2027 STATE & FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

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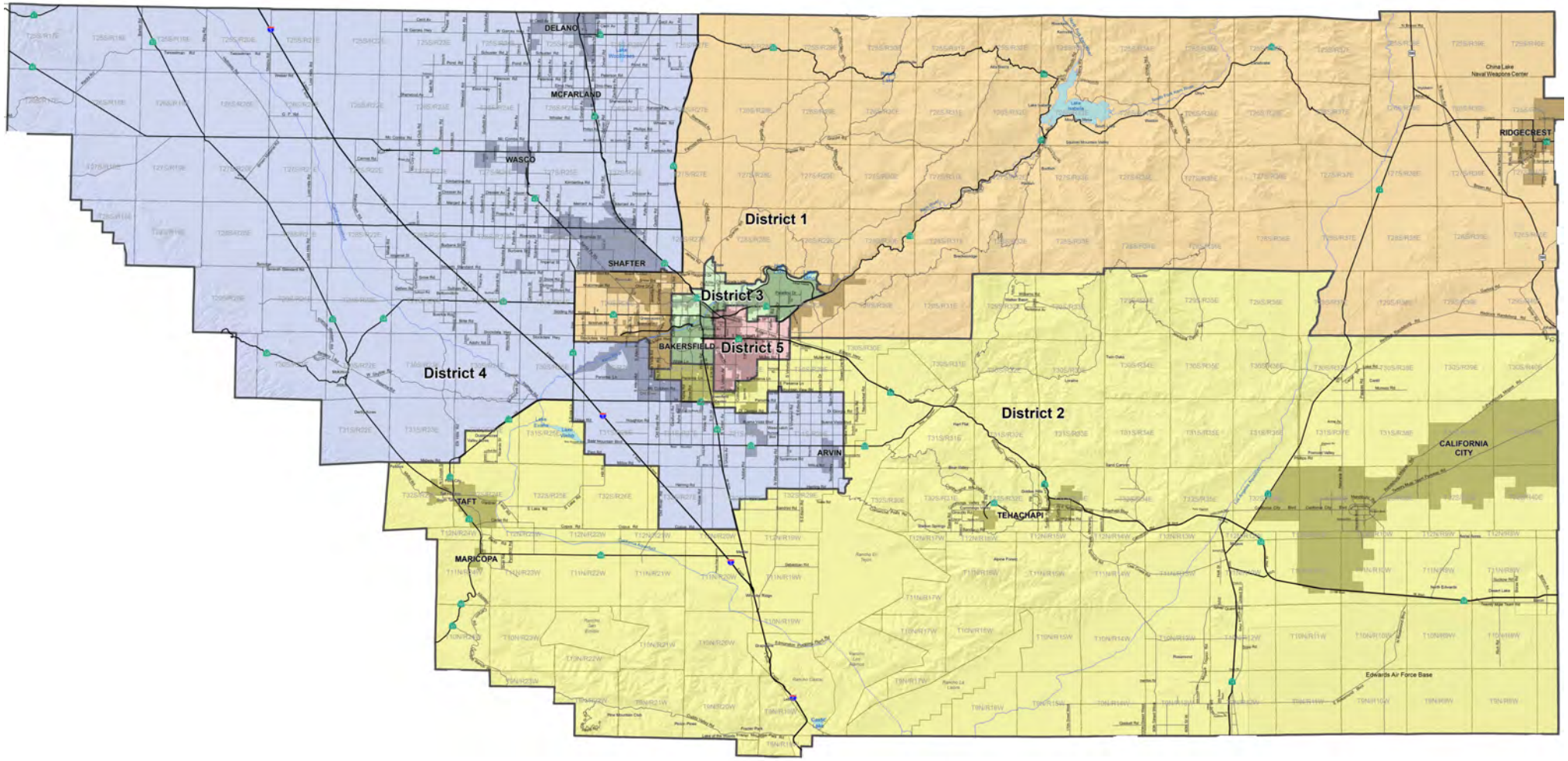
KERN COUNTY SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Supervisor Phillip Peters, Vice Chair
First District

