

## **2022 State Legislative Platform**

Dear residents of San Bernardino County,

San Bernardino County is unique. No county in America covers more territory or has more federal lands in its borders. With 2.2 million residents, it is the 14<sup>th</sup> most populous county in the United States and the 5<sup>th</sup> most populous county in California. If San Bernardino County was a state, it would be slightly smaller than West Virginia in size but have a population greater than New Mexico. With such unique assets, come unique challenges. The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and thousands of dedicated, capable County staff strive to meet these challenges head on, from wildfires to homelessness, from pre-school services to hospitals, to law enforcement and airports.

The Annual Legislative Platform lays out San Bernardino County's long-term positions and advocacy priorities on an array of challenging policy issues. It highlights the legislation the County plans to sponsor in the coming year, specific areas of concern that the County will focus on with our lawmakers, and general principles the County follows when vetting new legislation and regulations. This document is designed to guide County staff, who routinely work with state and federal agencies to implement programs, on where the Board of Supervisors stands on key policies. We also hope it will educate and inform residents about major political issues and help them to support new laws and regulations that will improve their neighborhoods and communities.

The Board of Supervisors sustains governing principles of fiscal stability, efficient delivery of services and operations, effective inter-agency cooperation, and a commitment to local control and decision-making. These key principles are reflected throughout the 2022 County Legislative Platform and direct our political advocacy efforts on behalf of our constituents.

Sincerely,

The Board of Supervisors

The State Legislative Priorities section describes the County's legislative goals and outlines the state legislative agenda for 2022.

### **PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

The Covid-19 pandemic has upended many facets of ordinary life. It continues to be a major challenge for residents and the County's healthcare and service programs. Although federal recovery funding has been very helpful, restrictions on eligible uses for those funds and aggressive timelines to get those funds directed to projects limits the effectiveness of those recovery dollars. Greater flexibility in the eligible uses and projects would help local governments make meaningful, lasting investments in infrastructure, facilities, and programs that benefit their constituents.

The County will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative proposals that:

- 1) support local discretion in public health decision-making;
- 2) maximize local resources and secure relief funding to ensure continued delivery of critical services;
- 3) promote

County budget stabilization and lessen significant budget shortfalls; 4) expand the use of technology and innovation to streamline County services; 5) continue to expand innovative care delivery models such as mobile healthcare; 6) increase access to advanced telecommunications services; and/or 7) improve the health outcomes of residents disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

## **INCREASE ACCESS TO HOUSING**

The high cost of housing is a critical issue for individuals and families across San Bernardino County. Families that must spend over half their incomes on housing often struggle to cover other major expenses like medical care, education, and a healthy diet. Many residents face long commutes on congested highways because they live in far distant communities where housing is cheaper. Businesses that leave California frequently mention the extraordinary cost of housing as a chief factor in their decision to move to cheaper, less expensive states.

The County will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, administrative proposals, or regulations that include: 1) an equitable amount of funding for housing programs in the County; 2) programs that increase access to housing; and/or 3) state regulatory reforms that reduce the cost and expedite the delivery time of affordable housing and workforce housing, including exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

## **REDUCING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING**

San Bernardino County is committed to helping reduce homelessness by providing critical services to the most vulnerable and needy residents of our County. Homelessness is a complex, persistent social problem with root causes tied to many factors, including housing affordability, behavioral and mental health services, substance abuse and addiction treatment, poverty, family disfunction, violence, crime, and the difficult process of helping the formerly incarcerated reintegrate back into society successfully. While the County has made substantive investments to expand supportive housing for the homeless and seen some successful referrals for services with our Sheriff's Department's HOPE Team, much work remains to be done.

Homelessness remains a persistent problem for cities and communities throughout San Bernardino County. According to the 2020 Point-In-Time Count Homeless Survey, there were 3,125 homeless persons in the County. A comparison of the last two counts revealed that 518 more persons were counted in 2020 – a one-year increase of 19.9%. Despite investments in 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.

