

COUNTY OF VENTURA	2018 ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY MANUAL		GENERAL INFORMATION CHAPTER II
Originating Agency: CEO	Last Issued 2018	Revised 2019	<u>Policy No. Chapter II - 7</u> LEGISLATIVE COORDINATION AND ADVOCACY
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POLICY

Ventura County's legislative program has as its goal the development and maintenance of good, sound, and effective local government. The purpose of the legislative program is to secure legislation that benefits the County and its residents while seeking to mitigate or oppose legislation that would adversely impact the County's delivery of service; to secure state and federal funding through the grant and/or appropriations process; and to shape public policy in priority areas that impact County government.

To provide an effective program of legislative representation and assure consistency in conveying official positions of the Board of Supervisors on all legislative matters, the following procedures are designed to implement the legislative policy of the County of Ventura.

PROCEDURE

1. STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDAS

The purpose of the County's state and federal legislative agendas is to:

- identify and secure Board approval for specific state and federal legislative proposals to be pursued during the upcoming year; and
- identify and secure Board approval for specific program and funding priorities to be pursued during the upcoming year.

Prior to initiating the following procedures for development of the annual legislative agendas, the County Executive Office will seek input from the Board of Supervisors regarding the Board's legislative goals and objectives for the County.

- A. Each fall County agencies/departments shall submit their proposals for potential County-sponsored State and federal legislation. Legislative proposals should support the County's goal of actively shaping good, sound, and effective local government.

- B. County legislative staff will review and coordinate departmental requests for legislation and supply recommendations for the proposed annual legislative agendas to the County Executive Officer for Board consideration.
- C. In order to allow sufficient time to secure authors for the County's legislative proposals, these recommendations will generally be submitted to the Board on or before January 1 of each year.
- D. The coordination of all actions related to the Board-adopted legislative agendas shall be the responsibility of the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff, who shall report regularly on the status of pending items, and who shall make recommendations on legislative policy issues as needed.
- E. Board approval is required for any new legislation proposed on behalf of the County.

2. STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORMS

State and federal platforms are adopted by the Board of Supervisors to provide a framework from which the legislative program will operate and a foundation for more effective advocacy on behalf of Ventura County. Platforms contain principles that are basic to county government and can be used to shape federal or state policies for the benefit of Ventura County.

The platforms provide specific parameters within which the Board, County Executive Officer, County agencies/departments, and the County's legislative advocates may represent County positions on legislation when time is an issue and immediate communication on behalf of the County is necessary.

The following process is used to develop the legislative platforms:

- Each fall/winter the County Executive Office legislative staff reviews the state and federal platforms with Board members, as well as agency/department heads.
- Suggested changes, additions, or deletions that could improve or assist County operations and enhance financial health will be incorporated into the platforms and presented to the Board for adoption.
- Generally, on or before January 1 of each year, the Board shall adopt a state and federal legislative platform, which shall serve as the official position of the County with regard to pending legislation. Once adopted, the platforms serve as a tool for focusing on and achieving the County's legislative goals while providing a reference for evaluating pending legislation under consideration at the state and federal levels.
- Although the state platform is designed to coincide with the two-year legislative session, both the state and federal platforms are reviewed annually to keep current with issues facing the County and any policy changes of the Board.

- If during the year an important issue arises which is not covered under the Board-adopted legislative platforms or is not consistent with existing Board policy, the County Executive Officer has the discretion to present the item to the Board for consideration at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

3. PENDING STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Pending legislation which may have significant impact on the County shall be presented to the Board of Supervisors through the coordinated effort of the County Executive Officer, elected and appointed County officials, and the County's legislative staff.

- A. The County Executive Office legislative and budget staff will forward to departments for their review and analysis pending legislation that appears to have a potential impact on operations or programs for which they are responsible.
- B. County agencies and departments are responsible for monitoring legislation in their specific areas and bringing bills, which have a potential major impact on the County, to the attention of the County Executive Office by submitting an analysis and recommendation for a position, if required.
- C. County Executive Office legislative and budget staff will review departmental analyses on pending legislation and present to the Board those bills identified as likely to have the greatest impact on the County. In doing so, staff will take into consideration the need to limit the size of the legislative program in order to maximize opportunities and efforts with respect to advocacy for each bill included in the program.
- D. If a bill potentially affects more than one agency or department, the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff will work to achieve a consensus position among those impacted before presenting the item for Board consideration.
- E. From time to time throughout the legislative session, the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff will present recommendations on pending legislation with high impact to Ventura County to the Board for adoption of positions.
- F. All requests for Board action on legislative issues shall be reviewed by and coordinated with the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff.
- G. The County Executive Officer/County legislative staff will maintain a file to track the progress of bills on which the Board has adopted a formal position and will report regularly on the status of pending bills.

4. COORDINATION OF STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

In order to maintain a presence in Washington D.C. and Sacramento, the County contracts for federal and state representation to advocate official County positions on pending federal and state legislation and administrative and/or regulatory proceedings. The federal and state advocates will coordinate advocacy activities with the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff.