Supervisor Chris Parlier, Chairman
Second District

Supervisor Jeff Flores
Third District

Supervisor David Couch
Fourth District

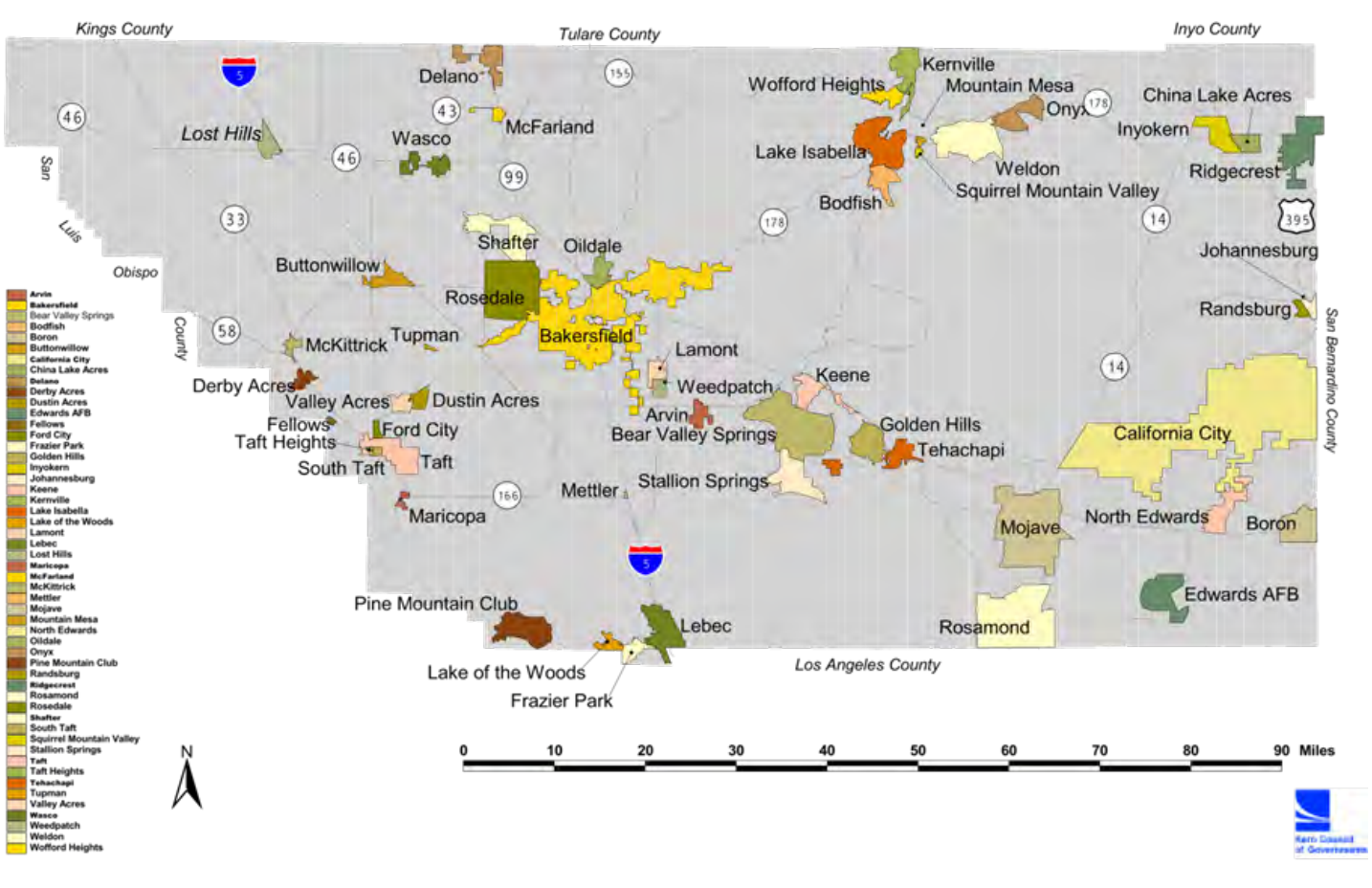
Supervisor Leticia Perez
Fifth District

ABOUT KERN COUNTY

OUR COUNTY AND COMMUNITY

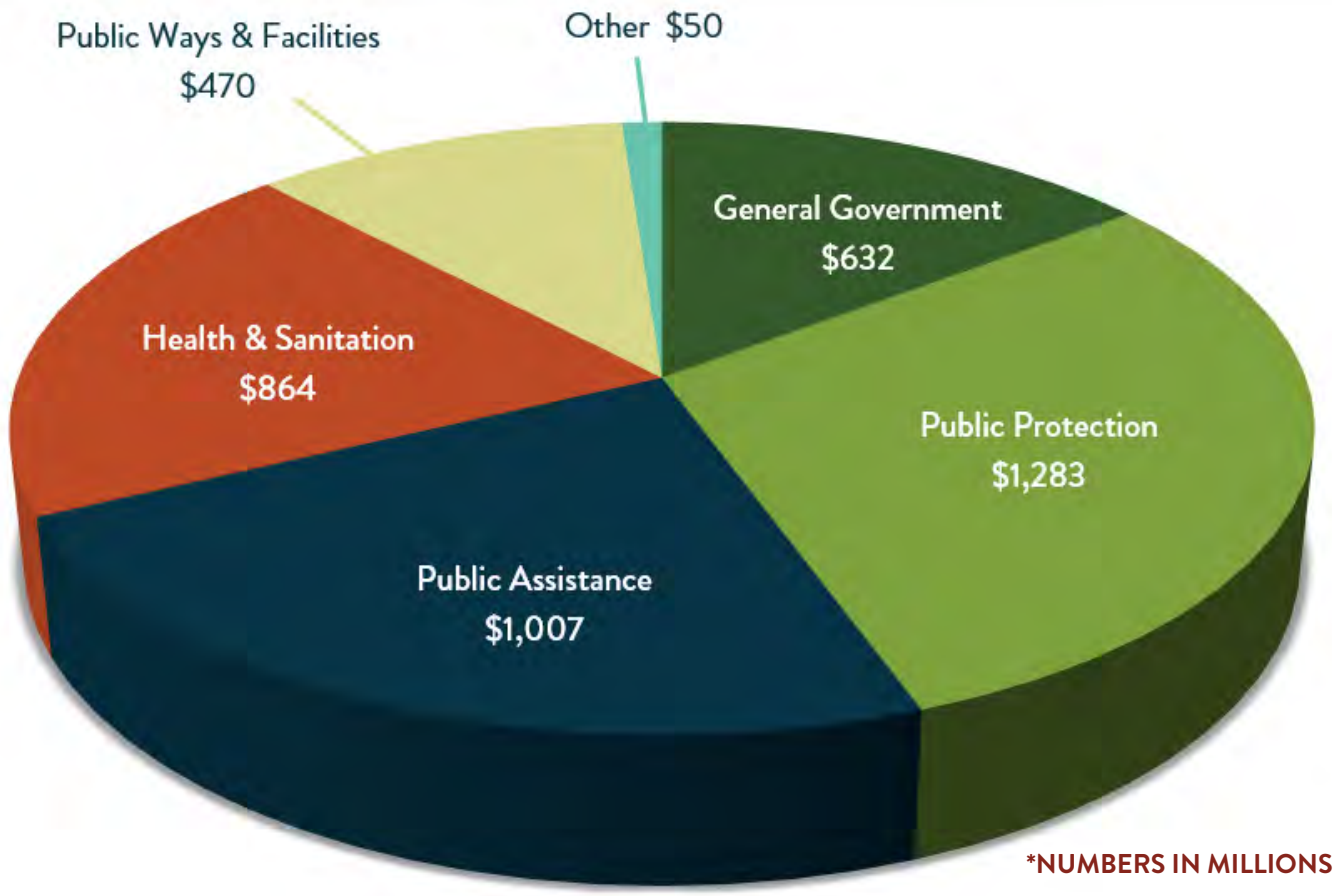
Kern County is a general law county with a rapidly growing population that now stands at approximately 917,000. Situated at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, Kern County has more than 8,000 square miles of valley farmland, foothills, mountains, and the Mojave Desert. The county's economy relies primarily on agriculture, petroleum extraction, and the development of renewable energy (solar, wind, and battery storage) and emerging energy technology (carbon capture and sequestration, direct air capture, lithium mining operations, and hydrogen production). There is also a strong aviation, aerospace, and military presence evidenced by Edwards Air Force Base, the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, and the Mojave Air and Space Port.