## **ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AMONG THE HOMELESS**

Ensuring housing affordability and reducing rates of homelessness for people living with behavioral conditions remain high priorities for the County. While increased housing costs

and poverty are the leading causes of homelessness in the County, people living with mental health and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) issues are significantly impacted.

The County will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies, and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, administrative proposals, or regulations that will:

- 1) Fund housing construction, provide operating subsidies and supportive services. These categories of costs must all be addressed to create permanent supportive housing, and/or increase housing affordability, for an individual with behavioral health conditions.
- 2) Support and fund effective behavioral and mental health services and ongoing treatment programs for the homeless.
- 3) Support housing programs and policies that benefit residents and are designed to meet local needs that encourage partnerships with municipalities for comprehensive services and affordable housing options.
- 4) Support policy models including Housing First, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing help remove barriers to housing for people with behavioral health conditions, and investments in supportive services and discharge or re-entry planning help prevent vulnerable individuals from becoming homeless.
- 5) Advance and support partnering with the health care delivery system and public safety to increase the capacity of an array of options along a continuum of care for individuals in crisis.
- 6) Develop infrastructure and increasing capacity for multidisciplinary triage personnel including mobile crisis teams and crisis residential options. While Senate Bill 82 has been critical for the development of these services, the demand for these teams continues to exceed the supply.
- 7) Address the shifting of housing and homelessness costs to the counties in a disproportionate way including the abrupt termination or interruption of any housing program wherein county funds are already encumbered.
- 8) Invest in housing that offers behavioral health care and other supportive services that assist individuals in maintaining housing.
- 9) Support education efforts to address “Not In My Backyard” (NIMBY) and siting challenges and to reduce stigma and housing discrimination against people with behavioral health conditions.
- 10) Support and fund effective workforce development and other service programs to assist formerly incarcerated individuals to find gainful employment. This includes advanced discharge or re-entry planning to help prevent vulnerable individuals from becoming homeless.

## **EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS TO COUNTY PARKS**

**PRADO REGIONAL PARK:** San Bernardino County 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 developing a master plan to improve Prado Regional Park with amenities and activities that improve the recreational experiences of park patrons. The County received Proposition 70 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.

The County will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative proposals that: 1) increase access and/or 2) permit the County to use Proposition 70 funds or other resources to significantly improve Prado Park.

**GLEN HELEN REGIONAL PARK:** Glen Helen Regional Park is an important cultural landmark in the County that continues to host major concerts and events. However, the facility needs substantial investment to upgrade existing roadways, infrastructure, and key features like the amphitheater and swim complex. A major priority is full completion of Glen Helen Parkway, that connects the park to I-15 and the 215 freeways. The County will work with the State Parks Department to make substantial improvements at Glen Helen Regional Park.

**KESSLER PARK:** Kessler Park is an important community asset in the unincorporated area of Bloomington that could become a much more substantial and enjoyable recreational facility. Kessler Park currently features two softball field and two baseball fields with neighboring parking but lacks other important amenities. The County will prioritize additional investments and improvements at Kessler Park.

## **IMPROVING HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY**

Reliable access to affordable high-speed broadband internet service is a critical issue for residents of San Bernardino County. Internet access is essential for economic development, education, and healthcare services, and raises basic questions about equity in our society. As many continue to work from home and rely on distance learning, the need for affordable and reliable broadband internet service has become a key policy priority for the County.

To effectively improve broadband access, the County will work with lawmakers, statewide associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, administrative proposals or regulations that include: 1) an equitable amount of funding to expand broadband service to the areas in the County that lack high-speed service and to improve the affordability of service for low-income residents; 2) support local decision-making authority and flexibility; 3) support the principles laid out in the County's 2020 broadband resolution; and/or 4) support program reforms and sufficient funding to close the digital divide as quickly and completely as possible.

## **FUNDING FOSTER YOUTH PROGRAMS AND HOUSING FACILITIES**

County governments have struggled since the enactment of the Continuum of Care Reform effort in 2017 to serve youth who need a more intensive set of services and support programs than can be provided in a resource family home or other family-

based setting. Recent changes in the foster youth system in California, such as the curtailment of out-of-state placements, has resulted in more foster youth being kept in state, increasing the need for and demand upon county housing and care facilities. The unfortunate consequence of these changes is that more foster youth are now spending extended periods of time in county shelters, hospital settings or other facilities, including offices.

