor greenhouse gas emission impacts into program design and performance formulas;
- Ensures local government entities such as the County or the Regional Climate Protection Authority are eligible to administer energy efficiency programs funded from the public goods charge.

### **S30. Wheeling Energy**

Existing legislation, AB 2624, allows local government to apply excess renewable power produced from a customer account as energy credits against charges for power delivered to one or more of its other accounts. This option allows for local government to take advantage of a generation at a site compatible with renewable generation installations and apply the credits for overproduction of electricity to a less compatible site. Private sector entities and consumers would like this same option for supplying power (through credits) to their selected benefitting accounts (other business sites, family members, etc.).

**Action:** Support the passage of legislation that would allow private sector entities and consumers to apply credits from overproduction of electricity from one account to another account.

### **S31. Community Choice Aggregation**

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

**Action:**

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

### **S32. County Climate Initiatives**

The County of Sonoma is dedicated to combating the impacts of climate change. Beginning in the 1990s, the Board of Supervisors took steps to ensure that the County has operated in an environmentally sustainable way. In 2006, in keeping with the County's long history of environmental leadership, General Services was authorized and directed by the Board to develop and implement a Climate Protection Action Plan (the Plan). The Plan focused on optimizing the energy efficiency of buildings, the "greening" of County fleet assets, and a reduction or modification of employee commute levels and patterns. Since then, in collaboration 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 Campaign, the County's General Services Energy and Sustainability Division created a model for a regional program titled the Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA). The RCPA was conceived to strategically address the issues related to climate change (including AB 32 and SB 375) regionally and to provide a coherent framework to harness the tools, resources, and energy needed to effectively implement its elements, measure success, and make course corrections.

**Action:**

- Sponsor legislation and budget actions that support the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority and the Climate Action 2020 initiative to update local climate action plans;

- Sponsor or 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;
- Sponsor or 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;
- 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 mandates include full cost recovery by Counties;
- Support budgetary action to fund local implementation of AB 32 and SB 375 requirements;
- Support focus on parks and open space lands, as public natural resources, in providing offset credits; and
- Oppose efforts to redirect cap-and-trade revenues to unrelated budget program areas.

### **S33. Air Pollution Program Efficiency and Effectiveness**

Legislation, state regulations, and policy substantially shape local air pollution control programs. Each year, legislative efforts, as well as rules and policies, are proposed at the state level. Air pollution control districts, the ARB, and the CEC 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.

In 2013, legislation sponsored by the air districts through the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association to extend several existing grant programs (AB 8, Perea) was approved. That bill calls for a continuing stakeholder process to evaluate the performance of the programs and make recommendations to the legislature. Air Board staff will be invited to participate in that committee. Incentive funding is also needed for sectors not addressed, or inadequately addressed, by existing incentive programs (for example, large scale incentives to replace old, high-polluting woodstoves and fireplaces). Any new incentive programs need to be efficient and effective, and also allow implementing agencies to recover the costs of administering those programs.

#### **Action:**

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

### **S34. Water/Energy Programs for Climate Protection**

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

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

- Support or sponsor legislation to allocate state allowance revenues for implementation of energy/water and youth employment programs at the local level;

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

### **S35. Water-Related Revenue Allocations for Water Suppliers**

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

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

### **S36. Manufacturer's Extended Product Stewardship for Discarded Items**

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 (used oil, Cathode Ray Tubes (CRTs), etc.). Collectively, these waste streams are costing the County hundreds of thousands of dollars to manage annually. These increased costs have resulted in new and increased tipping fees at County disposal sites, and have also increased the incidents of illegal dumping. Electronic devices waste has emerged as a major concern, and requires attention and action from the Legislature.

**Action:** Support extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation to include mercury-containing (fluorescent) lamps, electronic devices (in addition to CRT's), batteries, and other hazardous items that are prohibited from landfill disposal.

### **S37. 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 provides 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. Support budget language for funding of specific restoration sites, including the two terrace mining sites along the middle reach of the Russian River.

### S38. Williamson Act Funding

The Williamson Act (the Act), established in 1965, has helped preserve Sonoma County's rich and productive farm and ranch lands by providing property tax incentives to keep land in agricultural uses. Sonoma County has over 273,000 acres enrolled in the Williamson Act, and has lost approximately \$450,000 in subvention payments. Beginning in fiscal year 2009-2010, due to the ongoing budget crisis, the Governor has not funded the subventions to counties. In 2011, the Governor signed legislation (AB 1265) authorizing counties to shorten the contract term of Williams Act contracts from 10 years to 9 years, and capture the 10% increase, in part to offset losses to counties. In November 2011, the Board of Supervisors declined to implement AB 1265 due to concerns about increasing the tax burden on farmers and ranchers. This demonstrates the need for the Legislature and Governor to develop and fund a long-term plan for the Williamson Act in order to ensure that agriculture and open space are preserved into the future.

**Action:** Support legislation and budget language that fully funds the Williamson Act at its highest historical levels; support new and innovative funding alternatives to replace lost subvention payments; and develop long-term solutions, including locally developed and approved options, that create a reliable funding stream to protect the Act.

### S39. CEQA Reform

There are three issues related to CEQA that should be addressed in a CEQA reform bill or changes to CEQA Guidelines: 1) Adaptive Management; 2) Tiering Mitigated Negative Declarations from prior EIRs; and, 3) Limiting submittal of late comments.

Current CEQA rules require development and evaluation of a stable project description that does not change during the life of a project. Many fishery and habitat restoration projects use an adaptive management approach (the integration of project design, management, and monitoring to systematically test assumptions in order to adapt the design throughout the project as new information comes in) that is not easily implemented under the terms of CEQA in its existing form. Reform legislation would be an opportunity to seek modifications to CEQA that enable greater use of adaptive management methods while maintaining and even improving the environmental protections.

Recently, the CEQA Guidelines were modified language that previously allowed agencies to "tier" a Mitigated Negative Declaration for a project on a previous Programmatic EIR removing (CEQA Guidelines Section 15152 (f)(3)(C)). Given confusion over the new CEQA Guidelines, agencies may now need to prepare new EIRs to address subsequent project impacts, even if they were previously analyzed and, if found to be significant, overridden. This is in direct conflict with longstanding CEQA principles in support of document tiering, and is in direct conflict with CEQA process streamlining.

