

County of Ventura

2023 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA AND PLATFORM

I. OVERALL FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

- A. The County opposes proposals that would impose new unfunded mandates on the County.
- B. The County supports 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.
- C. The County supports proposals that would provide a greater share of total available Federal funding to California and opposes proposals that would reduce the State's share of total funding.
- D. The County supports legislation that would limit or minimize the County's exposure to tort/liability claims.
- E. The County supports efforts to reduce or eliminate the many cumbersome, contradictory regulatory/administrative/oversight requirements of Federal programs.
- F. The County supports all legislative and administrative efforts to maximize and expedite access to Federal resources to address health emergency and disaster preparation, response, and recovery needs.

II. NEW BILL REQUESTS

None.

III. FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- A. Public Works Projects. The County supports funding for the repair and replacement of aging flood protection infrastructure, including the following projects:
 - i. Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project
 - ii. Santa Paula Creek Storm Damage Restoration Project
 - iii. Santa Clara River Watershed Protection Plan/Capital Facilities Plan
 - iv. Santa Clara River Levee (SCR-1) Improvements Project
 - v. Ventura River Levee (VR-1) Improvements Project

- B. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Support is sought for funding for County watershed projects under the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service PL-566 watersheds program.
- C. Channel Islands Harbor. Support is sought for funding in the amount of \$8 million in the US Army Corps of Engineers' Operations and Maintenance/Navigation account for maintenance dredging to clear the Channel Islands Harbor sand trap for fiscal year 2023.
- D. Ventura County Computer Incident Response Team. Support is requested for funding for Ventura County District Attorney's office to implement the three-year Computer Incident Response Team program to investigate and prosecute computer network intrusion crimes
- E. Harvest Medical Pavilion. Support is requested for funding 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.
- F. Ventura County Integrated Justice Information System Upgrade. Support is requested for funding for an Integrated Justice Information System upgrade. The current platform that was built more than 20 years ago. This new integrated justice system would seek to leverage new software functionality to ensure that information is appropriately shared between 39 local, State, and Federal agencies.
- G. Radio Communication Upgrade. Support is requested for funding to implement a radio system that would serve the County and other city-based public safety entities with enhanced mobile apparatus, facility equipment, and expanded digital communication channels.

IV. **MAJOR POLICY ISSUES – BY DEPARTMENT**

Agricultural Commissioner

- A. The County supports proposals that would fully fund: the inspection of incoming and outgoing shipments of any materials capable of harboring pests and diseases detrimental to Ventura County's agricultural industry; the eradication of newly discovered pest populations; and pest management efforts.
- B. The County supports efforts to promote the implementation of sustainable pest management strategies to reduce reliance on the most toxic pesticides, promote

programs to educate the public on safe pesticide use and their impacts, and to prevent the introduction of new invasive pests.

- C. The County supports legislation that would allow growers of specialty crops to participate in crop insurance programs, including legislation that would treat plant pest and disease quarantines as disasters and provide eligibility for economic relief to growers of specialty crops in declared disaster areas.
- D. The County supports full funding for early pest and disease detection and surveillance improvements which would provide Federal support for pest exclusion and pest detection programs.
- E. The County supports legislation providing for full funding for cooperative U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Pesticide Regulation, and local Agricultural Commissioner pesticide programs providing scientific risk assessments and evaluations of the most toxic pesticides.
- F. The County supports legislation that encourages and provides financial assistance to agricultural operations to conserve and enhance the environment through conservation of prime farmland, energy conservation, and the development of renewable energy sources.

Airports

- A. The County supports the FAA fully funding the reconstruction of runways and taxiways to ensure existing infrastructure meets the needs of the community.
- B. The County supports Federal programs and funding to assist non-hub airports in developing and sustaining viable air service.
- C. The County supports reauthorization and increased funding of the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), which provides funding for safety, security, noise abatement, and capacity enhancement programs.
- D. The County opposes the privatization of the Camarillo Air Traffic Control Tower facility.
- E. The County supports the Federal Contract Tower Program including full funding of the program at the Oxnard Airport.
- F. The County supports the development and transition to alternative piston engine aviation fuels in a manner that does not negatively impact general aviation.
- G. The County supports raising the Federal cap on local Passenger Facility Charges to assist in funding airport infrastructure.