San Bernardino County calls upon state child welfare officials to work directly with county directors to immediately expand available foster youth care facilities, to ensure these young people have appropriate housing and receive the care and treatment they need. Funding for expanded services and facilities should be a top priority for the State Legislature in 2022 as well as the enactment of legislation to expedite services, streamline staffing for foster youth programs, and assistance to counties to create or expand foster youth housing and care facilities.

### **COMPLETION OF A NEW COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER**

San Bernardino County has long needed a modern state-of-the-art shelter facility that can provide animal welfare services on a broad basis. The County will pursue funding and support for a new animal shelter as a top priority.

The County Sponsored Legislation section includes specific statutory changes that the County is seeking in the current state legislative session. Sponsoring bills advances the County's policy goals and can raise awareness on issues of statewide importance.

**Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Funding:** The San Bernardino County Fire Protection District provides fire and emergency services for communities across the County, including on federal lands. Local Response Areas (LRA) are fire departments with jurisdiction in local areas that complete Community Risk Assessments (CRA) in an Operating Area (OA) with a County-wide approach. Community Risk Reduction (CRR) projects in an OA or the County increase public safety for all residents. Additional funding is needed for the Fire Protection District to continue to provide these essential services.

The County will sponsor legislation and/or a budget request that will provide additional funding to the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District to pay for Community Risk Reductions and Community Risk Assessments.

### **Illegal Cannabis Cultivation and Related Criminal Activities**

California voters legalized marijuana for recreational use with the passage of Proposition 64 in 2016. Since then, the state has struggled to create a viable, legal market for cannabis, due to high taxes, heavy regulation, and a glut of readily available illegal cannabis being produced across California that undermines legitimate, law-abiding cannabis businesses.

San Bernardino County has seen a wave of illegal cannabis farms spread across the Mojave Desert, with an estimated 1,200 known sites and many more that remain unknown. The criminals running these farms are often connected to international narcotics cartels and syndicates. They frequently steal water to keep their farms running, breaking into water mains, storage facilities or drilling illegal wells to tap into groundwater. Dangerous pesticides, such as carbofuran, are used on these illicit marijuana crops, but often end up poisoning birds, animals, and other wildlife. The workers on these farms typically are trafficked from other countries and increasingly our sheriff deputies are finding guns as they eradicate these illegal farms. More troubling still is that illegal farming is reportedly occurring in rented houses in residential neighborhoods, hidden away from public view and often destroying the interior of these homes. Something must be done to address the environmental damage and criminal activity of illegal cannabis farming in California.

San Bernardino County will introduce new state legislation in 2022 that will improve our law enforcement efforts and better address this critical issue on a statewide basis. These legislative proposals include:

1. **Increased Fines for Illegal Cannabis Cultivation Based on the Number of Plants Grown:** Illegal cannabis cultivation is a misdemeanor under current state law and has no penalty gradation on the size of the illegal operation – if the criminal is growing 70, 700, or 70,000 plants the punishment is the same. This legislation will increase civil fines for illegal cannabis farming based on the number of plants seized. Fines may be levied on a per plant and per day basis.
  
2. **State Funding for Environmental Cleanup of Cannabis Farming Sites:** Illegal cannabis farming causes extraordinary environmental harm in desert areas. These criminal operations use illegal pesticides, herbicides, and rodenticides in significant quantities, dump trash and waste at these farm sites, and destroy plants and animals. San Bernardino County needs additional resources to prevent illegal cannabis cultivation sites from polluting groundwater basins that are the primary source of local water supplies.  
  
The County will request \$10 million in one-time state funding to clean up illegal cannabis cultivation sites around Victor Valley and the Morongo Basin.
  
3. **Designate Groundwater as a Public Resource and Allow Law Enforcement to Pursue Illegal Cannabis Crimes that Include Groundwater Pollution:** This proposal amends the Health and Safety Code to clarify that groundwater is a public resource, and that pollution to groundwater or water theft through illegal wells used to support illegal cannabis farming is subject to imprisonment or other penalties under state law.