The CEQA statute allows new information (and future causes of action in litigation) to be inserted into the process at any time prior to the close of the last public hearing before final project approval by the lead agency (PRC Section 21177[a]). Project opponents regularly take advantage of this provision to introduce voluminous information about environmental issues at the last minute, with the intent and effect of disrupting the project review process and delaying the decision while the lead agency scrambles to ensure that every issue is adequately addressed. At its most troublesome, this information consists of material that could have been known and submitted earlier or that duplicates earlier submittals. This practice diminishes the importance of the orderly public review opportunities included in the CEQA process and often introduces substantial uncertainty into the decision-making process at the eleventh hour.

**Action:** Support amendments to CEQA statute and/or guidelines to:

- Facilitate environmental review of projects that employ adaptive management methodology;
- Clearly provide for the tiering of mitigated negative declarations on Programmatic EIRs, including situations where the subsequent project would have significant unavoidable impacts that were adequately identified

in the Programmatic EIR, and allow for multiple projects within a given area to share recent environmental data collected in the area; and

- Limit the introduction of new environmental information after the close of comment periods, with an exception for significant new information that could not have been known earlier. Further, amend the statute to enhance public review opportunities prior to final decision.

#### **S40. Storm Drain Maintenance Assessment Districts New NPDES Water Quality Standards**

Storm drains are separated by law from sewer drains. To form a maintenance district and assess property owners to fund storm drain maintenance requires a high threshold of voter approval (66 2/3 %). AB 2403 (Rendon, 2014) 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.

#### **S41. Building Accessibility**

Building accessibility regulations are established and promulgated on both Federal and State levels. Federal regulations are updated every 20 years and State regulations are updated every 3 years. One component previously required in both Federal and State regulations was the requirement to install detectable warning strips prior to entering a vehicular way. These warning strips are commonly known as “truncated domes”. Truncated domes serve visually impaired citizens to provide an audible detection. Unfortunately, these same truncated domes impose a hazard to the citizens who are dependent on using walkers, wheelchairs, crutches and otherwise can cause a trip and slip hazard.

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

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

#### **S42. Certificates of Compliance**

Under the state Subdivision Map Act, Certificates of Compliance are used to recognize parcels created by old deeds, patents, and early subdivision maps. Certificates are also used to recognize “fragment lots” that result from intersecting lines of old deeds and maps. Certificate parcels are usually inconsistent with the dwelling unit densities in the General Plan, but the County has no authority to deny or place conditions on these Certificates.

**Action:** Support legislation that would restrict or eliminate the use of Certificates of Compliance for lots created prior to implementation of the public agency review provisions of the Subdivision Map Act in 1929, and for “fragment lots”; and support legislation that creates (1) Amendments to Government Code Section 66499.35 to restrict or eliminate the use of Certificates of Compliance on parcels created by subdivision maps prior to 1929, and (2) Amendments to Government Code Section 66499.35 to restrict or eliminate the use of Certificates of Compliance for “fragment lots.”

#### **S43. Transportation Fee Limits**

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

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

**Action:**

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

## **Justice Services**

### **S44. 2011 Public Safety Realignment**

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

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

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

**Action:** Support legislation that will provide resources for the services being provided locally, with a stable funding source.

### **S45. Jail Alternative Model Recognition**

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

Sonoma County is exploring a number of jail alternatives including the potential development of a Community Corrections 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, individual and group counseling, alcohol and drug counseling, family counseling, and financial management classes.

**Action:** Seek funding made available through relinquished AB 900 Phase 1 funds and/or SB 1022, as well as SB 863, to fund the jail alternative model selected as most appropriate for Sonoma County. Also seek language in SB 863 guidance that recognizes all detention alternatives implemented by the County, not just those focused on pre-trial services.

#### **S46. Funding Responsibility for Civil and Criminal Grand Juries**

The state, through trial court funding, has transferred court fiscal responsibility to the state. The fiscal responsibility of criminal and civil grand juries was not included in the transfer. Since the County lacks control over activities, expenditures, and investigatory activities (which include county agencies and officials as well as special districts and cities) of grand juries, it is reasonable that the fiscal responsibility should also be transferred to the State. Grand juries report to the presiding judge and the presiding judge can order the county to increase funding for grand juries if a request is made and approved.

**Action:** Support legislation that would transfer fiscal responsibility of civil and criminal grand juries to the State since Government Code Section 914 allows the presiding judge to approve expenditures in excess of budget.

#### **S47. 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, the Local Revenue Fund 2011 and various subaccounts, including the Trial Court Security Account, were created in the State Treasury. Funding is provided through specified tax sources and other monies. The Trial Court Security Account monies are allocated monthly by the State Controller to the counties. Certain court security costs not funded in the past will be eligible to be reimbursed, if monies are sufficient in the Trial Court Security Account. These costs include the Lieutenant Pay and professional services.

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

**Action:** Support legislation that:

- Allows counties to be reimbursed for all costs for court security;

- Provides 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;
- Allows for other court security related items, such as transporting inmates to and from Court facilities, to be considered as eligible costs for realignment funding;
- Cleans up language in the Superior Court Law enforcement Act of 2001 (SB 1396) to be consistent with the Realignment Act of 2011 (AB 118);
- Revises Government Code 69922 as a result of the State's Realignment Act of 2011 (AB 118);
- Clarifies the definition of what Court Security costs are and provide that all court security costs shall be reimbursable; and
- Expands the eligibility of costs to include transportation of inmates.

#### **S48. County Correctional Facilities and Funding/Overcrowding**

Sonoma County projects the County jail will reach its inmate population capacity by 2025. State prison reform efforts have shifted many state inmates to the county jail, further reducing available capacity. The estimated cost to consolidate and expand the County's main adult detention facility to house the increasing inmate population is over \$400 million. Furthermore, a panel of three federal judges has ordered the state to reduce the state prison population to 137.5% of capacity by April 18, 2014, down from the December, 2013, population of approximately 150% of capacity. In February, 2014, the panel extended the deadline until February 28, 2016. As of December 10, 2014, the state prison population was at 140% of capacity.

#### **Action:**

- Support legislation that enhances diversion strategies, to prevent offenders from further involvement in the criminal justice system, e.g. mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, vocational training, and adult probation supervision;
- Support proposals to provide state funding to maintain and expand County correctional facilities to house increasing inmate populations, and to fund viable jail alternatives; and
- Oppose legislation that complies with the federal court order by shifting more State prison inmates to county jails and/or county probation, and releases dangerous felons into our community, for lack of a secure state facility to house them through the end of their sentence.