- H. The County supports alternative programs for pilot training that will address the pilot shortage issue that is impeding the County's ability to restore airline service.
- I. The County supports the expansion of eligibility for use of federal grant funds.
- J. The County supports reducing unnecessary Federal regulatory burdens on airport operators.
- K. The County supports the approval of a Fluorine-Free Foam as a replacement for Aqueous Film Forming Foam at Certificated Airports and Federal funding for mandated projects that delineate and mitigate the presence of PFAS chemicals that were discharged in accordance with, and as mandated by, FAA regulations.
- L. The County supports the integration of Unmanned Aerial Systems into the National Airspace System.
- M. The County supports the update of noise compatibility planning methodology to recognize and quantify the impacts on populations located near airports but beyond certain noise contours that establish eligibility for FAA funding under FAR Part 150, the Noise Compatibility Program.

Area Agency on Aging

- A. The County supports improving and expanding the Older American's Act (OAA), keeping pace with inflation and the growing number of older adults; preserve the OAA's flexibility and person-centered commitment; capitalize on the existing aging network to coordinate long-term care services; and increase appropriations under the OAA including expanding the OAA to include funding for Adult Protective Services and funding to help strengthen and expand Aging and Disability Resource Center's ability to help seniors and people with disabilities access resources and services.
- B. The County supports legislation that preserves the Federal funding for the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy program that provides counseling regarding Medicare. The County also supports legislation that provides funding for fall prevention, veterans' services including the Veterans Directed Care Program, and funding that provides case management, in-home care and respite for older adults including people with dementia.
- C. The County supports legislation that would allow dignity in death that includes privacy in nursing home rooms for those with less than five days to live, as well as additional services for the terminally ill.
- D. The County supports efforts to fully fund the Elder Justice Act and legislation to increase the funding provided for elder abuse prosecution and prevention

programs and increases the penalties for those convicted of crimes against seniors. The County also supports increasing the penalties for those convicted of crimes against seniors or those with disabilities.

- E. The County supports legislation that expands Medicare coverage of dental and hearing and visual aids for seniors.
- F. The County supports funding and efforts to move towards community-based services and age-in-place programs as opposed to nursing home placement.
- G. The County supports legislation to add low-income older adults to the list of specified groups for whom employers may claim a work opportunity tax credit.

County Executive Office

- A. The County supports full funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and authorization of mandatory payments to provide stability to the program.
- B. The County supports legislation that would allow for the interception of Federal tax refunds as a means to recover fees and judgments owed to the County of Ventura.
- C. The County supports the repeal of the caps on the amount of State and Local Taxes (SALT) that can be deducted on individual tax returns.
- D. The County supports legislation protecting participants in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program from deportation and that provides a pathway for permanent status.
- E. The County supports efforts to address comprehensive immigration reform.
- F. The County supports improvements to Federal housing assistance programs that promote housing stability therefore allowing more people in need to participate in those programs.
- G. The County supports efforts to obtain additional housing vouchers to support local collaborative efforts to house chronically homeless individuals and families.
- H. The County supports efforts to expand financial resources for the development and preservation of affordable housing.
- I. The County supports investment in equitable and inclusive economic development with a focus on building competitive industries, prosperous

communities, and promoting economic vitality in key sectors including arts and culture.

- J. The County opposes legislation that seeks to increase truck size or weight limits beyond those in current federal law until a federally funded, full analysis is completed outlining what impacts any increases may have on the national transportation system, including the added cost to State and local governments.
- K. The County supports legislation that would reinstate the 2022-2025 Federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) vehicle fuel economy standards and provide further fuel efficiency requirements.
- L. The County supports funding for wildfire prevention efforts, including undergrounding utilities and the removal of dead trees and other nonfire-resistant species.
- M. The County supports cost-effective strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and encourage the use of grants, loans, and incentives to assist local governments in the implementation of greenhouse gas reduction programs.
- N. The County supports legislative efforts which would provide financial assistance and operations and economic incentives that promote the use of renewable energy.
- O. The County supports legislation that provides financial and operational incentives for emerging technologies in renewable energy production to support local government efforts to minimize costs and environmental impacts.
- P. The County supports legislation that would establish a Federal revenue neutral carbon tax.
- Q. The County supports repeal of provisions included in the Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act of 2016 that make it nearly impossible for the Drug Enforcement Agency to freeze suspicious narcotic shipments.
- R. The County supports efforts to reclassify cannabis from a Schedule 1 substance to make it easier for ill patients and scientific and medical researchers to obtain marijuana.
- S. The County supports stronger gun control legislation including: a ban on modifications that make a semi-automatic gun work like an automatic; strict restrictions on the size of magazines and the sale of guns like the AR-15; background checks for all gun buyers; prohibition of gun shows at state-owned fairgrounds; prevention of the mentally ill from buying guns; a ban on the sale of

guns to people convicted of violent crimes, including domestic violence; and implementation of a mandatory waiting period on all gun purchases.