The Legislative Positions and Policy Statements provide general policy direction when developing a position on pending legislation.

**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, budget actions, or leverage existing resources, such as Proposition 68, that: 1) provide residents and tourists with access to County facilities that promote knowledge, education, lifelong learning, recreation, leisure, and cultural enrichments; 2) preserve and protect the County's natural and historical land resources, including sustainable multi-use of public lands; and/or 3) provide funding that will enhance the quality of life for County residents.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** *Improve the economy through attracting investment, creating, and retaining a skilled workforce, and reducing unnecessary and burdensome regulations.*

Support legislation, budget actions, or proposals that will: 1) provide tax relief programs and incentives for business recruitment, retention, and expansion; 2) grow and diversify the economy through supporting small businesses and opportunity sectors that generate livable, good-paying jobs; 3) promote cross-sector collaborations and partnerships to enhance and strengthen our regional economic competitiveness and well-being; 4) diminish poverty and stimulate the local economy; 5) encourage innovation and investment in the Inland Empire; and/or 6) promote new opportunities for entrepreneurs to open a business.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND HEALTH:** *Promote environmental sustainability that strikes a balance with the local economy.*

Support legislation, budget actions, and proposals that: 1) enhance environmental quality that balance the interest of the local economy and balanced energy solutions that provide the County with the decision-making authority and resources needed to achieve the state's climate goals; and/or 2) require regulatory agencies to better reflect and accommodate the unique characteristics and needs of local communities.

Oppose legislation, budget actions and proposals that reduce environmental quality funding to the region or compromise the health of the community.

**EQUITY:** *Promote the inclusion of marginalized groups, protect investment in human capital and eliminate racial disparities.*

Support legislation, budget actions, and proposals that: 1) result in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all; 2) ensure that people with marginalized identities can grow, contribute, and develop; and/or 3) reduce or remove barriers for all members of our community.

**FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER RESOURCES:** *Protect life, property and public health through responsible management of natural resources.*

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals 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; 4) maintain or improve upon the supply of adequate potable water; and/or 5) maintain flexibility in the conveyance of water to support isolated desert communities that may be unable to sustain themselves with their local water supplies.

**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, budget actions and proposals that: 1) provide flexibility to administer federal, state or local programs; 2) support local decision making authority over the use of state funds, including directing grants or mandatory pass-through allocations; 3) promote 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; 6) provide adequate training resources and require collaboration between County and city partners to effectively deliver services; and/or 7) allocates adequate funding for programs the County operates on behalf of the state.

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 state to counties unless program control, flexibility 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 County residents.*

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) fully fund the cost of State-mandated health and human service programs and hold counties exempt from fiscal penalties when the State does not provide adequate funding; 2) create, provide and protect funding formulas for services that ensure an equitable allocation of State funding; 3) provide greater flexibility to ensure programs are delivered efficiently and in a cost-effective manner; 4) provide for the health, safety, education, and well-being of County residents; 5) improve and increase the accessibility and quality of supportive services for County residents; 6) encourage data sharing and coordination between agencies to improve service delivery; 7) align state regulations to improve outcomes; 8) remove categorical funding restrictions allowing for greater local authority to achieve desired outcomes; 9) streamline and simplify application processes; 10) increase automation of case actions; and/or 11) promote a Whole Child, Whole Family, Whole Community (WSCC) approach to child development.

Oppose legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) transfer health and human service programs from the state to the County without guaranteed program control and adequate funding; 2) propose funding formulas that adversely impact and impede the ability of the County to deliver health and human service programs; 3) erode local control of the administration of health and human service programs; and 4) negatively impact health and human services program sustainability.

**LAND USE:** *Strengthen the County through strategic and planned development.*

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) promote local authority to adopt or plan for orderly growth and development; 2) increase local control and regulatory authority over land use, zoning, renewable energy, subdivisions and annexations; 3) make the preservation of farmland and land suitable for farming economically feasible for property owners and local government; 4) streamline state broadband permitting generally and benchmark permitting procedures with neighboring jurisdictions; and/or 5) explore funding opportunities for brownfield clean up and restoration.