## **Administrative Support & Fiscal Services**

#### **S49. Workers' Compensation**

Since passage of SB 899 (Poochigian, 2004) 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).

### **S50. California Paid Sick Leave Law Clarification**

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

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

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

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

### **S51. Fair Share of Property Tax Administration Costs**

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

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

### **S52. 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.

### **S53. Marketplace Equity and Consumer Protection**

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

**Action:**

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

### **S54. Weights and Measures Device Registration Fees**

County Sealers are responsible for carrying out mandated registration and enforcement activities for commercial weighing and measuring device laws at the local level under the direction of California Division of Measurement Standards. The authority to register and charge registration fees to recover county costs in enforcement of Weights and Measures state laws is granted to the local County Board of Supervisor under California Business and Professions Code, § 12240. This section of the law will sunset in January 1, 2016.

County Sealers are sponsoring the renewal of the sunset clause through their representative organization CACASA (California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association).

Existing device registration fees authorized under this section of the law permit local Weights and Measures to recover only a portion of actual program costs. County-Annual costs in FY 13-14 was approximately \$715,265. Revenues and reimbursement for this program in FY 13-14 was approximately \$490,399 for a total net county costs of \$228,884. The absence of the authority granted under this law will greatly diminish local Weights and Measures activities and will necessitate the need for a local ordinance to replace the authority to establish fees currently written in state law.

**Action:** Support legislative action to renew California Business and Professions Code, Division 5, Chapter 2, § 12240 in order to continue established local authority for ongoing funding for Weights and Measures enforcement activities.

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## **Federal Priorities**

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## Federal Priorities

### F1. Geothermal Royalty Revenues

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

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

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

Sonoma County's residential rental market, long considered to be one of the least affordable in the nation when comparing rent levels to the area median income, did not share in the downward price adjustment that created a more affordable for-sale housing market since the Great Recession. The fair market rent for a 2-bedroom unit jumped 47.4% between 2000 and 2010, going from \$886 to \$1,306. For workers earning the current minimum wage, the fair market rent in 2013 required a household with at least three full-time workers. The affordability situation is only worsening, as the average apartment rent rose to \$1,521 in 2014, a jump of 13.3% from the prior year. The rate of Sonoma County's increase was the greatest of 23 metropolitan areas in California studied by Real Answers, a Novato-based rent research firm. Axiometrics, a rent research firm based in Dallas, reported in May 2014 that Sonoma County tied for fifth, with the Vallejo area, among U.S. communities with the fastest yearly rent increases.

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

The lack of affordable housing stock in the County helps to fuel the rate of homelessness for local residents. During the last biennial point-in-time homeless count conducted in January 2013, 4,280 people were without permanent housing, with 3,300 of those sleeping out-of-doors. There are now 7,800 local households on the Sonoma County Housing Authority's Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program waiting list, many of which are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless as they are forced to pay up to 50% or more of their income just for housing costs.

Additionally, housing is not currently a Medi-Cal benefit. However, the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is proposing providing Medi-Cal funded shelter as part of their 1115 Waiver Renewal submission to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). This could enable the testing ways in which Medicaid-funded shelter could contribute to better health outcomes and reduced total cost of care for beneficiaries. DHCS will be introducing ideas, such as subsidized housing, which can support the goal of a whole-person approach to care for vulnerable populations.

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

**Action:** Support legislation that will:

- Increase the federal minimum wage;
- Provide a permanent source of funding for development of affordable housing;
- Increase funding for the Housing Choice Voucher Program to increase the number of households that can be served by the local housing authorities;

- Provide Housing Choice Vouchers dedicated to veterans (VASH Vouchers) to the Sonoma County Housing Authority (currently provided only to Santa Rosa Housing Authority);
- Increase funds for operation of homelessness assistance programs;
- Make available funds and new programs equally available to both rural and urban areas;
- Support efforts to effect meaningful reform on the policy of housing insecurity to achieve better outcomes for vulnerable populations;
- Evaluate options for targeted populations including homeless individuals who utilize Emergency Rooms and hospitals, and nursing facility residents who can be cared for in a community setting; and
- 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.

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

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

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

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

In 2010, as part of the federal Affordable Care Act, Congress created the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) that was designed to expand and sustain the necessary infrastructure to prevent disease, provide for early detection, and manage conditions before they become severe. This fund 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.

Chronic diseases in California such as heart disease, cancer, lung disease, stroke, diabetes, and asthma continue to plague our communities in ever larger numbers. In addition, 28% of California's 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders are overweight. Children who are overweight increase their risk for type 2 diabetes mellitus, asthma, and orthopedic problems. They are also more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Weight problems are complex with many causes including a person's diet and physical activity level; however, other aspects of everyday environment also can influence them. These may include a lack of recreation facilities, unsafe communities, or lack of access to low cost fresh fruits and vegetables. Finally, the growing number of people experiencing food shortages, insecurity and hunger is recognized as a public health concern.

**Action:**

- Urge members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to allocate PPHF resources in a manner that enhances counties' efforts to prevent disease and injury, promote health and ultimately reduce

healthcare costs. Oppose the use of the PPHF to backfill cuts to core operations and programs of the Centers;

- 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;
- 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;
- Encourage the allocation of new revenue streams in an equitable manner across all local health jurisdictions; and
- Seek to improve nutrition, obesity and fitness education programs as well as health literacy.

#### **F5. Increase Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services by Supporting Removal of the IMD Exclusion and Increasing Behavioral Health Services in Community Clinics**

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

Since 1965, the number of Psychiatric Hospitals and Psychiatric Units in General Acute Care Hospitals has declined. The California Hospital Association data shows that since 1995, there has been a 32% loss of psychiatric inpatient beds (3,000 beds). Of the total psychiatric hospital beds available in 2011, 55% were in general acute care hospitals making 45% of the beds unavailable to adult Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

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

Additionally, to address gaps in services in outpatient settings, the Sonoma County Department of Health Services is seeking funding to support collaboration between the Sonoma County Department of Health Services Behavioral Health Division and community clinics in Sonoma County to provide routine universal mental health and substance use disorder screenings, education, and integrated mental health and substance use disorder services to patients who screen positive for mental illness and/or substance use. The provision of services will focus specifically on minority communities in Sonoma County, with particular emphasis placed on reaching the Latino community.

#### **Action:**

- Support legislation that repeals or modifies the IMD Exclusion to enhance parity and to allow greater equality between Medicaid and Private Insurance.
- Seek federal appropriations or agency grant funds of \$800,000 to support behavioral health services in community clinics.

