

County of
San Bernardino **2020**

Federal Legislative Platform





The largest of over 3,000 counties in the U.S. by geographic area and the 12th largest by population, San Bernardino enjoys a robust and diverse economy.

In order for the County to continue to provide quality services, continued partnership with the federal delegation is imperative. In this platform, you will find San Bernardino County's federal legislative priorities for 2020.

Based on principles of fiscal stability, preservation of local control, efficient service delivery and operations, and the promotion of inter-agency cooperation, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors provides specific direction and overall policy guidance by adopting a legislative platform annually.

The Platform is arranged by Legislative Priorities, and Legislative Positions and Policy Statements. The Legislative Priorities section describes the County's legislative goals and outlines the legislative agenda for the current year, while the Legislative Positions and Policy Statements provide general policy direction when developing a position on pending legislation and federal proposals.

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County of San Bernardino
Office of Governmental and
Legislative Affairs

385 North Arrowhead Ave., 5th Fl.
San Bernardino, CA 92415

(909) 387-4821 • Phone

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The Legislative Priorities section describes the County's legislative goals and outlines the legislative agenda for the current year, which includes appropriate management of federal lands, improving the local economy, increasing recreational opportunities, the preservation of the safety net, reducing and preventing homelessness, and strengthening the region through investments in infrastructure.

Appropriate Management OF Federal Lands

San Bernardino County is the largest county by geographical size in the contiguous United States, with more than 80 percent of its land area owned and managed by the federal government. Our diverse public lands support a range of environmental, economic and quality of life benefits. The County is committed to balancing conservation with continuing public access for sustainable multiple uses, including recreational (hiking, camping, OHV travel, rockhounding) and economic uses (grazing, mining, filming, and more recently, renewable energy developments). In 2016, additional restrictions on public access and economic activity on federal lands have come in the form of designation of three new national monuments and adoption of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) Phase 1. The current administration has reopened the DRECP, potentially to open more land to utility-oriented renewable energy development. A number of large scale solar projects have covered thousands of acres of public land, resigning that land to a single restricted use and requiring mitigation that takes many more thousands of acres of private land off the tax rolls. The establishment of renewable energy projects also requires additional public service resources, including fire protection, law enforcement and road maintenance, with little, if any, additional revenue or adjustments to Payment in Lieu of Taxes payments.

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, other counties, associations and regional stakeholders to support legislation, administrative proposals or budget actions that: 1) require robust and meaningful consultation and coordination with counties, local jurisdictions and tribal governments during any proposal for a change of designation, or during any planning process that would develop or revise management of public lands; 2) require a portion of lease, royalty or other revenues generated by renewable energy projects on federal land to be directed to the local jurisdiction where projects are sited; 3) require species and habitat mitigation to be conducted largely on public land, including the retirement of grazing allotments; 4) protect areas with identified mineral resources from withdrawal; and/or 5) accommodate or mitigate for any loss of existing or permitted human activities on public land, including recreational and economic activities.

IMPROVE THE LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH REGULATORY REFORM

Government regulations can provide protection for the environment, public health, and worker safety and fairness. All too often, however, compliance is burdensome, redundant, costly, and time consuming and yield limited benefit, in terms of economic growth and government operations. For example, the routine maintenance of public infrastructure, including roads and flood control projects, may require extensive environmental review and mitigation, resulting in delays in completion of work essential to the protection of life and property. Often times, these projects have existed for decades. Since 1995, there have been nearly 6,600 significant rules published in the federal register. Of those, approximately 1,900 have been identified as having a significant effect on businesses. Regulations also affect governmental operations. The County recognizes the opportunity to improve the economy through smart regulations to ensure workplace safety and protect public health, but with a \$2 trillion price tag for compliance with an increasing number of complex rules, the regulatory system needs to be modernized.