Oppose legislation that: 1) erodes local land use authority; 2) uses air quality and/or climate change policy as a vehicle to restrict or remove local land use authority; and 3) imposes 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, budget actions and proposals 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, law enforcement officers and first responder personnel and the property of County residents; 4) mitigate any potential unintended impacts associated with Propositions 47 and 57 as well as bail reform; 5) plan for, respond to, and receive reimbursement for emergency disasters, acts of terrorism, and other catastrophic events; 6) ensure continued funding for adult criminal justice facilities and programs that will meet the needs created by public safety realignment; and/or 7) introduce additional penalties to protect businesses harmed by organized criminal activities such as mass shoplifting.

Oppose legislation, policies, and budget actions that: 1) reduce funding at the state and local level for public safety programs; 2) compromise the safety of local law enforcement or first responder personnel; 3) impede local law enforcement or first responders' ability to deliver services; and/or 4) reduce the safety of county residents or endanger the lives and property of residents and business.

**TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** *Connect communities through strategic investments in local and regional transportation and infrastructure projects.*

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) expedite infrastructure projects and provide flexibility in the administration of infrastructure programs and funding; 2) protect existing funds dedicated to local transportation projects; 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; 7) expand and fund high-quality broadband access as an additional fundamental aspect of modern infrastructure; and/or 8) develop an inland port.

Oppose legislation and budget actions that impact and compromise local and regional projects.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** *Improve the economy by targeting high growth industry sectors that are the most competitive and will generate family-sustaining career pathways.*

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) support the technology, healthcare, trade, manufacturing, logistics, construction, leisure and hospitality, bioscience, clean energy economies, and other in demand sectors; 2) promote economic self-sufficiency by supporting comprehensive employment and training programs, provide education and job placement, encourage employers to hire jobseekers with training and employment plans, and improve the retention of workers; and/or 3) support Local Workforce Development Boards; and/or 4) promote equity and inclusion in access to resources and the ability for all San Bernardino County residents to achieve sustainable employment and prosperity.

**VETERANS AFFAIRS:** *Assist the men and women who served in the armed forces to receive the benefits they have earned and support their families to also receive their due benefits.*

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) continue to properly fund veterans benefits for healthcare, higher education, vocational training, and retirement pensions; 2) support ongoing benefit programs such as compensation for service connected disabilities, surviving spouse benefits, and benefits for the children of veterans; 3) support new legislative proposals that will exempt retirement pay for veterans and annuity payments as part of a survivor benefit plan from state income tax; 4) support assistance programs such as home loans, government life insurance, burial benefits, supplemental income pensions for wartime veterans, and other benefits; 5) ensure that state and federal veterans care facilities in the County are properly maintained and meeting the needs of our local veterans; and/or 6) support the construction and ongoing availability of affordable housing units for homeless veterans.

## **2022 Federal Platform**

Dear residents of San Bernardino County,

San Bernardino County is unique. No county in America covers more territory or has more federal lands in its borders. With 2.2 million residents, it is the 14<sup>th</sup> most populous county in the United States and the 5<sup>th</sup> most populous county in California. If San Bernardino County was a state, it would be slightly smaller than West Virginia in size but have a population greater than New Mexico. With such unique assets, come unique challenges. The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and thousands of dedicated, capable County staff strive to meet these challenges head on, from wildfires to homelessness, from pre-school services to hospitals, to law enforcement and airports.

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Sincerely,

The Board of Supervisors

The Federal Legislative Priorities section describes the County's legislative goals in Washington, D.C. and outlines our federal legislative agenda for 2022.