- T. The County supports all efforts to protect our local military bases from closure and encroachment, supports funding for infrastructure, and the work of the community coalition known as Regional Defense Partnership for the 21st Century (RDP-21).
- U. The County supports legislation that recognizes shipping companies for voluntarily reducing speeds in the Santa Barbara Channel region to reduce air pollution and the risk of fatal ship strikes on whales.
- V. The County supports efforts to require NASA and Boeing, the owners of land at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory, and the Department of Energy, which leases land at the site, to clean up the site to the most protective standards, equivalent to background, and opposes the transfer and/or development of the property until the clean-up of the site is deemed complete.
- W. The County supports efforts to increase funding to the Federal EPA Superfund Account for work currently underway at the Halaco site as well as funding for future clean-up and removal actions.
- X. The County supports the establishment of a Federal Authority that will fund Regional Sediment Management projects on the California coast that are consistent with the US Army Corps of Engineers' mission of coastal risk reduction, ecosystem restoration, and navigation.
- Y. The County supports efforts that would achieve the sediment management goals of the Beach Erosion Authority for Clean Oceans and Nourishment (BEACON) in Ventura County and Coastal California.

District Attorney

- A. The County supports funding to investigate and prosecute internet crimes against children, particularly crimes involving child abuse sexual material.
- B. The County supports funding to investigate and analyze untested rape and sexual assault kits for the presence of DNA evidence that can lead to criminal apprehension and prosecution.
- C. The County supports funding and legislation that will keep firearms away from prohibited persons subject to convictions, restraining orders and forfeiture proceedings.

- D. The County supports funding for on-site emergency shelter beds for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault at Family Justice Centers, as well as legislation that will establish permanent federal funding for Family Justice Centers across California and the nation.
- E. The County supports federal funding for local agencies, including Behavioral Health, the District Attorney, and the Public Defender, to implement mental health and addiction recovery programs for low-level offenders.

Fire District

- A. The County supports initiatives to ensure the financial viability of the Fire District as well as the public safety services it provides. Specific focus is on forward planning, local government reimbursement, and prevention measures and response enhancements to “all-hazard” emergency incidents, local, State and Federal.
- B. The County supports efforts to bring insurance companies and the industry into mitigating the wildland fire problem.

Harbor Department

- A. The County supports 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.
- B. The County supports efforts to ensure that funds collected under the Harbor Maintenance Tax are targeted for navigation projects.
- C. The County supports the reauthorization of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act and regulatory versions that ensure that local issues and concerns are addressed.
- D. The County supports the appropriation of funding needed to reach authorized depths.

Health Care Agency

- A. The County supports efforts to protect, maximize, and provide funding for the County Medical System (inpatient and outpatient), including, but not limited to Safety Net Hospitals and Health Systems, Health Care for the Homeless, Federally Qualified Health Centers, telemedicine/e-consult services, maintenance and enhancement of electronic health care infrastructure, Medicare and Medicaid Waivers, Disproportionate Share Hospital Funding, Coverage

Initiatives, 340b Programs, Outpatient Reimbursement rules, Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) enhancement, formulas, and initiatives.

- B. The County seeks expanded funding support for publicly operated health care safety-net services. Continuation and expansion are sought for the federally funded State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Continued expansion and funding support is also sought for development and expansion of locally sponsored safety-net programs to provide health services, such as Oral and Optometry Health, the Medical Home Model, Integrated Medical & Mental Health Services, Whole Person Care, and Case/Care Management Services.
- C. The County supports legislation that would allow for the inclusion of a Marriage and Family Therapist in the list of health care professionals covered to bill Medicaid/Medicare through Federally Qualified Health Centers.
- D. The County supports expansion and continued funding of both behavioral health and health care services for the homeless.
- E. The County supports the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's efforts to ensure that manufacturers provide safe and effective mobile medical digital devices for home use.
- F. The County supports reauthorization and full funding of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program in order to improve the infrastructure for data collection, delivery of service, and full implementation.
- G. The County supports public policies and services that strengthen our public health system, expands health insurance coverage, and provides resources to better serve Maternal Child Adolescent Health populations, including children with special health care needs.
- H. The County supports full funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund.
- I. The County supports full funding of the Ryan White CARE Act Programs.
- J. The County supports proposals which allow for Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement for individuals who are excluded from participation in the Medicaid program as a result of their mental health placements, such as patients at Institutions for Mental Disease (IMDs), which are hospitals, nursing facilities, or other institutions with more than 16 beds that are primarily engaged in the diagnosis, treatment, or care of persons with mental diseases.
- K. The County supports opioid substance misuse prevention policies, including State rules, which maintain peace officers' access to prescription drug monitoring

program data during possible criminal investigations, and expanded Federal funding for overdose prevention education and rescue efforts.

