**AGENDA**
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STANDING COMMITTEE – LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER – 5th FLOOR CAO LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
1115 TRUXTUN AVE.
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

All agenda item supporting documentation is available for public review in the County Administrative Office, 1115 Truxtun Ave., 5th Floor, Bakersfield, 93301 during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, following the posting of the agenda. Any supporting documentation that relates to an agenda item for an open session of any regular meeting that is distributed after the agenda is posted and prior to the meeting will also be available for review at the same location.

**September 22, 2026 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.**

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:
Please click the URL to join: Microsoft Teams
Meeting ID: 296 362 077 776 493
Passcode: Hj7Px3eQ

Or join by Phone:
+1 831-296-3421
Phone conference ID: 661 152 553#

**Remote participation options are provided as a convenience only. In the event of technical difficulties, the meeting will continue in person uninterrupted**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
   This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons desiring to address Committee Members on any matter not on this agenda, but under the jurisdiction of the Committee. Committee Members may respond briefly to statements made or questions posed. They may ask a question for clarification, make a referral to staff for factual information or request staff to report back to the Committee at a later meeting. Also, the Committee may take action to direct staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda. SPEAKERS ARE LIMITED TO TWO MINUTES. PLEASE STATE AND SPELL YOUR NAME BEFORE MAKING YOUR PRESENTATION

4. **Approve minutes from the July 13, 2026 meeting –** APPROVE

5. **2027 State and Federal Legislative Platform –** DISCUSS; MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO APPROVE

6. **Update on Federal issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary** – RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION

7. **Update on State issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary –** RECEIVE AND FILE; PROVIDE DIRECTION

**8. Direction for new committee business at future meetings –** DISCUSS; PROVIDE DIRECTION

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**Americans with Disabilities Act**
**(Government Code Section 54954.2)**

Disabled individuals who need special assistance to attend or participate in a meeting of the Board of Supervisors Standing Committee may request assistance at the County Administrative Office, Fifth Floor, 1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield, California or by calling (661) 868-3198. Every effort will be made to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities by making meeting material available in alternative formats. Requests for assistance should be made five (5) working days in advance of a meeting whenever possible.

**DISCLOSURE OF CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS**

Pursuant to Government Code section 84308, members of the Board of Supervisors are disqualified and not able to participate in any agenda item involving contracts (other than competitively bid, labor, or personal employment contracts), franchises, discretionary land use permits and other entitlements if the Board member received more than $500 in campaign contributions from the applicant or contractor, an agent of the applicant or contractor, or any financially interested participant who actively supports or opposes the County's decision on the agenda item within the 12 months prior to the final decision; and for 12 months following the date of the final decision, members of the Board of Supervisors shall not accept, solicit, or direct a campaign contribution of $500 or more from the applicant or contractor, their agent, or any financially interested participant. Members of the Board of Supervisors who have received, and applicants, contractors or their agents who have made, campaign contributions totaling more than $500 to a Board member in the last 12 months, are required to disclose that fact for the official record of the subject proceeding. Disclosures must include the amount of the campaign contribution and identify the recipient Board member and may be made either in writing to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors prior to the subject hearing or by verbal disclosure at the time of the hearing.

**ITEM #4**

# SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STANDING COMMITTEE – LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER – 5th FLOOR CAO LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
1115 TRUXTUN AVE.
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

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**July 13, 2026, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.**

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:
Please click the URL to join: Microsoft Teams
Meeting ID: 224 943 214 091 33
Passcode: vA2Ja2L3

Or join by Phone:
+1 831-296-3421
Phone conference ID: 598 628 500#

**Remote participation options are provided as a convenience only. In the event of technical difficulties, the meeting will continue in person uninterrupted**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL:** PHILLIP PETERS AND JEFF FLORES PRESENT

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
   This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons desiring to address Committee Members on any matter not on this agenda, but under the jurisdiction of the Committee. Committee Members may respond briefly to statements made or questions posed. They may ask a question for clarification, make a referral to staff for factual information or request staff to report back to the Committee at a later meeting. Also, the Committee may take action to direct staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda. SPEAKERS ARE LIMITED TO TWO MINUTES. PLEASE STATE AND SPELL YOUR NAME BEFORE MAKING YOUR PRESENTATION: **DENNIS McLAIN HEARD**

4. **Approve minutes from the April 13, 2026, meeting –** APPROVED – SUPERVISOR FLORES FIRST; SUPERVISOR PETERS SECOND

5. **Update on Federal issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary** – RECEIVED AND FILED; BEN GOLDEEN REPRESENTING TOWNSEND PUBLIC AFFAIRS GAVE PRESENTATION ON CURRENT EVENTS; NO DIRECTION PROVIDED; JEANINE ADAMS HEARD

6. **Update on State issues of interest to the County; direct staff to act as necessary –** RECEIVED AND FILED; DYLAN ELLIOTT REPRESENTING SYASL GAVE PRESENTATION ON CURRENT EVENTS; NO DIRECTION PROVIDED; DENNIS MCLAIN AND NATALIE FINBERG HEARD