Health

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

The Charles M Schulz Sonoma County Airport is in the process of developing plans for several key capital projects over the next couple years. Since most of these projects rely heavily on the availability of Federal

funding through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), it is critical to ensure that the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) bill be reauthorized, updated, and modernized.

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

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

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

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

### **F7. Federal Transportation Funding Priorities**

The current authorization for the Highway Trust Fund, which finances highway, bridge, and transit programs, expires on May 31, 2015. Urge the County to support efforts to increase federal funding for highway, bridge, and transit programs.

The County has numerous transportation infrastructure projects that are planned or require funding. Transportation infrastructure is critical to the continued success and bolstering Sonoma County's economic development, tourist, and manufacturing industries. In addition, these projects improve the safety of residents. While Congress no longer earmarks project funding, the County can advocate for increased highway and transit funding. Examples of why the County needs increased federal funding include the following project priorities:

Monte Rio Bridge Replacement: This project proposes to replace the main structure across the Russian River that has severely deteriorated in recent years. A cooperative agreement with Caltrans will be required.

Brickway Extension and Laughlin Road Widening and Intersection Improvements at River Road: This project proposes to extend Brickway Boulevard south over Mark West Creek to Laughlin Road. This project will provide a direct link connection to the airport area from River Road. This project will shift some traffic from Fulton Road and the Highway 101 at the Airport interchange. A major component of this project is a new bridge over Mark West Creek. Following construction of this new link, the existing narrow Laughlin Road Bridge over Mark West

Creek will be closed to vehicular traffic, but will remain as an historical structure (1916 earth-filled arch). Future use will be limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, and emergency vehicle access only.

US 101/River Road Interchange Improvements: This project proposes to rehabilitate the interchange and approaches to US 101 at River Road. This is one of the main access routes to the agricultural areas of the County and serves as the primary access to the Russian River recreational areas and the Pacific Coast. To the east, Mark West Springs Road links the US 101 to Calistoga and northern Napa Valley. It is a very important and heavily used interchange. There are a number of sight distance problems and other safety issues to resolve with this work. This is an outdate alignment plus the road surfaces are extremely worn from the high volumes of truck traffic. The upgrading of the interchange will address the safety concerns and pavement design to accommodate heavy vehicle traffic. No significant environmental issues are anticipated with the rehabilitation of the interchange.

Sonoma County Transit Buses: Urge support for federal funding that will enable the acquisition of twelve 40-foot compressed natural gas powered transit coaches for Sonoma County Transit. The County and the region are committed to a comprehensive effort to improve the air quality. To this end, the County has replaced its diesel buses with clean-fuel buses powered by natural gas. The County is scheduled to replace twelve buses over the next year to maintain service on all routes and accommodate anticipated ridership growth upon introduction of SMART commuter rail service in late 2016.

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

#### **F8. Tribal Issues**

Federally recognized Indian tribes can develop lands held in trust by the federal government, without regard to local land use plans, such as the County General Plan. Further, such developments can have a number of 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, as well as more general matters, for tribal gaming and other development on tribal lands. Board policy has included opposing tribal gaming and insuring that the impacts of tribal development projects approved by the BIA are fully mitigated. In addition, the Board and County staff have actively participated in developing policy which deals with these issues regionally, and on state and national levels.

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

Specific actions include:

- Monitor development of BIA rules regarding tribal acknowledgment and appeals. County submitted comments on proposed rules last year, and final rule is expected to be issued in 2015.
- Advocate revisions to trust acquisition process to insure that impacts of tribal development projects are fully mitigated.
- Advocate County position, in coordination with CSAC, as legislation is developed to address Carcier decision or otherwise affect trust land acquisition process.

#### **F9. Close the Readiness Gap with Investments in Early Learning**

The evidence is overwhelming that investments in early childhood education for three- and four-year-old children yield enormous dividends to individuals and to society. Investments in quality early childhood education programming lead to improved educational outcomes for all students, a reduction in the achievement gap, lower crime rates and fewer people in need of economic assistance. In the current system of state subsidized slots there are two barriers that restrict full access to quality early care and education. There are a lack of facilities to support the expansion of subsidized slots, and the eligibility for subsidized slots has been set too low

and needs to be raised from the current 70% of state median income (\$43,000/yr for a family of four) to pay for the high cost of quality early care (average of \$9,888/yr).

**Action:** Support legislative efforts that:

- Support guaranteed 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 government subsidized slots for all low-income, three-year-old children by expanding facilities and lowering 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.

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## **Federal Issues**

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## Federal Issues

Following are the County's general federal advocacy issues for 2015. General advocacy issues differ from priority advocacy issues in that the County's legislative advocates will primarily support the efforts of others to enact legislation to address these concerns, which are most often shared concerns of multiple counties. The Federal Issues are categorized by functional area within the County organization.

### Health & Human Services

#### **F10. Dental Health**

Many Californians, including hundreds of thousands of children, have unmet oral health needs. 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. In 2011 it was estimated that 63% of California's water supply is fluoridated, reaching over 23 million residents. That number is steadily increasing: San Jose, once the only large city in the U.S. without this public health benefit, will be fluoridating its municipal system in the next few years. The Healthy People Oral Health 2020 goal is to increase the proportion of U.S. population served by community water systems with optimally fluoridated water to 79.6%.

#### **Action:**

- Support proposals to expand access to dental health services for low-income Californians;
- Support efforts to increase Denti-Cal reimbursement levels to encourage qualified dentists to participate in providing care to low-income children; and
- Support and develop funding for water fluoridation efforts. Encourage dental health education program expansions including adequate funding.

#### **F11. Threat to Primary Care Access**

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

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

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

#### **F12. The Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

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

WIOA replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and retains and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In general, the Act takes effect on July 1, 2015, the first full program year after enactment. This new law will impact the County's Workforce Investment Board and the One Stop Center, Job Link.

**Action:** Continue to support enhanced workforce services for the unemployed and other job seekers.

### **F13. TANF Reauthorization**

Authorization of TANF was temporarily extended to September 30, 2012 by the same legislation that extended the payroll tax cut, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. Ideally, reauthorization will include a revision of the Work Participation Rate (WPR). Currently, the formula for WPR ensures failure because the numerator includes all recipients who have worked 32 hours a week for a month, and the denominator includes recipients who are not required to work. Nearly 8,000 Sonoma County residents receive TANF (CalWORKs).

