

County of Ventura

2024 STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA AND PLATFORM

I. OVERALL POLICY PILLARS

The County supports:

- A. Proposals that would provide Counties with greater decision-making authority over the use of State and Federal funds and opposes proposals that would impose new unfunded mandates
- B. Efforts to ensure local discretionary control over governance issues, land use authority, and delivery of services
- C. Streamlining efforts that reduce access barriers, improve service, increase efficiency, and expand equity of public programs
- D. Legislation that would limit or minimize the County's exposure to tort/liability claims

II. NEW BILL REQUESTS

None

III. STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUES BY POLICY AREA

Healthy, Safe and Resilient Communities

Health and Wellbeing

The County supports:

- A. Efforts to enhance access to high-quality health care for all County residents, regardless of health care coverage status or ability to pay (HCA/HSA)
- B. Efforts to increase system integration and data sharing within and between agencies and organizations to improve outcomes for individuals that utilize multiple County services (Countywide)
- C. Efforts to integrate care delivery systems for mental health, substance use treatment services, and physical health that address the full spectrum of need and coordinates care (HCA)
- D. Preservation or enhancement of funding and policies that support chronic and infectious disease prevention programs and strategies, particularly for low-income and Medi-Cal eligible clients (HCA)
- E. Preservation or enhancement of funding and policies for prevention, surveillance, and response related to opioid and other substance misuse (HCA/DA)
- F. Preserving medical control for the Medical Director to plan, implement, and evaluate a countywide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system to provide equitable service to residents (HCA)

- G. Legislation that facilitates family access to child support program services while easing administrative burdens (CSS)
- H. Preservation or enhancement of funding for early literacy, school readiness, adult literacy, career development, vocational support, and assistance to vulnerable populations (LIB)
- I. Preservation or enhancement of funding for early childhood development programs and efforts to enhance science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) programs (CEO/ITS/LIB)
- J. Progressive and innovative programming designed to enhance animal welfare services with an emphasis on the human-animal bond and the well-being, protection, and humane care of animals (AS)

Public Safety

The County supports:

- A. Efforts that divert individuals from the criminal legal system, including gang violence reduction, substance use treatment, and mental health support programs (HCA/PD/PRO/SO)
- B. Efforts to enhance access to required constitutional level of legal representation for indigent County residents charged with crimes (PD)
- C. Legislation that addresses persistent and emergent crime trends, such as the proliferation of fentanyl, increases in gun violence, possession of “ghost” guns, and coordinated criminal rings perpetrating organized retail thefts (DA/SO)
- D. Legislation to remove firearms from prohibited persons and strengthen the enforcement of Gun Violence Restraining Orders (DA)
- E. Preservation or enhancement of funding for the investigation and prosecution of victim-based crimes, with an emphasis on crimes involving child sexual abuse material, human trafficking, and sexual assault (DA/SO)
- F. Preservation or enhancement of funding for programs and services that provide trauma-informed services to victims of crime, particularly in cases of domestic violence and sexual assault (PRO/DA)
- G. Efforts that utilize a community service model for supervising compliance of court orders and providing rehabilitative services to address criminogenic need (PRO)
- H. Efforts to provide resources, flexibility, and innovative practices to address the needs of youth in secure settings and provide pathways to transition to less restrictive settings (PRO)
- I. Proposals that would provide for the planning and modernization of juvenile facilities to ensure facilities reflect environments that foster evidence-based programming and support youth in age appropriate and trauma informed ways as well as providing for safety of youth and staff (PRO)
- J. Funding for programs that restore rights including reduction, dismissal, expungement, and/or sealing of criminal records for those who have completed their criminal sentences, which enhance community trust, promote public safety, lower rates of recidivism and preserve taxpayer resources (PD/PRO)

- K. Efforts to improve fire prevention including but not limited to, hardening of homes, enforcement of defensible space, undergrounding utilities, removal or dead or dying trees and other non-fire-resistant species (FD)
- L. Preservation or enhancement of funding for local governments to secure lifesaving public safety equipment (FD/PWA/SO)

Resiliency

The County supports:

- A. Efforts that build resiliency via local hazard mitigation planning and sufficient funding to support disaster-resilient housing and infrastructure (FD/RMA/SO)
- B. Efforts to maximize and expedite access resources to address health emergency and disaster preparation, response and recovery needs (CEO)
- C. Legislation that would fully fund mass care and shelter efforts, including planning, preparation, implementation, and operational costs, for equitable response and recovery and supporting individuals with disability, access, and functional needs (HSA)
- D. Preservation or enhancement of funding for accessible buildings, including upgrades to critical infrastructure and support in times of disaster, such as wildfires and extreme heat (LIB)
- E. Efforts to ensure residents have access to reasonable priced fire insurance and that the insurance industry recognizes fire hazard risk reduction efforts (FD)

Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Vitality

Fiscal Responsibility

The County supports:

- A. Efforts to obtain consent of California's voters before allowing the State to transfer control of local financial resources from local governments to State government (CEO)
- B. Efforts to address the financing model and financial shortfall for safety net systems, including timely reimbursement from payors for services provided (HCA/HSA)
- C. Full cost recovery for salary, benefits and administration and enhance flexibility and local control over labor relations issues (CEO)
- D. Proposals that designate the Board of Supervisors as the sole authority to grant retirement benefits and maintain the fiscal stability of the County's retirement system without increasing the County's financial obligation (CEO)

Economic Vitality

The County supports:

- A. The efforts of our local partners to seek State and Federal funding to further support residents when projects are beyond the County's scope (CEO)
- B. Legislation to enhance funding for consumer protection through weights and measures, fruit and vegetable standards, food safety, farmers markets, and organic production (AG)
- C. Investment in economic development with a focus on building competitive industries, supporting prosperous communities, and promoting economic vitality in key sectors including arts and culture (CEO)
- D. Legislation that stimulates interoperability and innovation, fosters competition, reduces barriers to entry, and facilitates growth for businesses (CEO/ITS)

Reliable Infrastructure and Sustainability

Protecting Infrastructure

The County supports:

- A. Preservation or enhancement of funding for broadband equity and digital literacy for unserved and underserved communities (LIB/HSA/ITS)
- B. Efforts to develop policies and provide incentives that will ensure adequate funding for the maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of aging public works infrastructure, including support of multi-modal transportation objectives, and Local Levee Assistance Programs (PWA)
- C. Flexible design requirements for State highways serving as local roads (PWA)
- D. Efforts to ensure that oil and gas development activities do not pose a significant risk to water supplies, people, or natural resources; and to develop and implement a plan that sets a finite time limit on the maintenance of oil wells in idle status (RMA)
- E. Funding and flexibility for retrofitting of County buildings to increase seismic safety and for existing homes that are in Fire Hazard areas (HCA/RMA)
- F. Efforts that would fully fund the exclusion, detection, eradication, and management of invasive pests (AG)
- G. Legislation to implement sustainable pest management, including funding for outreach on best practices. This includes support for an increase in the "mill tax" to fund pesticide regulatory activity (AG)
- H. Legislation to increase the environmental review of new school sites to minimize negative impacts on both farms and schools (AG)
- I. Funding and initiatives to modernize public safety technology and infrastructure (FD/ITS)
- J. Preservation or enhancement of funding for coastal infrastructure, ocean water quality, and preservation of existing coastal resources (HAR/RMA)

- K. Efforts to assist non-hub airports in developing and sustaining viable air service (AIR)
- L. Legislation that ensures compatible land use and development in the vicinity of the County airports (AIR)
- M. Amending the California Public Utilities Code (PUC) to include the Federal Aviation Administration Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS) protected surfaces within the PUC, Section 21659, Hazards Near Airports Prohibited (AIR)

Sustainability

The County supports:

- A. Funding for sustainability and reliable infrastructure to preserve and enhance the environment through energy conservation; development of renewable energy sources; restrictions on offshore development, coastal, wetlands and waterways protection; farmland and habitat preservation; and development of alternative transportation modes (RMA)
- B. Efforts to streamline the environmental review process for development without compromising environmental quality standards (RMA)
- C. Policies and funding that promote environmental sustainability, protects water resources, enhances regional water supplies, and supports efforts to promote the diversion of reusable and recyclable materials from landfills. This includes supporting legislative efforts to streamline permitting of public works projects (PWA)
- D. The development of State regulations and procedures that promote the commonsense implementation of both State and Federal resource protection laws and ensure enhanced collaboration between State and Federal agencies to enable efficient, consistent, and cost-effective compliance with these resource protection laws to expedite the delivery of vital public works projects (PWA)
- E. Decarbonizing our buildings and vehicles while enhancing local energy resilience, with legislation that would create opportunities for local governments to administer greenhouse gas reduction programs as well as receive State and Federal funding for local renewable energy production and install and utilize integrated distributed energy resources (CEO-S)
- F. Efforts to streamline processes for implementing projects in energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy storage, transportation and building decarbonization using emerging technologies in renewable energy production and microgrids (CEO-S)
- G. A regional approach to the multi-jurisdictional issue of Sea Level Rise (SLR) to ensure the continued existence of critical coastal infrastructure and the health, safety, and welfare of California coastal communities for future generations (RMA)
- H. Efforts to balance preservation of agriculture and open space, water supply, and other physical constraints with housing production in meeting state housing element goals (RMA)

- I. Development and transition to alternative piston engine aviation fuels in a manner that does not negatively impact general aviation (AIR)

Address Homelessness and Lift Up the Most Vulnerable

The County supports:

- A. Efforts to expand financial resources for the development and preservation of affordable housing (CEO/HSA).
- B. Funding for the development, acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of housing/shelters for persons who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless (CEO)
- C. Preservation or enhancement of programs and services that expand the County's ability to provide services to vulnerable residents throughout the continuum of need, including prevention, early intervention, and after-care services (HSA)
- D. Reinforcing work and workforce support programs that help lift families out of poverty and provide pathways to self-sufficiency (HSA)
- E. Efforts to increase awareness of and prevent elder and dependent adult abuse, including increased funding and support to the prosecution and prevention of crimes and abuse against seniors (HSA)
- F. Legislation that enables seniors and adults with disabilities to reside in a community setting to support aging with dignity and provide them with engaging, equitable services in a community setting (HSA)
- G. Efforts to ensure that those disproportionately impacted by economic downturns and historically underrepresented in receiving public relief receive critical services and benefits (HSA)
- H. Legislation that addresses any challenges related to the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act, including support and flexibility for services that support foster youth (HSA)

Diverse and Innovative Workforce Dedicated to Service Excellence

The County supports:

- A. Investment of sufficient ongoing funding to support local health departments to build a modern workforce and infrastructure to continue to address emerging critical threats to the health and wellbeing of County residents (HCA)
- B. Efforts to increase the number of qualified essential health care professionals through programs that support education for undergraduate and graduate students to enter the fields of Public Health, Laboratory Sciences, Primary Care, Specialty Care, and other professional fields supporting the health care industry (HCA)
- C. Efforts to support the mental health of first responders and other public safety personnel, including proposals that improve training, standards, and resources available to support mental health (FD)

IV. FEDERALLY SPECIFIC ITEMS

Healthy, Safe and Resilient Communities

The County supports:

- A. Protection of Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal health programs, including efforts to maintain sufficient funding levels to serve eligible populations that do not rely on county financial participation (HCA)
- B. Legislation protecting participants in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program from deportation and that provides a pathway for permanent status (CEO)
- C. A Multi-agency approach to implementing the Stepping Up Initiative to reduce the number of adults with mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders in County jail (PD/SO)
- D. Proposals that would fully fund agricultural pest exclusion through inspections of incoming and outgoing shipments, eradication and management of invasive pests including funding for a dog team training facility in California (AG)
- E. Preservation or enhancement of funding for disaster programs supported through FEMA, including the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants (SAFER) (SO/FD)
- F. Efforts to increase the amount of funding available for mental health response, including repeal or reform of the institutions for mental disease (IMD) exclusion (HCA)
- G. Reauthorization and increased funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) to address the substantial impact illegal immigration has on the County (SO)

Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Vitality

The County supports:

- A. Proposals that would provide Counties with greater decision-making authority over the use of Federal funds and which provide for direct grants or mandatory pass-through allocations (CEO)
- B. Full funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and authorization of mandatory payments to provide stability to the program (CEO)
- C. The repeal of the caps on the amount of State and Local Taxes (SALT) that can be deducted on individual tax returns (CEO)
- D. Legislation to provide crop insurance to growers of California specialty crops and disaster relief for the economic impacts of pest quarantines (AG)

- E. Incentives to promote sustainable agriculture through USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service farmland conservation programs and transition to renewable energy (AG)