- L. The County supports efforts to provide additional funding for residential treatment, recovery housing, and all other costs associated with substance use and misuse.
- M. The County supports legislation or budget actions that will raise Medi-Cal hospital rates through hospital provider fees with the appropriate model that will provide additional funding for public hospitals and expansion of coverage for children.
- N. The County seeks funding and legislative support for the expansion of Family Medicine Residency Training programs to further improve the availability and access of primary care physicians at the local, state, and national level.
- O. The County supports efforts to seek funding and legislative action that would improve opportunities for physicians that work in public health care safety-net systems to reduce or forgive student loan obligations.
- P. The County supports an increase in Graduate Medical Education funding for the training of primary care doctors.
- Q. The County supports efforts to fund and incentivize health care delivery systems that achieve national accreditation, certification, and/or recognition.
- R. The County supports construction funding to permit compliance with State earthquake retrofit requirements for acute care hospital and outpatient facilities, including replacement facilities as appropriate.
- S. The County supports new and ongoing investment in a diverse set of services and supports to provide needed assistance to our communities as part of a comprehensive pandemic response and recovery.

Human Services Agency

- A. The County supports efforts that increase system integration and allow for more streamlined data sharing, such as Homeless Management Information System and the Child Welfare Continuum of Care.
- B. The County supports changes that are designed to improve overall program administration and encourage flexibility and simplification for more equitable and effective service delivery.
- C. The County supports increased and flexible funding to address the complex needs of vulnerable populations. Such funding sources should provide families

in crisis with the support, culturally competent services, evidence-based early intervention, and prevention programs needed to keep children safely at home and out of foster care.

- D. The County supports increased funding and support across the continuum of need for all foster youth, particularly those with complex care needs. This includes support of modifications to Federal law that allows flexibility to ease transitions for foster youth across various programs and systems of support. The County supports the ability to utilize funding from a wider array of funding streams to maximize resources for these vulnerable individuals.
- E. The County supports efforts to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program and increase Federal funding levels for TANF and related programs that address factors contributing to poverty.
- F. The County supports the goals of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and increased funding for the workforce network and collaborative.
- G. The County supports funding, programs, and initiatives aimed at reducing the number of families and individuals experiencing homelessness in our community, particularly those initiatives aimed at expanding affordable housing resources and comprehensive support services that lead to self-sufficiency.
- H. The County supports policies, funding, and legislation that support age-friendly programs that provide equitable support for aging populations.
- I. The County supports programs and initiatives, accompanied by new funding, that equitably address the digital divide and provide access to the most vulnerable residents of the County.

Information Technology Services

- A. The County supports efforts that would provide for the improvement of broadband availability, accessibility, competition, and performance in Ventura County.
- B. The County supports legislation and technology enhancement efforts that will strengthen and improve cybersecurity for the public, businesses, and government.
- C. The County supports efforts to enhance the privacy of sensitive data concerning individuals but does not place burdensome regulations on businesses and the free flow of information.
- D. The County supports funding and initiatives to modernize public safety technology and infrastructure.

- E. The County supports funding and initiatives to enhance science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) programs.
- F. The County encourages support for legislation that stimulates innovation, fosters competition, reduces barriers to entry, and facilitates growth for hi-tech entrepreneurs and technology businesses.
- G. The County supports legislation that facilitates open data and transparency while opposing legislation that will burden County operations.

Library

- A. The County supports the Museum and Library Services Act and the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services and increasing appropriations for its library grant programs through the Library Services and Technology Act.

Probation

- A. The County supports proposals that would provide funding of juvenile and adult programs to suppress the addiction to controlled substances and facilitate the treatment of severe chemical dependency, including medically assisted treatment.
- B. The County supports proposals that would provide funding for the purposes of establishing collaborative re-entry programs and services for those adult and juvenile offenders returning to their communities from State prisons and local custodial facilities.
- C. The County supports funding opportunities designated to assist local agencies who have the responsibility of managing youth in the foster care system and those reintegrating into their communities.