- A. It is the primary responsibility of the Senior Deputy Executive Officer for Government Affairs and County legislative staff, in coordination with the Washington D.C. and Sacramento advocates, to advance the official County position on bills as they progress through the legislative process. However, this advocacy may require and include the participation of Board members, the County Executive Officer, agency/department heads, and other designated County staff as appropriate.
- B. Advocacy activities may include direct interaction with members of the Legislature and their staffs, legislative committees and their staffs, the Administration, state and federal agencies, statewide organizations (e.g., California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Urban Counties of California (UCC), and League of California Cities), as well as local or regional governmental decision-making bodies.
- C. An agency/department may not take any action that would imply the County's support or opposition to any pending legislation in the absence of, or inconsistent with, adopted Board positions.
- D. Any time a County employee appears before a state, federal, or local body to express a personal opinion or make a public comment, that individual must state for the record that he or she are speaking as a private citizen, and not as an employee of the County or a representative of the agency/department for which he or she works. Further, written personal opinions shall not appear on County or department stationery.
- E. These procedures do not apply to elected officials who have been independently elected to represent the County and its residents. However, elected agency/department heads are encouraged to continue the past practice of open communication with the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff on important state and federal issues. In addition, the support of the elected officials on behalf of County policy positions can be a persuasive factor when dealing with state and federal representatives, and efforts to maintain this cooperative spirit will be given a high priority by the County Executive Officer/Senior Deputy Executive Officer and County legislative staff.

The following procedures address appropriate advocacy efforts on behalf of Ventura County.

A. Testimony

- 1) In general, it shall be the primary responsibility of the Senior Deputy Executive Officer, County legislative staff, or the County's contract advocates to represent the County in Sacramento and Washington D.C. for the purpose of conveying County support or opposition to specific measures, as well as how those measures affect Ventura County.
- 2) The Senior Deputy Executive Officer or County legislative staff shall coordinate with the County's contract advocates the scheduling of testimony/presentations before legislators, staff members and legislative committees.
- 3) Other County staff who authorized or requested to testify before the Legislature on behalf of the County shall submit proposed testimony as far in advance as possible

so that the Senior Deputy Executive Officer or County legislative staff can review the material and coordinate the testimony with that of other agencies, counties, etc. as necessary.

- 4) When requests are received by an agency/department to present expert testimony (i.e., technical expertise) on an issue, it is not necessary to provide a copy of the testimony to the County Executive Office for review prior to the testimony. However, notification is required to the Senior Deputy Executive Officer or County legislative staff about the expert testimony in order to facilitate coordination of testimony with other counties or agencies, if necessary.
- 5) When an agency/department representative is requested or invited to provide expert testimony about a subject on which the Board has no formal position, it is imperative that the individual providing the testimony state for the record that he or she is providing testimony as an expert in the given field, and **not** as a representative of Ventura County.

B. Written Correspondence

- 1) Following action by the Board of Supervisors on legislative matters, the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff shall coordinate with the Board Chair and Clerk of the Board to forward copies of such action to appropriate State and federal representatives, committees, and agencies.
- 2) Letters of support or opposition to legislation will be prepared and coordinated with departments by the Senior Deputy Executive Officer or County legislative staff in accordance with Board-adopted positions. As appropriate, and in collaboration with the County's advocates, letters of support/opposition will be sent to appropriate State and federal representatives, committees, and agencies.
- 3) Written correspondence on behalf of the County to elected officials at the federal, State or local level shall be transmitted over the signature of the Board Chair, the County Executive Officer, or County advocates.
- 4) Agency/department heads may also sign and send support/opposition letters reflecting the County's position on a particular piece of legislation; **however, such letters must include a reference to the date of the Board's adoption of the policy position on the bill.** Copies of such support/opposition letters must be transmitted to the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff.

C. Other Contact with State and Federal Representatives

- 1) County staff planning trips to Sacramento or Washington D.C. to meet with state or federal representatives, committees, and/or agencies shall notify County legislative staff of their intended appearance, specifying the general purpose of the visit and whom they plan to see.

Although issues to be discussed may appear minor or administrative in nature, advance notification of such appearances may allow legislative staff to provide the department with information that will enhance the meeting.

- 2) Any written material that is to be presented to a state or federal representative, committee, or agency of a legislative or policy nature should be provided to the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff in advance of such presentation. This will permit the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff to review the material to insure that the information does not contain inconsistencies with adopted Board policy.
- 3) It is important that the County Executive Officer/County legislative staff be informed as to what occurred at or as a result of the meeting in the event that questions are raised at a later date by a Board member.
- 4) From time to time legislator, as well as officials of state and federal agencies, may request/schedule meetings or visits to County Agencies or Departments. It is important that advance notification of these visits/meetings be provided to the Chair of the Board, County Executive Officer and County legislative staff. If appropriate and when convenient, a Board member or representative of the County Executive Office may wish to participate in the meeting/visit.

D. Professional Organizations - Requests for Advocacy

From time to time professional organizations representing various functions of County Agencies/Departments may take a position on a particular piece of State or federal legislation and request letters of support/opposition for that organization's position.

Before writing letters in support of a professional organization's position or engaging in other related advocacy activities, agencies/departments shall contact County legislative staff to:

- discuss the requested action;
- determine whether there is existing County policy on the issue; and
- verify that it does not conflict with adopted Board policy or adversely impact other County operations.

E. Advisory Groups - Advocacy Activities

Some agencies/departments work directly with and coordinate activities with an advisory board, committee, or council.

Before writing letters of support or opposition or engaging in other related advocacy activities, advisory groups shall contact County legislative staff to:

- discuss the requested action;

- determine whether there is existing County policy on the issue; and
- verify that it does not conflict with adopted Board policy or adversely impact other County operations.

Whenever an advisory group takes a position on pending legislation, written correspondence should be signed by the chair of the advisory group and must state that the position reflects the policy of that advisory group, not the County Agency/Department or the Board of Supervisors. If the Board of Supervisors has taken a position on the legislation, that position should be noted within the correspondence, with reference to the date of adoption.