Reliable Infrastructure and Sustainability

The County supports:

- A. Efforts to develop funding policies and incentives that will ensure maximum funding for the maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of aging vital public works infrastructure, and reduction of redundant and cumbersome administrative regulations that hinder usage of Federal funds (PWA)
- B. Multi-year authorization of the National Flood Insurance Program and amortization periods for newly mapped areas before mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and higher insurance rates go into full effect (PWA)
- C. Funding for County watershed projects under the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service PL-566 Watersheds Program (PWA)
- D. Development of Federal regulations and procedures that promote efficient and consistent compliance with Federal and State resource protection laws (PWA)
- E. Reauthorization and increased funding of the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), which provides funding for safety, security, noise abatement, and capacity enhancement programs (AIR)
- F. Full funding through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to reconstruct runways and taxiways to ensure existing infrastructure meets community needs (AIR)
- G. Funding through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for activities related to dredging of Federally authorized channels and sand deposition areas, jetty maintenance and repair, and environmental enhancement (HAR)

Address Homelessness and Lift Up the Most Vulnerable

The County supports:

- A. Improvements to Federal housing assistance programs that promote housing stability therefore allowing more people in need to participate in those programs (CEO/HSA/HCA)
- B. Reauthorization and increased funding for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program (SNAP), and related anti-poverty programs (HSA)
The improvement and expansion of the Older American's ACT (OAA) to keep pace with an expanding older adult population and the increasingly complex needs of that population. (HSA)

V. STATE AND FEDERAL BUDGET REQUESTS

- A. New Animal Shelter. Funding is requested to expand the existing footprint of the property and construct several new structures to increase the capacity of animal services for the unincorporated area and eight of the County's ten cities.
- B. Ventura County Family Justice Centers. Funding is requested for administrative services and emergency shelter beds for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault who have been displaced as a result of their victimization.
 - i. Ventura FJC – Funding for an on-site 24-hour domestic violence shelter
 - ii. Carmen Ramirez FJC and East County FJC – Funding for design, construction, and programming
- C. Dentistry and Optometry Services for Disadvantaged and Underserved Communities. Funding is requested to expand services for dentistry and optometry at all Ventura County Ambulatory Care Clinics across the County.
- D. Mental Health Rehabilitation Center (MHRC). Funding is requested for the renovation of an existing County building to provide 30-40 beds of intensive support and rehabilitative services for adults with severe mental disorders.
- E. Vanguard Recuperative Care. Funding is requested to establish 75 recuperative care beds at the Vanguard permanent supportive housing site, which will provide short-term post hospitalization care to individuals experiencing homelessness and offers a transition period into permanent housing.
- F. Public Works Projects. Funding is requested for the following projects, which is vital to the County's infrastructure:
 - i. Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project
 - ii. Regional Desalter Projects
 - iii. Santa Paula Creek Flood Control Restoration Project
 - iv. Santa Clara River Watershed Protection Plan/Capital Facilities Plan
 - v. Santa Clara River Levee (SCR-1) Improvements Project
 - vi. Ventura River Levee (VR-1) Improvements Project
- G. Channel Islands Harbor. Funding is requested via the US Army Corps of Engineers' Operations and Maintenance/Navigation account for maintenance dredging to clear the Channel Islands Harbor sand trap.
- H. Ventura County Computer Incident Response Team. Funding is requested to support a three-year Computer Incident Response Team program that will investigate and prosecute computer network intrusion crimes.

- I. Harvest Medical Pavilion. Funding is requested for the construction of a rural-based acute care 49-bed hospital and accompanying ambulatory medical and specialty clinics in the Heritage Valley to provide critical medical and health care services to disadvantaged and underserved families and individuals residing in small rural communities geographically separated from the more urban areas of the county.

County Agencies and Departments

AG	Agricultural Commissioner	HSA	Human Services Agency
AIR	Airports	ITS	Information Technology Services
AS	Animal Services	LIB	Library Services
CEO	County Executive Office	PRO	Probation Agency
CSS	Child Support Services	PD	Public Defender
DA	District Attorney	PWA	Public Works Agency
FD	Fire Protection District	RMA	Resource Management Agency
HAR	Harbor Department	SO	Sheriff's Office
HCA	Health Care Agency		