As a full-service community, Kern County recognizes the need for active legislative engagement at the state and federal levels to protect and enhance the interests of Kern County's residents and businesses. Accordingly, County officials maintain close relationships with state and federal representatives to advocate, influence, and monitor pertinent legislation.



ABOUT KERN COUNTY

FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 BUDGET BREAKDOWN



*NUMBERS IN MILLIONS

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KERN COUNTY'S LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The purpose of this Legislative Platform is to clearly outline the position of the County on priority issues and matters that impact the County's ability to operate effectively, while allowing flexibility for the consideration of additional legislative and budgetary issues that arise during the legislative session. The Platform is intended to serve as a strategic framework to guide and expedite the County's legislative decision-making. It allows the County to take a position on most legislation without having to repeatedly go back to the Board for approval on letters of support or opposition. However, legislative proposals that fall under the parameters of the most recently adopted County Legislative Platform but could reasonably be determined to be controversial or require significant policy discourse shall be referred to the Legislative Program Committee or the full Board of Supervisors for thorough review and deliberation, dependent upon urgency of the matter.

Overall, the County of Kern supports legislation that provides governmental decision making at the level closest to the people whenever it is likely to produce the most effective and efficient results. We support further reforms in the federal-State-local fiscal relationship that will improve the County's ability to finance and efficiently administer both mandated and discretionary services while opposing legislation that creates mandates without federal or State funding sources to carry them out.

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 and State investment in local infrastructure; federal-State-local initiatives to provide venture capital; tax and financial incentives that will encourage the growth of new and existing businesses in the County; and development and funding of a local education and workforce training investment plan that matches the requirements of growing and emerging industries.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The mission of the County of Kern is to exceed the expectations of the communities we serve, changing the way they feel about government, those who manage it, and the services it provides. In alignment with key focus areas established in the County's Strategic Plan, the Legislative Platform seeks to guide legislation that will support the County's goals of maintaining:

Healthy, Safe, and Resilient Communities: Advance policies that strengthen the wellbeing and resilience of all Kern communities by fostering safe neighborhoods, supporting families and businesses, expanding compassionate and coordinated homelessness initiatives, and reinforcing a dependable social safety net. At the same time, prioritize robust public safety by supporting the Kern County Fire Department and Sheriff's Office through investments in modern emergency communications, reliable backup power, wildfire mitigation, and enhanced law-enforcement readiness, ensuring fast, effective, and community-focused response during emergencies.

Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Vitality: Promote responsible and efficient use of public funds by safeguarding local fiscal authority, reducing administrative burdens, and ensuring that state and federal mandates are fully funded. Strengthen Kern County's long-term economic resilience by supporting policies that expand local revenue opportunities, streamline permitting and regulatory processes, and empower communities to attract and retain diverse industries. Advance accountable governance through transparent, data-driven decision-making and protections for essential revenue streams that sustain core public services.

Reliable Infrastructure and Sustainability: Advance policies that strengthen Kern County's physical, technological, and environmental foundations by investing in resilient infrastructure, modern communications systems, and sustainable land-use strategies. Support streamlined permitting, balanced environmental regulation, and reliable water, energy, and broadband systems that safeguard local authority while enabling timely development. Prioritize infrastructure upgrades that enhance community safety, economic vitality, and long-term environmental stewardship, ensuring Kern's communities remain vibrant, connected, and adaptable to future needs.