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

### **F14. Elder Justice Act**

President Obama proposed \$21.5 million in funding for the Elder Justice Act for 2013. Despite continued advocacy from elder abuse prevention advocates across the country, the proposed funding was removed by the Senate.

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. Unfortunately appropriations have not been authorized, which left the provisions of this law unfunded. The EJA law has the promise of establishing federal standards for adult protective services and providing a dedicated federal funding stream for services to protect seniors and vulnerable adults from abuse. The EJA also provides funding for the Long Term Care Ombudsman to investigate abuse and neglect in skilled nursing facilities. The law also provides for the establishment of Forensic Centers on Elder Abuse and training in abuse investigation standards. The Human Services Department urges federal funding to support the Elder Justice Act as it was originally designed.

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

### **F15. Older Americans Act (OAA)**

Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA) was proposed in 2012, but not acted on by Congress. The OAA is vitally important to Sonoma County because the state funding for Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) has been eliminated. Seniors age 60 years and older account for over 20% of the total population in Sonoma County. By 2030, seniors age 65 years and older will account a projected 25% of the total population in Sonoma County. Public services for older adults are limited, with the majority of services available to seniors with low incomes.

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

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

## **Development Services**

### **F16. Climate Protection and Energy Efficiency Legislation**

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

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

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

### **F17. Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)**

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs are innovative local government financing programs that allows a property owner to apply for funds to pay for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements that will reduce their energy costs. 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 home-owners and business clear the primary barrier to efficiency upgrades: steep up-front costs.

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 the risk of homeowners, business owners, lenders, or the financial system, and was created with stringent operating rules, to ensure a net positive benefit to all parties. However, the Federal government has yet to recognize PACE programs as providing these benefits or as a local property tax lien.

**Action:** Support legislative action to ensure the ongoing recognition of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) bonds as assessments and support the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program.

### **F18. Sonoma County Transit Buses**

This project seeks federal assistance to purchase twelve 40-foot compressed natural gas powered transit coaches for Sonoma County Transit. The County and the region are committed to a comprehensive effort to improve the air quality of this area. To this end, the County has replaced its diesel buses with clean-fuel buses powered by natural gas. The County is scheduled to replace twelve buses over the next year to maintain service on all routes and accommodate anticipated ridership growth upon introduction of SMART commuter rail service in late 2016.

**Action:** Seek federal appropriations for new bus purchases.

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

As a quorum of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors helps constitute the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, and regional transportation priorities reflect County residents' needs, this Platform recommends

working, where feasible, in collaboration with SCTA staff and advocates to seek transportation funding from the federal government on the following focus areas.

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

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

#### **F20. Russian River Biological Opinion**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**F22. San Francisco Bay Restoration**

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

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

**F23. Collaboration with USGS and NOAA**

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

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

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

**F24. Agricultural Water Enhancement Program**

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

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

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## **General Issues**

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## General Issues

Following are the County's general advocacy issues for 2015. 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**

UCLA's Center for Health Policy Research estimates that 3.2 to 4 million Californians will be uninsured in 2015. Two-thirds of the uninsured are low income, and eight in ten come from working families. 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 President and Congress to build upon the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) to work with the goal of expanding a system of health care coverage and medical care delivery for all children and adults that builds upon and preserves the strengths of the current system, including the unique qualities of county operated systems, such as the County's Healthy Kids program, but that addresses areas of concern such as correctional health services. Any health care reform process must take into account historical, current, and future County costs for treating those who are, and those who may remain, uninsured. Finally, health care reform must include mental health parity provisions that provide coverage for mental health services equal to coverage for medical and surgical benefits and ensure adequate ongoing funding for both expanded and core mental health services.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts, like SB 4 (Lara), to provide health insurance for all children and adults regardless of immigration status and a stable source of funding for all residents of California consistent with the *Health Care Reform Principles of Action* adopted by the Board.

#### **G2. Identify Solutions to Address the Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences**

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic experiences, such as abuse and neglect, which can result in toxic stress and have a profound effect on a child's developing brain and body. Childhood exposure to adverse experiences is linked to heightened 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 may put our children at higher risk for learning difficulties, emotional problems, developmental issues and long-term health problems.

**Action:** Support legislation like ACR 155 (Bocanegra) to identify solutions to address the impact of ACES and Toxic Stress.

### **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 Department has emphasized these programs to reduce these disparities; however, resources, staffing, and community awareness must be increased in order to be effective.

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

### **G4. Built Environment and Climate Change**

Historically, public health has played a role in community design. Before planning became a separate discipline, local health departments performed many “planning” tasks. In the 1900’s, they advocated separating noxious land uses from dwelling units and clamped down on rampant sanitation issues and poor conditions in tenement housing. Today’s public health professionals are realizing that our modern built environment with poorly designed streets, lack of transportation options, air pollution, and sprawl is negatively impacting health. Physical inactivity levels are significant among Californians of all ages and abilities. Individuals 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. These conditions create and exacerbate the symptoms of many chronic diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, asthma, bronchitis, stroke, diabetes, obesity, osteoporosis and depression while also increasing the risk of serious injury. Increasingly local public health departments are getting involved in helping to mitigate these health risks. From traffic-calming to bike lanes to transit-oriented development, the public health “voice” can help inform land use and transportation decisions to help create safer, healthier communities.

Climate change is a complex phenomenon and diverse ecological effects may result. Human health may be directly or indirectly impacted by changes in water, air, food quality and quantity, ecosystems, agriculture and economy. Local health departments may be confronted with devising new strategies to deal with these unprecedented threats to the overall health of California’s population.

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

### **G5. Expand Access to the Nurse-Family Partnership Program**

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

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

**Action:** Support legislation like AB 50 (Mullin), which seeks to develop the means to leverage public and private dollars to substantially expand the scale of the NFP program across the state.

#### **G6. 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.

#### **G7. 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, with the CDC in 2009 estimating that the health care costs in the United States are between \$16-26 billion annually.

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 legislation like AB 49 (Mullin), which seeks to make various legislative findings and declarations relating to the nontherapeutic use of antibiotics in livestock, and would declare the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would address the overuse of antibiotics in livestock production.

#### **G8. 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.

#### **G9. 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 (Agricultural Commissioner's Office, UC Cooperative Extension, Health Services, and other departments).

Initiatives to support local agriculture and healthy communities are components of the County Strategic Plan. These initiatives are in alignment with USDA's mission and the funding made available through the Farm Bill, including the areas of: food and nutrition; food safety, including promoting the growing and access to healthy

foods; agricultural product marketing and regulatory programs; rural development, including farm worker housing; education, including job training and resources for new farmers and green economy; and protecting natural resources and the environment through sustainable management.