### **FEDERAL WILDFIRE FUNDING AND POLICY**

California county fire districts typically struggle to finance their operations due to a lack of dedicated tax or fee revenue. The immense size and the extraordinary amount of federal property makes this financial challenge especially challenging for San Bernardino County. Our County Fire District covers an area of 16,032 square miles and responds to 8,166 incidents each year on federal lands with no reimbursement for these services. While the Fire District receives payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT) from the federal government, this funding is based on a formula of total federal acres and county residents, which means other counties often receive more funding even though they have less federal acreage but higher populations. Outside of California Fire Master Aid agreements for major wildfires, the Fire District receives no reimbursement for smaller, day-to-day services like emergency medical response,

As California confronts a multi-year drought and a year-round cycle of major wildfires, counties with large amounts of federal land should receive additional consideration and funding to provide firefighting services. San Bernardino County will pursue the following policy changes:

1. **Changes to the Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) Formula:** Significant changes to the PILT formula should be made to support counties with extremely large amounts of federal public lands, thereby reducing the weighting given to population.
2. **Permanent Wildfire Funding for Counties with Extensive Public Lands:** Federal wildfire funding should be adjusted to increase funding to local governments that provide firefighting services over extensive public lands.
3. **Substantial Investment in Undergrowth Clearing and Improved Forest Management:** Poor management of California's national forests has allowed undergrowth to build up over decades. This undergrowth is now a significant fuel source for the state's mega-wildfires which have burned millions of acres the past two years. A new approach to forest management emphasizing pro-active undergrowth clearing and collaborative management between state and federal wildfire and wilderness conversation agencies should be implemented.

## **EFFECTIVE 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 vast 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).

The County will work with the Congressional delegation, national associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative proposals 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; and/or 6) encourage federal agencies to appropriately and robustly manage, fund and staff recreational access to federal lands in partnership with local governments and community organizations.

San Bernardino County will actively pursue the completion of these key federal projects:

- 1) **Execution of the Oso Grande Land Exchange with the U.S. Forest Service:** Recently passed federal law directs the Secretary of Agriculture to exchange property in the San Bernardino National Forest near the City of Big Bear with the County. County staff will work with the Forest Service to meet the provisions outlined in federal law for the land exchange to be executed.
- 2) **Utilize the Morgan Ranch Property to Create Trail Access to Cucamonga Canyon:** The County will continue to work with the U.S. Forest Service and the City of Rancho Cucamonga to create an accessible public trailhead facility and a new trail to provide safe access to Cucamonga Canyon in the San Bernardino National Forest.

## **INCREASE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS TO PRADO REGIONAL PARK**

San Bernardino County 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. The County would like to renovate 271 acres of land located to the east of the park, as well as the Yorba-Slaughter Property located near SR-71 and west of the park using Proposition 70 funding. These projects will allow the County to increase recreational amenities and fund improvements that are consistent with the Corps' mission of developing multi-use flood control projects. Once completed, both properties will become new areas of Prado Regional Park.

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.

## **IMPROVE THE LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH REGULATORY REFORM**

Government regulations can safeguard the environment, public health, and provide employees a safe and fair workplace. All too often, however, regulatory compliance is burdensome, redundant, costly, and time consuming and yields limited benefit, in terms of economic growth and government operations. Since 1995, there have been nearly 6,600 major 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.

## **ILLEGAL CANNABIS CULTIVATION AND RELATED CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES**

San Bernardino County has seen a wave of illegal cannabis farms spread across the Mojave Desert, with an estimated 1,200 known sites and many more that remain unknown. The criminals running these farms are often connected to international narcotics cartels and syndicates. They frequently steal water to keep their farms running, breaking into water mains, storage facilities or drilling illegal wells to tap into groundwater. Dangerous pesticides, such as carbofuran, are used on these illicit marijuana crops, but often end up poisoning birds, animals, and other wildlife. The workers on these farms typically are trafficked from other countries and increasingly our sheriffs are finding guns as they eradicate these illegal farms. More troubling still is that illegal farming is reportedly occurring in rented houses in residential neighborhoods, hidden away from public view and often destroying the interior of these homes. Something must be done to address the environmental damage and criminal activity of illegal cannabis farming in California.

San Bernardino County supports: 1) federal law enforcement efforts against international and multi-state crime syndicates who are engaged in illegal cannabis cultivation in California; 2) close collaboration with local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors by federal agencies like the Drug

Enforcement Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Environmental Protection Agency; and 3) the re-introduction of federal legislation like the PLANT Act that increases penalties for the production of illicit and hazardous substances on federal lands.