2027 FUNDING PRIORITIES

2027 Earmark Requests	
$5,000,000	**Regional Public Safety Communications Network** – Shovel ready project to include construction of six greenfield communication network tower sites to improve performance and coverage of the communications network used by first responders.
$1,500,000	**Water Conservation** – Shovel ready project to eliminate the use of potable drinking water to irrigate nonfunctional turf at various municipal facilities.
$2,000,000	**Library ADA and Parking Improvements** – This shovel-ready project will provide improvements to ADA accessibility and parking at various libraries throughout Kern County. The library parking lot and accessible paths of travel serve as mobility hubs, where people transition from private and public modes of transportation to public services such as free access to information, avenues to literacy and learning, social activities, and skill development.
$650,000	**First Responder Emergency Communications Extreme Conditions Vehicle Equipment** – This shovel-ready project will provide for the purchase of equipment capable of clearing snow to allow first-responder-emergency-communication technicians to access 28 remote mountain top communications towers during extreme winter conditions in Kern. This equipment will allow access for repairs and maintenance to infrastructure providing radio communication to first responders protecting the public and saving lives.
$3,000,000	**Kern River County Park Pavement Restoration** – This shovel-ready project will provide pavement restoration to park roads, parking, and ADA accessibility at the Kern River County Park. The park roads, parking, and accessible paths of travel serve as mobility hubs, where people transition from private and public modes of transportation to recreational river and lake features providing physical and mental health through outdoor activities including swimming, boating, camping, hiking, fishing, and skiing. This 104-acre riverfront park provides enhanced local ecosystems with habitat for wildlife, improving biodiversity.
$3,000,000	**Buena Vista Aquatic Recreational Area Pavement Restoration** – This shovel-ready project will provide pavement restoration to park roads throughout Buena Vista Aquatic Recreational Area (BVARA). These park roads connect people to two recreational lakes in a park consisting of over 900 acres. Facilities such as BVARA provide physical and mental health through outdoor activities including swimming, boating, camping, fishing, and skiing, as well as enhanced local ecosystems with habitat for wildlife, improving biodiversity.
$400,000	**Dam and Recreational Lake Maintenance Equipment** – This shovel-ready project will provide for the purchase of equipment capable of performing lake edge vegetation control at several recreational lake facilities throughout Kern. These recreational features provide physical and mental health through outdoor activities including swimming, boating, camping, hiking, fishing, and skiing, as well as enhanced local ecosystems with habitat for wildlife, improving biodiversity.

2027 FUNDING PRIORITIES

2027 Earmark Requests	
$6,940,000	**Probation Department Range Facility** – Construction of a dedicated Probation Department range facility where probation officers receive essential firearms and tactical training including instruction, certification, and ongoing skills development required for officers to perform their duties safely and effectively.
$7,700,000	**Airbus H125 Helicopter** – To support Search and Rescue, Patrol, and Special Operations countywide, as well as mutual aid requests for this region
$7,000,000	**New/Updated Sheriff's Office Regional Training Center** – Support a specialized facility to provide centralized, high-quality instruction, tactical practice, and professional development for sheriff's deputies
$500,000	**Real-Time Information Center** – A centralized technology hub to assist the Sheriff's Office with providing live data to support deputies in the field
$1,925,000	**Mobile Device Computers (MDCs)** – Standardize and upgrade 413 MDCs to assist sheriff's deputies access real-time information and manage field operations

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

STATE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES BY POLICY AREA

General Legislative Principles

The County seeks full funding for the costs of state programs; additional funding for programs where service needs have outpaced stagnant or slow growing revenues; funding formulae which ensure an equitable allocation of state funding; minimize the adverse impact of state actions; achieve greater flexibility over the use of state funds; secure state assistance whenever possible to preserve the County's property tax, sales tax, locally imposed taxes, fees, and Vehicle License Fee revenue base; oppose the shift of programs unless control is also shifted and state funding is guaranteed, and oppose new unfunded mandates unless they promote a higher priority.

Healthy, Safe, and Resilient Communities

SECTION 1.1
Public Protection

The County supports legislative efforts that strengthen public protection by reinforcing local authority, ensuring sustainable funding, and promoting solutions that reflect the diverse needs of California's 58 counties. It advocates for evidence-based criminal justice reforms that respect operational realities across the state, emphasize flexibility in program design, and expand data-sharing practices that enhance coordination among justice partners. The County maintains that any new laws affecting prosecution, sentencing, supervision, diversion, or specialty courts must be accompanied by adequate and reliable funding for district attorneys, public defenders, probation, behavioral health, the Sheriff's Office, and any additional affected County agency to prevent the cost-shifts that erode essential services. It further supports investments in modern, rehabilitative juvenile facilities; expanded inmate education and reentry programming to reduce recidivism; continuity of health coverage and access to third-party payment systems for eligible detainees; and strengthened law enforcement training, resources, and infrastructure tailored to rural crime, gang activity, drug trafficking, human trafficking, and emerging public-safety threats. These resources may include funding for proper less lethal and tactical equipment to assist law enforcement in deescalating violent, volatile incidents, leading to more peaceful resolutions, and a real-time information center to assist law enforcement in responding quickly and safely responding to communities in need or to assist in preventing further crime. Additional funding is needed for research and exploration of best practices for use of force to continue to better serve communities. The County underscores the importance of meaningful local involvement in state-level discussions on justice reform to ensure that statutory changes remain workable and grounded in community needs.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SECTION 1.1
Public Protection (cont.)