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, other counties, associations and regional stakeholders to support legislation or budget actions that will: 1) provide responsible environmental regulatory and permitting reforms that improve California's business climate and competitiveness; 2) enact effective regulatory streamlining; 3) require deadlines for making regulatory decisions; 4) require economic impact studies to be conducted on any new rules or regulations; and 5) attract private capital to stimulate the local economy.

INCREASE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS TO PRADO REGIONAL PARK

The County of San Bernardino operates the 2,280 acre Prado Regional Park in Chino on a leasehold obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), all of which lies within the Corps' Santa Ana River Main Stem/Prado Dam project area. The County is in the process of developing a master plan to improve Prado Regional Park with amenities and activities that focus on improving the outdoor and recreational experiences of park patrons. The County was the recipient of Proposition 70 park grant funds approved by California voters in 1988. Subsequent state legislation authorized the County to sell agricultural preservation land acquired with the original grant funds and use the sale proceeds to acquire replacement property. Pursuant to California law, the County may acquire park and/or open space land in fee or perpetual easements with the Proposition 70 land sale proceeds. The County would like to replace the leasehold at Prado with easements funded with Proposition 70 funding, which will then allow the County to increase recreational amenities and fund improvements that are consistent with the Corps' mission of developing multi-use flood control projects.

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, other counties, associations and regional stakeholders to support legislation, budget actions or policies that increase access and would permit the County to use Proposition 70 funds to improve Prado Regional Park.

REDUCE AND PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is a persistent national problem that impacts cities and communities throughout San Bernardino County. According to the 2019 Point-In-Time Count Homeless Survey, the number of homeless was 2,607. A comparison of the last two counts revealed that 489 more persons were counted in 2019, which represents an increase of 23.1%. Despite our investments in positive programs such as permanent supportive housing, homeless outreach, and aggressive use of the "housing first" and "rapid re-housing" protocols, the homeless population in San Bernardino County continues to grow.

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, other counties, associations and regional stakeholders to advocate for legislation or budget actions that will: 1) support initiatives to reduce and prevent homelessness; 2) expand the availability of permanent and supportive housing that provides coordinated services; and 3) allow counties to maximize and leverage federal, state and local funds and programs to provide services for homeless individuals and families and those at risk of becoming homeless.

STRENGTHEN THE REGION THROUGH STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Administration released an outline proposal for a \$1.5 trillion infrastructure plan, which includes \$100 billion for incentive grants that provide funding for surface transportation, airports, passenger rail, maritime and inland waterway ports, flood control, hydropower, water supply, water resources, drinking water facilities, storm water facilities, Brownfield and Superfund sites. A well-performing and maintained infrastructure network is vital to economic development, allowing businesses to expand, jobs to be created and commerce to be transported efficiently.

The County will work with the congressional delegation, other counties, associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to support legislation and budget actions that: 1) expedite infrastructure projects and provide flexibility in the administration of infrastructure programs and funding; 2) protect existing funds dedicated to local transportation/transit improvements; 3) promote and expand alternative financing programs; 4) improve mobility options for the public; 5) mitigate the impacts of freight and congestion on the County's residents; 6) improve the County's ability to maintain and modernize our infrastructure; and 7) develop an inland port.

The Legislative Positions and Policy Statements provide general policy direction when developing a position on pending legislation and is broken into areas of cultural, educational and recreational services, environmental protection and health, flood control and water resources, governance, finance and operations, health and human services, and public safety and first responders.

CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Promote opportunities and access to cultural, educational and recreational services within the County that add to the quality of life of residents and visitors.

Support legislation, proposals and budget actions that: 1) provide residents and tourist with access to County facilities that promote knowledge, education, lifelong learning, recreation/leisure and cultural enrichments; 2) preserve and protect the conservation of the County's natural and historical land resources, including sustainable multi-use on public lands; and 3) provide funding for services that enhance the quality of life for County residents.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND HEALTH

Promote environmental sustainability that strikes a balance with the local economy.

Support legislation, budget actions or programs that enhance environmental quality and that balance the interest of the local economy.

