

## COUNTY OF KERN

### 2010 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The County of Kern supports legislation that maximizes federal revenues and promotes greater flexibility in the use of federal funds. The County opposes federal policies that have adverse impacts on the County's revenues, costs, and decision-making authority.

We support proposals that would provide a greater share of total available federal funding to the County or to the State of California and oppose proposals that would reduce the County's or State's share of federal funding. We support proposals that would provide local governments with greater decision-making authority over the use of federal funds. We oppose proposals that would impose new unfunded mandates on the County. We oppose proposals that would increase spending for one program by cutting spending in other programs of greater benefit to the County, or that would result in a net revenue loss or cost shift to the County. We support federal fiscal relief for financially distressed State and local governments.

It is also our general legislative aim to preserve and build the County's job base and to improve the regulatory climate for private enterprise. We support federal investment in local infrastructure, and we support federal funding for local education and workforce training investment that matches the requirements of growing and emerging industries.

**Criminal Justice and Public Protection:** The County supports increased federal expenditures to assist local law enforcement agencies with crime prevention and prosecution, technology improvements, forensics science, and training. The County supports full federal reimbursement for county costs to incarcerate criminal aliens, and increased federal expenditures to help prepare and equip local law enforcement agencies to fulfill their role in preventing and responding to terrorist attacks.

The County supports improved federal emergency preparedness and response, including more efficient distribution of homeland security grant funds and disaster response and mitigation. We support federal expenditures to assist County public safety agencies in preparing and executing an early warning system and evacuation plan for communities downstream from the Lake Isabella Dam operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The County supports increased federal efforts to prevent and respond to wildland fires through local assistance and through active and robust fuel management programs.

**Federal Lands and Installations:** The County supports policies that balance federal lands preservation with public access, use, and enjoyment of federal lands. The County supports continued full funding for the Payments-In-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) program by which local governments are reimbursed for the cost of providing services to property tax-exempt federal lands and installations. The County supports PILT amendments to include active military installations in the payment formula.

The County supports federal expenditures that fully utilize the flight and weapons research, development, test, and evaluation capabilities of Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake and Edwards Air Force Base. The County also opposes federal policies that would promote urban or environmental encroachment upon the future ability of these installations to fulfill missions critical to national defense.

**Health and Human Services:** The County recognizes and supports the continued reform of federal health and welfare entitlement programs, provided that these reforms do not shift additional cost burdens from the federal government to counties. Counties must have sufficient program flexibility to coordinate and consolidate the delivery of health and human services as cost-effectively as possible, as well as sufficient

funding to fulfill their mandated responsibilities in these areas. We oppose proposals that would increase the County's unreimbursed costs of providing and administering health and human services, such as health care for uninsured or indigent residents.

We support increased federal funding for public health activities such as detecting and combating bioterrorism and pandemic disease, immunizations, maternal and child health, and food safety. We support federal reimbursement of the costs of emergency health care provided to undocumented immigrants. We support funding for emergency preparedness and response, trauma care, and health care for the uninsured.

Federal health care reform must ensure that hospitals operated by California counties receive sufficient continued federal funding to care for the indigent and uninsured populations they are mandated to serve. We support reimbursement policies that acknowledge health care burdens for counties having unusual levels of poverty and uninsured populations. We oppose federal administrative or legislative actions that reduce the amount of Medicaid disproportionate share hospital funding or graduate medical education funding that California public hospitals receive.

**Community Development and Workforce Investment:** We support continued federal investment in local infrastructure and workforce training. We support Federal investment programs that target economic development and workforce training in communities experiencing higher levels of poverty and chronically high unemployment. We support the restoration of federal expenditures for the Community Development Block Grant, public and assisted housing, and Workforce Investment Act programs.

**Transportation:** We support legislation to increase, streamline, and improve the flexibility of federal funding to improve, repair, and maintain County roads, highways, and public transit and that promotes the timely development of local transportation projects at local governments' discretion.

**Environmental Quality:** In carrying out federal mandates for environmental protection and waste disposal, the County must retain the ability to manage programs efficiently and cost-effectively. Toward that aim, we support streamlining of environmental regulations.

We support Federal Endangered Species Act amendments that balance social and economic benefits with species protection and ensure that policies are based on good science.

We support legislation requiring that in states where at least 25% of the territory is publicly held, a 1:1 transfer of public lands to private ownership must occur when private land is taken by the government for environmental mitigation reasons.

**Energy:** The County supports further federal investment to promote "green" public infrastructure as well as full funding of the Diesel Emissions Reductions Act (DERA) to assist counties with retrofitting diesel engines in their fleets, which is one of the most-cost effective means of reducing PM and NOx emissions to help address PM non-attainment.

**Water:** We support stable water supplies for urban and agricultural users in the County and enactment of federal appropriations to assist funding of the San Joaquin Valley Water Reliability program to expand facilities for storing, banking, conveying, distributing, conserving, and reclaiming water; flood control and storm water management; and enhancing and restoring wetlands and open space.