The County also recognizes the increasing severity and frequency of wildfires, particularly in high-risk regions such as Kern County, and supports legislation that extends Cal Fire's peak staffing season, provides fair and timely reimbursement for local fire protection services, and funds large-scale removal of drought-damaged or diseased trees. It continues to urge reforms to Cal Fire's "Gray Book" so compensation for local firefighting resources deployed to State Responsibility Areas is accurate, transparent, and sufficient to maintain readiness. Additionally, the County supports efforts to stabilize the fire insurance market, so homeowners and businesses facing heightened wildfire risk can obtain affordable coverage without abrupt cancellations or untenable premium increases. Collectively, these priorities reflect a commitment to strengthening immediate public-safety capabilities while advancing long-term community resilience, fiscal responsibility, and practical, locally driven approaches to public protection.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SECTION 1.2
Health & Human Services

The County is committed to sustaining a strong, equitable, and locally responsive health and human services system that protects vulnerable residents while ensuring the State maintains its fiscal responsibility for core programs. The County supports stable and flexible funding for CalWORKs, IHSS, APS, CWS, Public Health, behavioral health, school-based services, and related safety-net programs. It further emphasizes the need for modernized systems, clear and timely State guidance, reasonable County implementation timelines, and policies that enhance service integration across children, families, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and justice-involved populations. The County opposes cost-shifts and administrative mandates that burden local agencies, reduce service capacity, or impede the ability to respond quickly to operational, regulatory, or technological demands and community needs.

The County also supports investments that strengthen public health infrastructure, emergency medical systems, disease surveillance, and regional response capabilities, particularly for conditions like Valley Fever that disproportionately affect local communities. It advocates for expanded behavioral health and substance use disorder services, housing and treatment resources for individuals with complex needs, and data-driven frameworks that preserve local control while ensuring transparency and accountability. Overall, the County seeks State policies that are collaborative, evidence-based, and adaptable, enabling counties to implement reforms responsibly, maintain critical safety-net operations, and address emerging health and human services challenges over time.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

STATE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES BY POLICY AREA

Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Vitality

SECTION 2.1
State Partnership, Local Revenue Protection, & Accountable Governance

The County advocates for legislative policies that preserve and strengthen local fiscal authority, ensure fair treatment in state-mandated programs, and strictly safeguard counties from absorbing unreimbursed costs. It supports making unfunded mandates optional and securing constitutional protections against cost-shifts that undermine local budgets. The County supports reasonable local flexibility in the use of dedicated funding streams and opposes overly restrictive, arbitrary, or administratively burdensome spending requirements that impede the effective use of public funds to address local priorities.

The County further backs efforts to simplify administrative requirements, expand opportunities for privatization or contracted services where cost-effective, and require that any new or increased fees accurately reflect the true cost of service delivery. It strongly defends core local revenue streams—including sales tax, locally imposed fees, and Vehicle License Fee revenues—used to fund essential health, mental health, and social services, and opposes any diversion or reallocation of these funds by the State. Additionally, the County opposes state policies imposing new taxes or penalties on oil and gas production or extending property tax exclusions for large-scale renewable energy projects without fully compensating counties for lost revenue and rejects proposals restricting local economic development agreements or altering the collection and distribution of local sales taxes. The County also supports comprehensive election-integrity measures designed to enhance the accuracy, security, and accessibility of voter registration and candidate-qualification systems.

At the same time, the County firmly opposes efforts by the State to interfere with local collective-bargaining processes or impose wage, benefit, or retirement mandates that bypass or override negotiations between counties and recognized employee organizations. It supports preserving local authority to negotiate compensation based on fiscal capacity, operational needs, and community priorities, and rejects legislation that forces counties to adopt higher wage structures without reimbursement or mutually agreed upon labor agreements. The County also opposes state actions that alter locally negotiated retirement age requirements or modify employee retirement benefits in ways that impose unfunded cost increases or erode local control over workforce management decisions.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SECTION 2.2
Economic & Workforce Development

The County supports legislative efforts that promote broad-based economic growth by reducing regulatory barriers, streamlining permitting processes, and empowering local communities to attract and retain businesses. It advocates for lowering business-related fees and taxes, expanding manufacturing, and advancing job creation throughout Kern County and California. The County further backs initiatives that strengthen key industry clusters, including but not limited to, aerospace and defense, agriculture and ranching, energy and natural resource production, transportation, logistics, warehousing and manufacturing, health services and medical technology, and recreation, tourism, and entertainment. Kern strongly supports establishing a California Space or Aerospace Commission to enhance competitiveness in emerging sectors like satellite and drone technology. It champions the use of state economic development tools such as the Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (iBank) and Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) to provide vital financing and technical assistance for local projects and entrepreneurs. Additionally, the County supports the ongoing development of reliable and expanded electrical grid infrastructure to meet growing economic development demands.