Public Defender

- A. The County supports funding for the office of the Public Defender so that indigent defendants receive the required constitutional level of representation.
- B. The County supports increased funding of the John R. Justice Prosecution and Defender Incentive Act, which provides repayment of educational loans for attorneys who provide legal services in public interest areas of law such as criminal prosecution and defense.
- C. The County supports a multi-agency approach to implementing the Stepping Up Initiative in order to reduce the number of adults with mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders in county jails.

- D. The County supports the development and funding of community-based, non-jail alternatives that enhance community trust, public safety, lower rates of recidivism, and preserve taxpayer resources.

Public Works Agency

- A. The County supports legislative efforts to develop funding policies and incentives that will ensure adequate funding for the maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of aging vital public works infrastructure in Ventura County.
- B. The County seeks funding in support of local efforts to complete levee rehabilitation and/or reconstruction projects that are required in order to obtain FEMA's Levee Certification Requirements (i.e., 44 CFR 65.10).
- C. The County supports legislative efforts that would require FEMA to give all newly mapped areas an amortization period before mandatory flood insurance purchase requirements and higher insurance rates go into full effect.
- D. The County supports multi-year authorization of the National Flood Insurance Program.
- E. The County supports transportation legislation that would include maximum funding support for maintenance and operation of local roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure; maximum flexibility to use Federal highway funding for expansion of local pedestrian and bicycle usage and alternate transportation modes; and reduction of redundant and cumbersome administrative regulations that hinder usage of Federal highway funds.
- F. The County supports and encourages the development of Federal regulations and procedures that promote the common-sense implementation of both Federal and State resource protection laws and ensure that both Federal and State agencies work together in a coordinated, uniform, and predictable fashion in order to enable efficient, consistent, and cost-effective compliance with these resource protection laws.
- G. The County encourages and supports enhanced communication, collaboration, and coordination between Federal and State regulatory agencies in order to expedite the delivery of vital public works projects and minimize regulatory redundancy, process inefficiencies, and agency conflicts.
- H. The County supports Federal initiatives and funding assistance for the planning, design, construction, and/or land acquisition associated with the protection of Ventura County's natural resources, including but not limited to natural floodplain management, habitat protection, and water resources protection.

- I. The County supports legislative efforts to provide financial and technical assistance for the development of local water supply enhancement projects which promote resource sustainability including but not limited to groundwater and seawater desalination, underground water storage facilities, rainwater capture, recycled water, and distribution system interconnection projects.
- J. The County supports legislative efforts that focus water quality improvements on pollutant source control versus treatment control methods.

Resource Management Agency

- A. The County supports legislation which encourages and provides financial assistance to local governments to preserve and enhance the environment through energy conservation, development of renewable energy sources, restrictions on offshore development, farmland and habitat preservation, and alternative transportation modes.
- B. The County supports continued funding of research and State/local monitoring efforts in the furtherance of the goals of the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act of 2000.
- C. The County opposes new oil and gas leases off the Pacific Coast.

Sheriff's Office

- A. The County supports reauthorization and increased funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) to address the substantial impact illegal immigration has on the County.
- B. The County supports continued or increased funding for the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) program. As a result of past EMPG funding, local emergency responders are prepared to respond to human-caused and natural disaster.
- C. The County supports continued or increased funding for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program. The PDM grants, awarded through FEMA, provide funds to States, territories, native tribes, communities, and universities for mitigation planning and the implementation of those plans before a disaster occurs.
- D. The County supports funding for enforcement and eradication programs designed to combat street to high-level drug sales, manufacturing, and distribution.

- E. The County supports continued funding to allow the Sheriff to support the U.S. Forest Service in law enforcement activity on Federal forest land.
- F. The County supports funding to backfill lost revenue for inmate welfare programs.
- G. The County supports legislation and regulations that would amend the Federal Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP) and allow non-convicted individuals to have continued access to necessary treatment through Federal health benefits such as Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP, and VA health benefits.
- H. The County supports funding to track, combat, and treat opioid and methamphetamine addiction.
- I. The County supports funding for traffic safety and driving under the influence with grants provided by the Office of Traffic Safety, through a partnership with the National Transportation Safety Board.
- J. The County supports efforts to ensure adequate funding to be used to decrease the backlog awaiting DNA and National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) analysis.
- K. The County opposes efforts to prevent local participation in Federal Asset Forfeiture Programs.
- L. The County supports funding for the investigation, mitigation, and dismantling of human trafficking organizations.
- M. The County supports continued access to and participation in the Defense Logistics Agency's Law Enforcement Support Office 1033 program, which allows for the transfer of Department of Defense property that might otherwise be destroyed, to law enforcement agencies across the U.S.
- N. The County supports legislation to cap attorneys' fees in civil rights lawsuits.