**Action:**

- Secure federal funding, through the Farm Bill and other avenues, to support County work to enhance the economic development of local farms and ranches, and coordinate food systems in the community to increase food access and public health; 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 level.

**G10. Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems**

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

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

In the absence of a strong Federal initiative on the topic, States and localities have been left to address the use of e-cigarettes. Locally, this past year, the Board passed an update to the County’s smoke-free public places ordinance to now include secondhand vapors. At the State level, SB 24 (Hill) was introduced in December 2014 and would extend the requirements of the Stop Tobacco Access to Kids Enforcement Act (STAKE Act) to include sale of ENDS devices.

**Action:** Support legislative efforts, such as SB 24, that seek to treat ENDS the same as traditional tobacco products.

**G11. Flavored Nicotine Products**

As smoking rates have declined, the industry has been resorting increasingly to tactics that make nicotine products attractive to new consumers, especially youth, serving as gateway drugs to nicotine addiction. 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. This issue has recently been reviewed by the FDA, and their tobacco advisory committee has confirmed the harmful role played by menthol flavorings, yet no federal regulation has been issued to date. These products have also been historically heavily marketed to minority populations. Today, a visit to your local smoke shop or convenience store demonstrates that tobacco and nicotine containing product displays increasingly resemble candy products. Cigg-Fizz, a chocolate pop-rock like nicotine product in flashy packaging sold in California, exemplifies this trend. Use of E-cigarettes, which come in a variety of flavors, has more than doubled amongst youth.

**Action:** Support legislation which would restrict the sale of flavored nicotine-containing products in the state of California.

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

The Child Care and Development Services Act is enacted for, among other purposes, the purpose of providing a comprehensive, coordinated, and cost-effective system of child care and development services for children from

infancy to 13 years of age and their parents, including a full range of supervision, health, and support services through full- and part-time programs. Legislation similar to SB 464 (Jackson), would establish standards with respect to nutrition and physical activity for early childhood education programs, infant care programs, and after school programs conducted under the Child Care and Development Services Act, and would express legislative intent to encourage all child care providers to implement educational programs for parents that provide parents with physical activity and nutritional information relevant to the health of their children. It would strengthen early childhood education program requirements for physical activity, specify allowable beverages, and limit television time.

**Action:** Support legislation like SB 464 (Jackson), which would 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.

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

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

Similarly, the emerging green economy requires a trained “green” workforce and AB 3018 (Nunez, 2008) 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 which would provide the support and training programs needed to meet the workforce demands that will come with health care reform. Federal funding can be directed through existing programs, such as in the Department of Labor, and/or programs can be combined with funding in the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Advocate for state budget action to fund green-trained work force development. Advocate that Proposition 39 funds be utilized appropriately to train the workforce in this field.

### **G14. Implementation of Federal Healthcare Reform**

In March 2010, President Obama signed into law comprehensive health care reform, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). It is estimated that Americans have saved \$9 billion since 2011. Since the opening of the Marketplace, more than 10 million Americans have gained insurance coverage.

The Expansion of Medicaid coverage has allowed California to offer Medi-Cal to adults who are not disabled and have no dependents. As of July 2014, 1,743,000 Californians have attained Medi-Cal coverage or have enrolled in the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). To date, over 89,000 people in Sonoma County are served by Medi-Cal alone, and an estimate of 24,000 residents are newly eligible (2014).

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

**Action:** Monitor any new legislation that would modify funding or responsibilities related to the County's role in implementing the ACA. Oppose any legislation that would redirect county funds, beyond what was agreed to as part of the 2014-2015 Budget, for the State's share in the ACA.

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

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

The Title IV-E Waiver is a 5-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 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 continued federal funding and California Department of Social Services IV-E Waiver Counties:

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

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

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

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

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

There has been a marked increase in the number of income eligible children/families waiting for a subsidized child care slot to become available in Sonoma County. The County and the Child Care Planning Council of

Sonoma County are concerned about protecting funding for The After School Education and Safety Program Act of 2002 (Proposition 49) and 21<sup>st</sup> Century After-School Programs as these directly impact the quality of life for Sonoma County residents.

There is currently a shortfall of almost 8,000 child care spaces, across all age groups in Sonoma County. Specifically, there are 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.

**Action:** Support legislation and budget action that ensures continuity of child care for children and families. Seek and support legislation that would preserve, protect and increase funding for subsidized and other government-funded child care. Support legislation that would reduce state regulatory barriers and increase opportunities for child care capacity expansion. Seek and support legislation and budget action to ensure that CCL is adequately funded by the State, to provide reliable and meaningful services as well as keeping parents informed about CCL functions and limitations.

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

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

**Action:** Sponsor or support funding for the Youth Employment Program.

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

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

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

**G20. CalFresh Outreach**

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

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

**Action:** Seek federal appropriations of \$600,000 to support CalFresh outreach efforts.

**G21. Senior Transportation**

Improving access to transportation resources for seniors and adults with disabilities has been identified as a high priority in the Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) senior needs assessment. The AAA implemented a special initiative on senior transportation that received national attention, but the staff position dedicated to this project was eliminated due to a lack of funding for senior transportation programs. Transportation is critical to seniors' ability to access social and medical services that enable them to remain safely in their homes. The City of Santa Rosa was funded for one call center, and is working with 211 to launch a centralized telephone number for seniors to call for transportation assistance. Funding is needed to support the current volunteer driver programs implemented by Sonoma County, and to establish new ones. Because public transit agencies must confront multiple priorities, it is vitally important that separate federal funding for senior transportation continue and expand. Additional funds on the federal level could result in local grants for senior transportation alternatives and mobility management.

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

**G22. Unaccompanied Immigrant Minors**

The United States is currently experiencing an unprecedented wave of children traveling alone through Mexico, without parents or other family members, and arriving at our southern border. The number of these children detained by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has increased from an average of 6,500 per year prior to 2011 to 60-90,000 children expected in 2014. Although mostly teenage boys in 2011, the number of girls, including pregnant and parenting teens, and younger children has steadily increased. Due to the growing humanitarian crisis caused by the rapid increase seen in this population, the National Association of Counties (NACo) adopted a resolution at their annual conference calling on the Obama Administration and Congress to address the crisis by providing adequate federal funds for shelter and care.