The County also strongly supports protecting Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding and preserving local authority to design and operate workforce development programs tailored to regional economic needs. It backs increased investment in workforce infrastructure and opposes policies that diminish local flexibility or shift decision-making away from community-based workforce boards. Together, these economic and workforce priorities ensure Kern County can build a resilient economy supported by strong local industries, modern infrastructure, and responsive workforce programs aligned with employer and community needs.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

STATE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES BY POLICY AREA

Reliable Infrastructure and Sustainability

SECTION 3.1
Land Use, Planning & Environmental Quality

The County supports legislative efforts that protect local land use authority, ensure jurisdictional planning autonomy, and promote practical, community driven solutions to housing and environmental challenges. It advocates for policies that encourage affordable and traditional housing development, streamline environmental regulations, and reduce permitting delays that stall important projects. The County also emphasizes its authority to evaluate and site complex land use proposals, such as large scale energy, infrastructure, or emerging technology facilities, in ways that reflect community priorities and local conditions, and therefore opposes state actions that centralize decision making at the state level or weaken local discretion.

The County further supports reforms to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to prevent misuse in blocking environmentally sound developments, favors a balanced approach to species protection under the State Endangered Species Act that accounts for ecological and economic impacts, and proactive solutions backed with state funding to address recycling and waste diversion challenges. Additionally, the County supports incentive based, achievable climate related strategies that respect local planning frameworks and preserve county authority over growth, land use priorities, and environmental compliance, including maintaining local control over the siting and approval of emerging technology driven projects that often require significant energy or land use considerations.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SECTION 3.2
Energy

The County supports an all-of-the-above energy strategy that advances energy independence while protecting local control, promoting economic stability, and ensuring fair treatment of property owners and communities. It opposes legislation aimed at phasing out fossil fuels, imposing new taxes or penalties on oil and gas production, or adding duplicative regulations to well permitting processes. The County also resists efforts to shift permitting authority for renewable energy projects from local governments to the state. Instead, it supports legislation that empowers counties to oversee and regulate emerging technologies like geothermal, carbon capture, hydrogen, and CO_2 pipelines. The County further calls for restoring and protecting local authority to assess large-scale renewable energy facilities at fair market value to preserve local property tax revenues. The County also supports the procurement of biomass energy to promote sustainable power generation. Additionally, it advocates for greater transparency and compensation for residents and businesses affected by Investor-Owned Utility Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events, ensuring that energy reliability and community resilience remain top priorities.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SECTION 3.3
Water & Agriculture

The County supports legislative efforts that ensure a reliable and sustainable water supply for both urban and agricultural users, including investments in infrastructure for water storage, conveyance, flood control, and stormwater management, and calls for strong state action to prevent and mitigate the invasive golden mussel infestation threatening Kern County's water infrastructure. It advocates for funding to restore key systems like the Kern-Friant Canal and supports the development of a Delta conveyance system that balances water delivery with environmental protection. The County also backs exemptions from CEQA for certain water infrastructure projects to reduce delays and costs. It supports local flexibility in implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and opposes added legal or administrative burdens on groundwater and well permitting.

In agriculture, the County promotes policies that protect its farming and ranching heritage, support agritourism, and restore Williamson Act subvention payments to preserve farmland while allowing maximum flexibility for landowners facing water limitations, including the option to convert farmland to large-scale solar installations when appropriate. The County opposes state efforts to reintroduce large predators, such as gray wolves and grizzly bears, among others, due to risks to public safety and local ranching and grazing operations.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SECTION 3.4
Transportation & Infrastructure

The County supports legislative actions and strategic investments that modernize essential transportation corridors, expand multimodal options across roads, highways, airports, and public transit, and reinforce critical infrastructure necessary for public safety, economic development, and regional mobility. This includes advancing grade separations, congestion relief initiatives, and other safety-enhancing improvements. The County further advocates for stable and equitable funding formulas that enable jurisdictions to repair aging roads and bridges, improve goods-movement efficiency, and deliver transit upgrades that connect residents to jobs and essential services. Coordinated planning with state partners remains a priority to streamline project delivery, enhance resiliency, and ensure that infrastructure programs address the distinct needs of both rural and urban communities.

Additionally, the County supports balanced state policies governing off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation that preserve appropriate access to public lands while recognizing legitimate environmental, habitat, and resource-protection requirements. The County supports collaborative, science-based approaches to OHV management and opposes broad or disproportionate closures that unnecessarily restrict recreational access, economic activity, or established transportation routes, while supporting targeted mitigation and responsible use where environmental impacts have been demonstrated.

The County also calls for the immediate abandonment of the California High-Speed Rail Project and urges that remaining funds be redirected to local and regional transportation efforts that provide measurable, near-term benefits for Kern County residents. In addition, it supports establishing a dedicated funding stream for California airports, such as Meadows Field, by leveraging aviation fuel tax revenues to promote economic development and strengthen regional mobility.