Oppose legislation, budget action, and proposals that reduce environmental quality funding to the region.

FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER RESOURCES

Protect life, property and public health through responsible management of natural resources.

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) promote sound management of natural resources; 2) assist local jurisdictions by removing unnecessary barriers and costs associated with environmental regulations; 3) fund the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of watershed management or flood control projects; and/or 4) maintain or improve upon the supply of adequate potable water.

GOVERNANCE, FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Improve the delivery of county services, reduce mandates on local government, and promote effective management of county programs by allowing local control.

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) provide flexibility to administer federal, state or local programs; 2) allow decision-making authority over the use of federal funds, including directing grants or mandatory pass-through allocations; 3) allow the utilization of technology and innovation to streamline County services; 4) eliminate unnecessary, redundant, or overlapping requirements or regulations for program eligibility, funding maintenance of efforts, monitoring, permitting or reporting; 5) constitutionally protect all local revenues; and 6) adequately fund programs the County operates on behalf of the federal government.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that will adversely impact County operations by: 1) preempting the County's authority; 2) eroding local control; 3) limiting the ability to operate in a reasonable and cost-effective manner; 4) transferring programs from the federal government to counties unless program control and flexibility are also shifted and adequate funding is guaranteed; 5) exposing the County to unreasonable litigation; 6) increasing County responsibilities or expenses without a viable, adequate and dedicated source of revenue; and/or 7) reducing the County's share of total funding through formula allocations or reductions.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Enhance safety-net services and invest in programs that strengthen the community and improve the lives of residents.

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) fully fund the cost of federally mandated health and human service programs; 2) create, provide and protect funding formulas for services that ensure an equitable allocation of federal funding and reflect complete, accurate and total caseloads and administrative costs; 3) promote local control over health and human service programs; 4) provide greater flexibility to ensure programs are delivered efficiently and in a cost-effective manner; 5) provide for the health, safety and well-being of county residents; 6) diminish poverty and stimulate the local economy; 7) hold counties exempt from fiscal penalties when the federal government does not provide adequate funding; 8) improve and increase the accessibility and quality of supportive services for vulnerable populations; 9) promote data sharing and coordination between agencies to improve service delivery; 10) align state and federal regulations to improve outcomes; and/or 11) remove categorical funding restrictions allowing for greater local authority to achieve desired outcomes.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that: 1) transfer health and human service programs from the federal government to the County unless program control and adequate funding is guaranteed; 2) propose funding formulas that adversely impact and impede the ability of the County to deliver health and human services; 3) erode local control of the administration of health and human service programs; and/or 4) compromise the health and well-being of County residents.

HOUSING AND LAND USE

Strengthen the County through strategic and planned development.

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) provide for additional funding for housing programs; 2) promote local authority to adopt or plan for orderly growth and development; 3) increase local control and regulatory authority over land use, zoning, renewable energy, subdivisions and annexations; and/or 4) streamline the regulatory processes.

Oppose legislation or budget actions that: 1) reduce funding for housing programs; 2) erode local land use authority; 3) use air quality and/or climate change policy as a vehicle to restrict or remove local land use authority; and/or 4) impose unfunded land use and general plan mandates.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND FIRST RESPONDERS

Preserve and protect the safety of the public, law enforcement and first responder personnel.

Support legislation and budget actions that: 1) provide adequate resources to deliver services; 2) provide flexibility and local discretion in the administration of programs; 3) ensure the safety of the public, property of County residents and law enforcement and first responder personnel; 4) plan for, respond to, and receive reimbursement for emergency disasters, acts of terrorism and other catastrophic events; and/or 6) ensure continued funding for adult criminal justice facilities and programs that will meet the needs created by the State's public safety realignment and other criminal justice reforms.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that: 1) reduce funding at the federal and local level for public safety programs; 2) compromise the safety of the public, local law enforcement or first responder personnel; and/or 3) impede the local law enforcement or first responders' ability to deliver services.