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

## **Natural Resources**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 2011-2014 droughts in California are one of the worst in recent memory with Governor Brown declaring a drought state of emergency in January of 2014. Last year, 2013-14, was the driest on record. Many cities have issued mandatory or voluntary conservation orders of between 20-25%. Reducing water usage in the urban landscape is a critical part in meeting the desired conservation levels. Farmers have had to import water;

purchase livestock feed, and reduce irrigation or dry-farm in order to stay in business making farming less profitable.

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

The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) conducts research and educational programs to help commercial crop and livestock farmers in Sonoma County deal with the 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 plants, 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, and addressing climate change for public and ecological benefits.

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

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

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

**Action:** Support legislative and budget proposals that would provide resources for counties to perform ranch planning for riparian areas and management programs; and obtain broad support for programs and funding for these programs at federal, state, and local levels.

- Sponsor or support legislation to develop community scale riparian area and wetland improvement projects and programs;
- Prioritize projects improve ecosystem services on conservation lands, open space, agriculture and working lands, and important watersheds;
- Promote projects that enhance natural system functions whereby ecosystem services are improved at a greater rate than the status quo;
- Achieve a portfolio of rural and urban investment projects to maximize statewide coverage;
- Promote new and innovative programs and projects that improve water quality, habitat for endangered species, groundwater recharge, in-stream flows and carbon sequestration, including grazing management, urban greening and land use planning; and

- Identify synergies or multi-benefit attributes of coordinating or leveraging other federal, state, local, and private funding sources including the upcoming State Water Resources Control Board Grazing Regulatory Action Plan.

### **G27. 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.

### **G28. 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 (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 ARRA 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 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.

### **G29. 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. SCWA Director and Supervisor Efre Carrillo is part of the selection committee.

**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.

**G30. 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.

**G31. 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:

- Requests for 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;
- Request for 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.
- Support state legislation to increase funding levels from the Department of Boating and Waterways and make other improvements to the grant allocation process.

**G32. USDA/California County Cooperative Wildlife Services Program**

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

### **G33. Sonoma Mountain Habitat Preservation Project**

The District has invested \$37 million to permanently protect 4,100 acres on Sonoma Mountain through conservation easement and fee purchases to preserve important scenic, agricultural, and natural resources. These funds would support protection through purchase of a conservation easement over a 1,112-acre property that includes significant habitat types and forms the complete headwaters to Carriger Creek, a priority riparian corridor that contains Endangered Species Act listed steelhead. This easement acquisition will complete the protection of a critical legacy piece of Sonoma Mountain, and connect this key habitat and recreation area to Jack London State Historic Park.

**Action:** Support Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District efforts to obtain funding for the Sonoma Mountain Habitat Preservation Project.

### **G34. Sonoma County Stream Channels Project**

Over 80,000 acres of land in the county are protected by the Sonoma County Agriculture Preservation and Open Space District (SCAOSD) through fee and easement. These funds will support development of a plan that, when implemented, will connect urban streams and flood control channels to upslope watershed lands, increase the number and quality of recreational trail options, and increase the number of people using alternative transportation. Additionally, implementation of the plan will support climate change mitigation and adaptation. Plan implementation will also support enhancement of wildlife corridors, habitat for aquatic ecosystems, and ESA listed salmonids and other aquatic species. The plan will be developed in collaboration with the SCAPOSD, Regional Parks, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Campaign, cities, non-Government Organizations, and other community groups.

**Action:** Support Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District efforts to obtain funding for the Sonoma County Streams Channels Project.

### **G35. Integrated Watershed Restoration, Stewardship and Climate Adaptation Program**

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

A second key element of the plan will include the identification and evaluation of new tools and strategies to reduce conflicts among agricultural operations and ecosystem protection, such as new legal and policy tools to retain in-stream flows, expand riparian corridors, and incentivize best management practices. It is expected that this plan will be exportable to other watersheds and provide technology transfer to other groups. Implementation of this plan will support the protection, restoration, and enhancement of biological diversity and open-space resources of regional importance; preservation of working landscapes; improvements in water quality, habitat, and other coastal resources; and natural resource-based climate mitigation and adaptation. Key partners in this effort would include RCDs, 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.

### **G36. Documentation and Analysis of the Multiple Benefits of Conservation**

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

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

### **G37. Plan and Implement Urban Farm Center**

The Board has supported the District General Manager’s request to explore an Urban Farm Center in an underserved area of Santa Rosa. The Center would provide a farm site for the District offices, which would reflect the District’s mission to protect agricultural lands, urban open space and natural resources. Programming – which would be achieved by others via a competitive RFP process – may include Farm to Institution programs, youth training, farmers markets, agricultural business incubators, community gardens, and education regarding the importance of agriculture in Sonoma County. The Urban Farm 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 in early 2015 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.

## **Development Services**

### **G38. Clean Generation Measures**

Counties should be permitted to retain the green credit associated with power generation. Power purchase agreement installation surplus generation will be deemed eligible for this treatment. Counties should be encouraged to generate more green energy by being paid the full value of solar power generated and sold to an investor-owned utility, less reasonable transmission charges.

**Action:**

- Support increased state solar subsidies, advocate for retention of the green credit for surplus generation, and require peak rate payment for solar power generation sold to investor-owned utilities and community choice aggregators;
- Advocate for legislation which authorizes Power Purchase Agreement surplus power to be wheeled to its own other government accounts;
- Support California Energy Commission rebates to reflect the loss of the Federal Tax Credit and restore the California Solar Rebate to levels required to ensure cost effectiveness of installations over the life of the

installation. These incentives may decrease over time as the cost of solar PV continues to decline as the technology fully matures; and

- Support the extension of the 30 percent solar Investment Tax Credit (ITC) past 2016 as a matter of tax fairness and parity; the average annual subsidy for oil and gas has been \$4.8 billion, compared to \$370 million for all renewable technologies.

### **G39. Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations**

The state and local agencies have an interest in increasing the available water supply from existing reservoirs operated by state or federal entities. Many of these reservoirs are operated under rules that were developed in an earlier era when advanced weather forecasting technology was unknown. Potentially significant increases in water storage may be achieved if more reliable quantitative precipitation forecasting technology is deployed statewide and if the operators of state and federal reservoirs can complete re-operation studies.