Finally, the County endorses state legislation that bolsters local planning capacity, improves coordination among transportation agencies, expands multimodal options, and ensures long-range strategies do not inadvertently disadvantage rural or economically diverse regions. Policies that enhance local flexibility, broaden access to formula funding, and sustain resilient, community-driven infrastructure remain central to the County's transportation and infrastructure priorities.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUES BY POLICY AREA

General Legislative Principles

The federal government should recognize the inalienable rights of state and local governments to participate in the decision-making process of a federal system. It should further recognize that because local government is the closest to the citizenry, it is often best equipped to deliver services and administer programs. Strong county government is an essential component and partner in the effective operation of national-state-local government activities. The County will seek to support proposals which would provide a greater share of total available Federal funding to the County or California, and oppose proposals which would reduce the County's or State's share of total funding; support proposals which would provide local governments with greater decision-making authority over the use of Federal funds, and which provide for direct grants or mandatory pass-through allocations to large rural counties; oppose proposals which would impose new unfunded mandates on the County; oppose proposals which would finance increased spending for one program by cutting other programs of greater benefit to the County, or which would result in a net revenue loss or a cost shift to the County; support proposals to reduce or relax match requirements which hinder the ability of financially distressed state and local governments to receive or utilize Federal funds; support Federal fiscal relief for financially distressed state and local governments; and oppose Federal preemption of state and local government authority.

Healthy, Safe, and Resilient Communities

SECTION 4.1
Public Protection

The County supports federal policies that strengthen public safety, emergency preparedness, disaster resilience, and the capacity of local governments to protect their communities. It urges Congress and the Administration to provide stable, predictable, and flexible federal funding for local law enforcement, emergency management, fire protection, public-safety communications, cybersecurity, critical infrastructure protection, and counter-terrorism preparedness, without imposing unrelated conditions that interfere with state or local authority.

The County also supports sustained federal investment in disaster planning, hazard mitigation, wildfire prevention and forest management, evacuation infrastructure, early-warning systems, and emergency response, with particular attention to high-risk areas such as communities located in the wild land-urban interface. It also calls for timely and full reimbursement of eligible local costs associated with federally declared disasters, wildfire suppression, and federal-land firefighting, recognizing that effective disaster response depends on strong federal, state, and local partnerships.

Additionally, the County advocates for sustained federal investment in victim services and public health programs, including the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), and Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). Increase funding for multi-agency task forces, such as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) programs, and for any federally mandated law enforcement activities within the County that require financial support to meet those requirements.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SECTION 4.2
Health & Human Services

The County supports federal health care policies that preserve and strengthen the health and human services safety net, protect access to affordable and comprehensive care, and ensure that federal and state responsibilities are matched with adequate resources for local delivery systems. The County advocates for a strong federal-state-local partnership in Medicaid, including protection of reimbursement and financing mechanisms that sustain hospitals, clinics, behavioral health providers, long-term care, and other safety-net services; adequate support for rural and underserved communities; and federal assistance to help states and counties implement new eligibility, enrollment, reporting, and program-integrity requirements without imposing unfunded administrative burdens. In particular, the County supports policies that minimize coverage disruptions, protect continuity of care for vulnerable populations, and preserve access to programs such as 340B that help safety-net providers maintain affordable access to prescription drugs.

The County also supports sustained or increased federal investment in core public health and prevention activities including infectious disease surveillance and response, wellness protection, maternal and child health, food and water safety, emergency preparedness, disaster response, trauma care, and public health workforce capacity, as well as behavioral health, substance use disorder treatment, homelessness prevention, and services that divert individuals from the criminal justice system and support successful reentry. The County opposes federal policies that shift costs or administrative responsibilities to local governments without adequate funding and supports flexible, locally driven approaches that address community-specific needs. It further supports improving access to health care for veterans and other underserved populations through expanded local services, reduced wait times, improved health information interoperability, and coordinated care across federal, state, and local systems.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUES BY POLICY AREA

Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Vitality

SECTION 5.1
Federal Partnership, Local Revenue Protection, & Accountable Governance

The County supports federal legislative efforts that strengthen intergovernmental partnerships, protect local fiscal capacity, and promote equitable revenue sharing and fiscal stability. It advocates for federal programs that provide counties with adequate administrative funding, flexibility to address local priorities, and predictable, long-term planning authority, preferably through flexible block grants and other streamlined funding mechanisms. The County supports preserving the federal tax exemption for municipal bonds, protecting counties' ability to issue tax-exempt debt for essential infrastructure and services, and opposing federal actions that preempt or constrain local revenue authority. The County further supports federal policies that recognize and preserve local decision-making authority while establishing clear, accountable standards for the use of federal funds and public resources.

The County also strongly supports full, annually adjusted Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) to compensate local governments for lost property-tax revenue associated with federally owned lands and installations, including active military bases, as well as continued federal investment in local military research, testing, and aerospace facilities such as China Lake and Edwards Air Force Base.

The County also strongly supports comprehensive election-integrity measures that improve the accuracy, security, transparency, and accessibility of voter registration, ballot administration, and candidate qualification processes while respecting state and local election administration and ensuring sufficient federal resources to implement new requirements.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SECTION 5.2
Community Development & Workforce Investment

The County supports federal legislative efforts that strengthen community development and workforce investment, particularly in communities experiencing persistent poverty, high unemployment, housing instability, and barriers to economic mobility. It advocates for sustained and flexible funding for key programs such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), public and assisted housing, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), while opposing federal actions that reduce local flexibility, restrict eligible uses, or shift program costs to local governments. The County also supports policies that address the rising cost of housing and infrastructure, expand access to affordable childcare and transportation, strengthen broadband and digital skills, and ensure that federal workforce and economic-development investments reach underserved and rural communities.