The County will work with our Congressional representatives, national associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for federal legislation, budget action, or administrative proposals 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/or 5) attract private capital to stimulate the local economy.

## **PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

The Covid-19 pandemic has upended many facets of ordinary life. It continues to be a major challenge for residents and the County's healthcare and service programs. Although federal recovery funding has been very helpful, restrictions on eligible uses for those funds and aggressive timelines to get those funds directed to projects limits the effectiveness of those recovery dollars. Greater flexibility in the eligible uses and projects would help local governments make meaningful, lasting investments in infrastructure, facilities, and programs that benefit their constituents.

The County will work with our Congressional representatives, national associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for federal legislation, budget action, or administrative proposals that: 1) support local discretion in public health decision-making; 2) maximize local resources and secure relief funding to ensure continued delivery of critical services; 3) promote County budget stabilization and lessen significant budget shortfalls; 4) expand the use of technology and innovation to streamline County services; 5) continue to expand innovative care delivery models such as mobile healthcare; 6) increase access to advanced telecommunications services; and/or 7) improve the health outcomes of residents disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

## **REDUCING HOMELESSNESS**

Homelessness is a persistent problem for cities and communities throughout San Bernardino County. According to the 2020 Point-In-Time Count Homeless Survey, there were 3,125 homeless persons in the County. A comparison of the last two counts revealed that 518 more persons were counted in 2020 – a one-year increase of 19.9%. Despite investments in 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 our Congressional representatives, national associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for federal legislation, budget actions, administrative proposals, or regulations that will: 1) support initiatives to reduce and avoid homelessness; 2) ensure the County receives an equitable share of funding to address homelessness and build affordable housing; 3) expand the availability of permanent and supportive housing with wraparound and coordinated services; and/or 4) allow counties to leverage federal, state and local funds to provide services for at-risk and homeless individuals.

## **STRENGTHEN THE REGION THROUGH STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE**

A well-maintained transportation network is essential for the free flow of goods and people, moving

commerce through the region and making sure employees can get to work. The recently enacted Infrastructure and Jobs Investment Act will provide extensive funding to not only improve highways, but rehabilitate aging bridges, invest in transportation safety projects, expand public transit, and support innovative approaches to transportation and infrastructure.

The County will work with our Congressional representatives, national associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget action, or administrative proposals that: 1) expedite infrastructure projects and provide flexibility in the administration of infrastructure programs and funding; 2) protect existing funds dedicated to local transportation and 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; 7) expand and fund high-quality broadband access; and/or 8) develop an inland port.

### **WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)**

Enacted in 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) creates federal employment and workforce training programs and provides formula funding to state and local governments. WIOA provides the framework for a modern, demand-driven workforce development system to meet the needs of employers and jobseekers. WIOA is a vital funding source for workforce development that helps counties address the challenges of training our local workforce.

The County will work with our Congressional representatives, national associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for legislation, budget actions, or administrative proposals that support the reauthorization of WIOA to include: 1) continued local control and discretion over workforce training programs; 2) greater engagement with local employers to retain businesses, provide on-the-job training, job placement services, and offset business closures through layoff prevention services; 3) continued funding of career centers and other programs such as Individual Training Accounts that provide jobseekers choices for occupational training, career pathway programs to meet strategic planning goals, and build a workforce customized to meet local demand and emerging sectors; 4) continued support of career growth and employment advancement opportunities to meet local economic development needs that align with the Countywide Vision; and/or 5) promote equity and inclusion in access to resources and the ability for San Bernardino County residents to achieve long-term employment and prosperity.

### **IMPROVING HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY**

Reliable access to affordable high-speed broadband internet service is a critical issue for residents of San Bernardino County. Internet access is essential for economic development, education, and healthcare services, and raises basic questions about equity in our society. The coronavirus pandemic has widened the divide between those who have high-speed broadband and those that do not have physical access to or cannot afford internet service. As many continue to work from home and rely on distance learning, the need for affordable and reliable broadband internet service has become a key policy priority for the County.