**Action:** Support Water Agency Efforts to:

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

### **G40. NOAA's Hydrometeorology Testbed Project Implementation**

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

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

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

### **G41. Healdsburg Dam Renovations**

These funds would support the refurbishment of the Healdsburg War Memorial Dam in Healdsburg, California. The dam was originally built in 1953, and then reconstructed in 1956 following a flood. The dam consists of a concrete sill, steel anchor plates and removable flashboards. The flashboards and support structure are erected annually, currently to a maximum height of seven feet due to structural weaknesses, in late June and removed mid-September. The War Memorial Dam is a significant recreational feature along the Russian River with over 100,000 annual visitors to Healdsburg Veterans Memorial Beach, and the increased water levels during the dry summer months contribute to the recharge of the City of Healdsburg's drinking water wells located upstream.

Refurbishment of the entire dam structure would include repair of the eroded surfaces on the concrete foundation, replacement of steel anchor plates, replacement of the flashboard panel assemblies, and a new sheet pile wall. Additionally, fish passage will be enhanced while the dam is erected by increasing the depth of the resting pool beneath the spillway. After the work is completed, Regional Parks expects that it will be able to restore the War Memorial Dam to its historical height of ten feet.

**Action:** Seek funding in the amount of \$2,100,000 for the Sonoma County Veterans Memorial Beach Dam in Healdsburg.

#### **G42. Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve Development**

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and Sonoma County Regional Parks are currently working together to complete the Taylor Mountain Master Plan. Funding is needed to continue the development phase of the project. Once this park is developed, the public will be able to hike, bike or horseback on this beautiful 1,000 acre park. The Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve is just minutes always from the cities of Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Roseland, Cotati, Petaluma, and Sonoma.

**Action:** Seek funding in the amount of \$8,000,000 for Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve.

#### **G43. Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail**

The Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Corridor is a multi-phase project that will form an important link in the California Coastal Trail System as well as linking commercial, recreational and residential areas of Bodega Bay. Some segments have been funded, but several segments still require funding for the planning and development phases. Conceptual plans and preliminary California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance are complete for the entire trail corridor.

**Action:** Seek funding in the amount of \$5,000,000 for the Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail.

#### **G44. McCullough/Mark West Creek Acquisition**

Sonoma County Regional Parks and the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District have been working together on a public-private partnership to preserve the McCullough and Cresta Ranches to transform these properties into a regional park and open space preserve. The proposed Mark West Creek Regional Park and Open Space Preserve would become 1,095 acres of recreational open space and wilderness opportunity minutes from the cities of Santa Rosa, Calistoga, Windsor, and Healdsburg. The east and west ridges of the McCullough Ranch stand as a 461 acre preserve of grasslands, woodlands and streams that are home to Coho Salmon and Steelhead Trout, and a 22 mile trail system that provides expansive views of the surrounding Russian River Valley and the Santa Rosa Plain. The proposed linkage of the two properties speaks to the essence of Sonoma County's legacy of open space preservation.

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District purchased a 340 acre property known as Cresta Ranch in November 2007, and a 461 acre property known as McCullough Phase I in September 2009. These properties are intended to be part of the future Mark West Creek Regional Park. To date, the County has invested approximately \$15 million for the purchase of McCullough and Cresta Ranches. To realize the full potential of this project, which will ultimately form a contiguous protected habitat of over 4,600 acres on the northern edge of the Santa Rosa urban area, additional funding is needed to acquire the valley between the ridges, protect the confluence of Mark West and Mill Creek, and create public access from Porter Creek Road.

**Action:** Seek funding in the amount of \$8,000,000 for the McCullough/Mark West Creek Acquisition.

#### **G45. Tolay Lake Regional Park Master Plan and Development**

Sonoma County Regional Parks is working to complete the planning and development of Tolay Lake Regional Park. The approximate 3,400 acre park will restore habitat, protect open space, protect cultural resources of

national significance, and provide educational and recreational opportunities to Sonoma County residents and visitors. The \$18 million needed for the acquisition of Tolay Lake was provided by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Conservation Board, State Coastal Conservancy, Land and Water Conservation Fund, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, State Proposition 12 Funds, and private foundations, businesses, and individual donors. The draft proposed Master Plan identifies trail and public access facilities, interpretive facilities, lake and upland restoration priorities, and other necessary infrastructure improvements.

**Action:** Seek funding in the amount of \$12,000,000 for Tolay Lake Regional Park Master Plan and Development.

## **Justice Services**

### **G46. Gun and Replica Weapon Regulation**

Sonoma County has long supported the view that preventing gun and community violence is critical to its goal to achieve 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, which will require all airsoft guns to have brightly colored or transparent markings. The bill will allow officers to more easily identify airsoft guns as imitation firearms instead of real guns in an effort to prevent officer-involved shootings based on a perceived safety threat.

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

### **G47. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits for Pesticide Discharges**

On Oct. 31, 2011 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) Pesticide General Permit (PGP) for point source discharges from the application of pesticides to U.S. waters under the Clean Water Act (CWA). EPA's action was in response to a 2009 decision by the US Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals (National Cotton Council, et al. v. EPA) in which the court vacated EPA's 2006 Final Rule on Aquatic Pesticides that exempted pesticides from CWA permitting. As a result of the court's decision, NPDES permits are generally required for these types of discharges as of Oct. 31, 2011. Aquatic pesticide applications not covered by an NPDES permit may be subject to a fine.

Congress has attempted to adopt legislation known as the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act since early 2011. The legislation would prohibit EPA and states authorized to issue NPDES permits from requiring a permit for some discharges of pesticides authorized for use under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). To date Congress has been unable to adopt the legislation. However, language was adopted in the House version of the 2013 and 2014 Farm Bill. During Conference Committee on the Farm Bill in January 2014 Senate majority negotiators did not allow the provisions in the final Conference Report.

Requiring an additional permit does not add any real environmental protection that is not already provided through the FIFRA process of product registration and labeling of the pesticides. Under the court decision both regulators and users are now facing many ambiguities about which regulations, permits and enforcement officials maintain jurisdiction and authorities to carry out the federal pesticide regulatory program for USEPA under FIFRA and CWA.

**Action:** Supports federal legislation that reduces regulatory and enforcement ambiguities and redundancies.

## **Administrative Support & Fiscal Services**

### **G48. Libraries Funding**

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

In the past three years, rising costs and reduced funding to the Library system have caused reduced library services including reduced hours of operation at all branches. The current adopted budget relies on one-time sources totaling \$535,000 to balance current operations costs. Despite improved property tax revenue estimates, current projections show that expenditures will continue to increase faster than available revenues for the future which will likely result in further reductions to services without additional revenue sources. These projections do not include provision for existing backlogs of maintenance needs nor do they include provision for increasing hours of operation at any branches.

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