The County supports aligning federal education, workforce, and economic-development investments with regional labor-market needs and emerging industries, including advanced manufacturing, health care, renewable energy, natural resource development, technology, and infrastructure. It encourages federal policies that strengthen partnerships among local governments, employers, community colleges, workforce boards, and community-based organizations; streamline regulatory and grant requirements; and provide predictable, multi-year funding for local implementation. The County further supports responsible use and modernization of place-based economic-development tools, including Opportunity Zones and other incentives that attract private investment while producing measurable benefits for residents, and urges the federal government to avoid unfunded mandates or changes to eligibility, funding formulas, or program administration that undermine local capacity to address community and workforce needs.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUES BY POLICY AREA

Reliable Infrastructure and Sustainability

SECTION 6.1
Energy & Environmental Quality

The County supports federal legislation and administrative policies that promote balanced, science-based environmental protection, reliable and affordable energy, domestic energy security, and local economic opportunity. The County supports efforts to streamline permitting and environmental review, modernize the Endangered Species Act to better account for social and economic impacts, and provide greater regulatory certainty for energy, water, critical infrastructure, and resource-development projects. The County supports accelerating the development of renewable energy, energy storage, and transmission infrastructure while ensuring that federal siting, permitting, and environmental policies recognize local land-use authority, property rights, grid reliability, and community impacts.

The County also supports responsible exploration, development, processing, and use of domestic oil, natural gas, minerals, and other natural-resource deposits as part of a diversified national energy strategy. Where appropriate, the County supports the use of the Defense Production Act and other federal authorities to facilitate domestic production and processing of strategically important natural resources, strengthen supply chains, reduce dependence on foreign sources, and support national and local economic resilience. These policies should be implemented with appropriate environmental safeguards and meaningful consideration of local economic, infrastructure, land-use, and environmental-quality impacts, reflecting the County's commitment to both environmental stewardship and practical energy and resource policies that support affordable energy, business growth, and community prosperity.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SECTION 6.2
Water & Agriculture

The County supports federal legislative and administrative policies that secure a reliable, affordable, and sustainable water supply for urban and agricultural users, including investments in water storage, conveyance, groundwater recharge, water recycling, conservation, flood control, and the restoration of wetlands and open space. The County advocates for federal funding to modernize community drinking water and wastewater systems and for policies that strengthen drought and flood resilience. It supports a clear and workable definition of "Waters of the United States" that respects local and agricultural interests, as well as federal policies that provide greater certainty in the implementation of the Endangered Species Act, federal water-project operations, and environmental regulations affecting water deliveries. The County also supports federal efforts to expand water supplies through infrastructure and technology, streamline permitting for water projects, and ensure that federal water policy recognizes the needs of communities and agricultural regions in the San Joaquin Valley.

The County supports federal agricultural and trade policies that preserve and expand international markets for locally produced commodities, reduce the adverse effects of tariffs and trade barriers, and strengthen the competitiveness of American agriculture. It supports a Farm Bill that maintains meaningful investments in agricultural research, conservation, crop insurance, rural infrastructure, and drought and disaster assistance. The County further supports comprehensive immigration reform and improvements to the H-2A and other agricultural labor programs that provide farmers with a stable, predictable, and lawful workforce while addressing housing, transportation, and administrative burdens associated with seasonal labor. The County also supports federal policies that recognize the importance of domestic food production, protect agricultural land and water resources, and minimize unnecessary federal regulatory or permitting burdens on farming and ranching operations.

2027 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

SECTION 6.3
Transportation & Infrastructure

The County supports federal transportation and infrastructure policies that increase predictable funding, streamline project delivery, reduce regulatory burdens, and give local governments greater flexibility to address their unique needs. Through the surface transportation reauthorization process, the County advocates for robust federal investment in roads, bridges, grade separations, highways, freight corridors, airports, and public transit, while protecting formula funding and expanding competitive grant opportunities for local projects. The County supports reforms that accelerate environmental review and permitting, promote greater state and local control over project delivery, provide flexibility in federal match and grant requirements, and preserve access to infrastructure funds without imposing unnecessary federal mandates. Continuity and stability of federal transportation funding is paramount to preventing the unnecessary delay of critical infrastructure projects.

The County also supports continued federal investment in aviation infrastructure, including reauthorization and adequate funding for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), and other airport infrastructure programs, with particular attention to the needs of small and regional airports. The County supports policies that strengthen infrastructure resiliency, improve freight and supply-chain mobility, facilitate technology and innovation, and provide local governments flexibility to prioritize projects based on local conditions rather than one-size-fits-all federal requirements. It further supports reasonable implementation of federal procurement, labor, environmental, and project-delivery requirements that do not unnecessarily increase costs or delay construction. Finally, the County opposes federal policies that could allow incompatible urban development, land-use restrictions, or environmental requirements that undermine the long-term viability of military installations and defense-related infrastructure that are critical to our national security.

Additionally, the County also supports balanced federal policies governing off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation that preserve appropriate access to public lands while recognizing legitimate environmental, habitat, and resource-protection requirements. The County supports collaborative, science-based approaches to OHV management and opposes broad or disproportionate closures that unnecessarily restrict recreational access, economic activity, or established transportation routes, while supporting targeted mitigation and responsible use where environmental impacts have been demonstrated.

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