To effectively improve broadband access, the County will work with our Congressional representatives, national associations, local agencies and other stakeholders to advocate for federal legislation, budget actions, administrative proposals or regulations that include: 1) an equitable amount of funding to expand broadband service to the areas in the County that lack

high-speed service and to improve the affordability of service for low-income residents; 2) support local decision-making authority and flexibility; 3) support the principles laid out in the County's 2020 broadband resolution; and/or 4) support program reforms and sufficient funding to close the digital divide as quickly and completely as possible.

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, equity, flood control and water resources, governance, finance and operations, health and human services, housing and land use 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, budget action, and proposals 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/or 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 action, and proposals 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.

**EQUITY:** *Promote the inclusion of marginalized groups, protect investment in human capital and eliminate racial disparities.*

Support legislation, budget action, and proposals that: 1) result in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all; 2) ensure that underserved communities and constituencies can grow, contribute, and develop; and/or 3) reduce or remove barriers for all members of our community.

**FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER RESOURCES:** *Protect life, property, and public health through responsible management of natural resources.*

Support legislation, budget action, and proposals that: 1) promote sound management of natural resources; 2) assist local jurisdictions by removing unnecessary barriers and costs associated with environmental regulations, like 408 permits by the Army Corps of Engineers that should be easier and faster to obtain; 3) fund the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of watershed management or flood control projects; 4) maintain or improve upon the supply of adequate potable water; and/or 5) maintain flexibility in the conveyance of water to support isolated desert communities that may be unable to sustain themselves with their local water supplies.

**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 federal legislation, budget action, and proposals 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; 6) provide adequate training and resources and require collaboration between County and city partners to effectively and efficiently deliver services; and/or 7) 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 County residents.*

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) fully fund the cost of federally mandated health and human service programs and hold counties exempt from fiscal penalties when the federal government does not provide adequate funding; 2) create, provide and protect funding formulas for services that ensure an equitable allocation of federal funding; 3) provide greater flexibility to ensure programs are delivered efficiently and in a cost-effective manner; 4) provide for the health, safety, education and well-being of County residents; 5) improve and increase the accessibility and quality of supportive services for County residents; 6) encourage data sharing and coordination between agencies to improve service delivery; 7) align state and federal regulations to improve outcomes; 8) remove categorical funding restrictions allowing for greater local authority to achieve desired outcomes; 9) streamline and simplify application processes; 10) increase automation of case actions; and/or 11) promote a Whole Child, Whole Family, Whole Community (WSCC) approach to child development.

Oppose legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) transfer health and human service programs from the federal government to the County without guaranteed program control and adequate funding; 2) propose funding formulas that adversely impact and impede the ability of the County to deliver health and human service programs; 3) erode local control of the administration of health and human service programs; and/or 4) negatively impact health and human services program sustainability.

**HOUSING AND LAND USE:** *Strengthen the County through strategic and planned development.*

Support legislation, budget action, and proposals 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, budget action, and proposals 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, law enforcement officers and first responder personnel and the property of County residents; 4) plan for, respond to, and receive reimbursement for emergency disasters, acts of terrorism, and other catastrophic events; and/or 5) 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.

**VETERANS AFFAIRS:** *Assist the men and women who served in the armed forces to receive the benefits they have earned and support their families to also receive their due benefits.*

Support legislation, budget actions and proposals that: 1) continue to properly fund veterans benefits for healthcare, higher education, vocational training, and retirement pensions; 2) support ongoing benefit programs such as compensation for service connected disabilities, surviving spouse benefits, and benefits for the children of veterans; 3) support new legislative proposals that will exempt retirement pay for veterans and annuity payments as part of a survivor benefit plan from state income tax; 4) support assistance programs such as home loans, government life insurance, burial benefits, supplemental income pensions for wartime veterans, and other benefits; 5) ensure that state and federal veterans care facilities in the County are properly maintained and meeting the needs of our local veterans; and/or 6) support the construction and ongoing availability of affordable housing units for homeless veterans.