7. **Direction for new committee business at future meetings –** DISCUSSED; SUPERVISOR PETERS DIRECTED STAFF TO REVIEW LEGISLATION THAT CLARIFIES SUPREMACY CLAUSE AND BRING BACK TO FULL BOARD IN AUGUST; JEANINE ADAMS AND NATALIE FINBERG HEARD

8. **ADJOURNMENT –** ADJOURNED TO NEXT MEETING 9/14/2026 – 2:00 PM

**Americans with Disabilities Act**
**(Government Code Section 54954.2)**

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**ITEM #5**

September 22, 2026

Legislative Program Committee
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

**PROPOSED 2027 STATE & FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM**
**Fiscal Impact: None**

This is to request that the LPC review the attached 2027 State & Federal Legislative Platform and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve at the September 29, 2026 meeting. The primary purpose of the platform is to provide a basis for quick response by the County Administrative Office and the County's lobbying firms as issues arise. The platform also identifies the County's legislative priorities to help guide County departments in recommending legislative positions.

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.

The proposed platform has been developed in response to legislative events, broad state and federal policy initiatives, and the County's efforts to ensure equitable program and funding relationships in Sacramento and Washington D.C. In general, the platform calls for local decision making as well as the authority and financial ability to provide local services as efficiently as possible.

The platform also emphasizes the continuing need to preserve local revenues for local purposes and to provide full state and federal funding to counties for mandated programs, including adjustments that reflect the increasing cost of operating these programs. Overall, the platform will serve as a reference point as deliberations proceed on the state and federal budgets and in other policy areas, and copies will be provided to members of our delegation serving in the State Legislature and Congress.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that the LPC review the 2027 State & Federal Legislative Platform and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve the document at its September 29, 2026 meeting.

Sincerely,

Nancy Anderson
County Administrative Officer

NA:TB 2027 State & Federal Legislative Platform (LPC)

Attachment

cc: All County Departments
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange
Townsend Public Affairs



# 2027 STATE & FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

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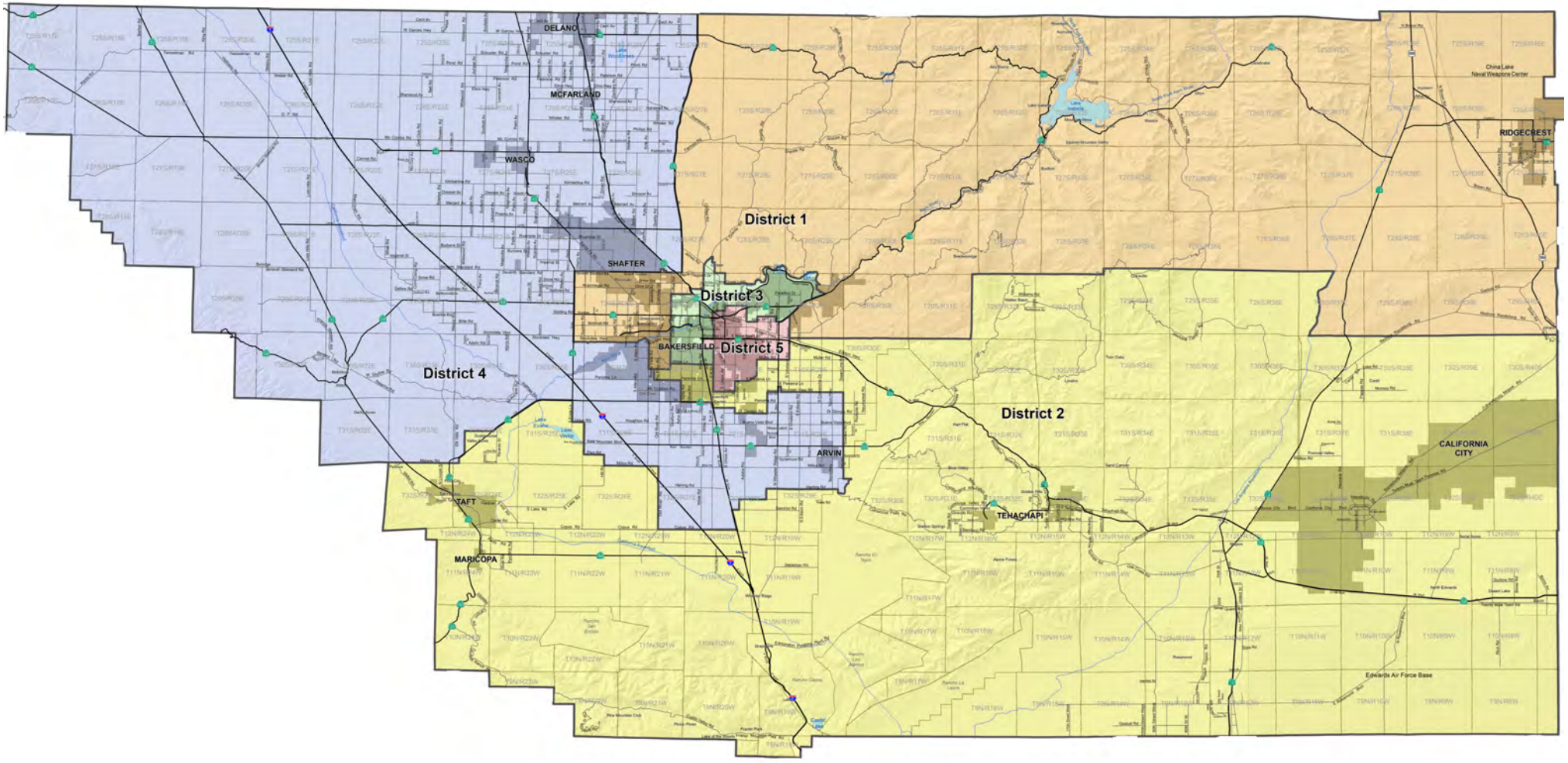
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# KERN COUNTY SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS






# 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*

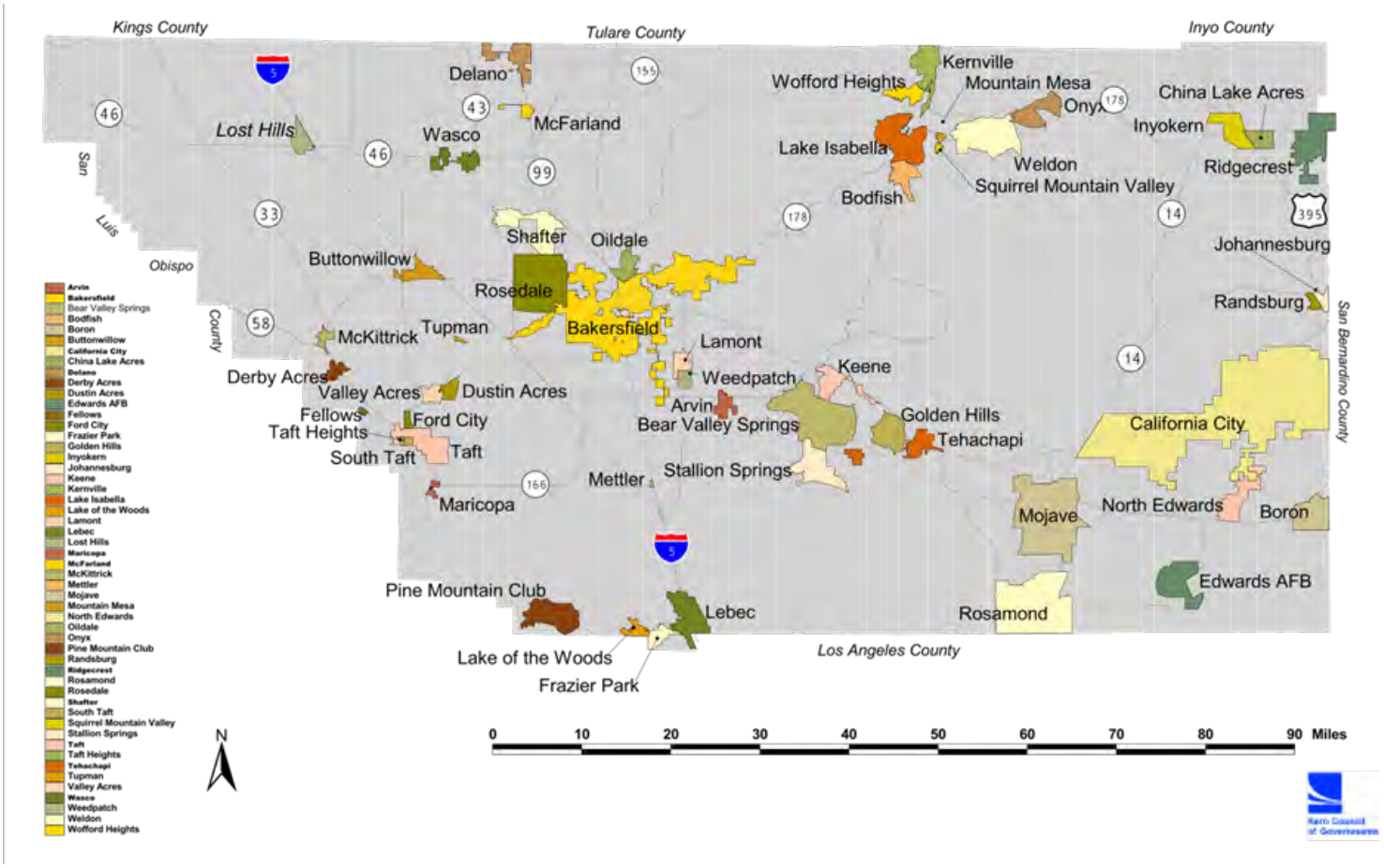


# ABOUT KERN COUNTY

## 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.

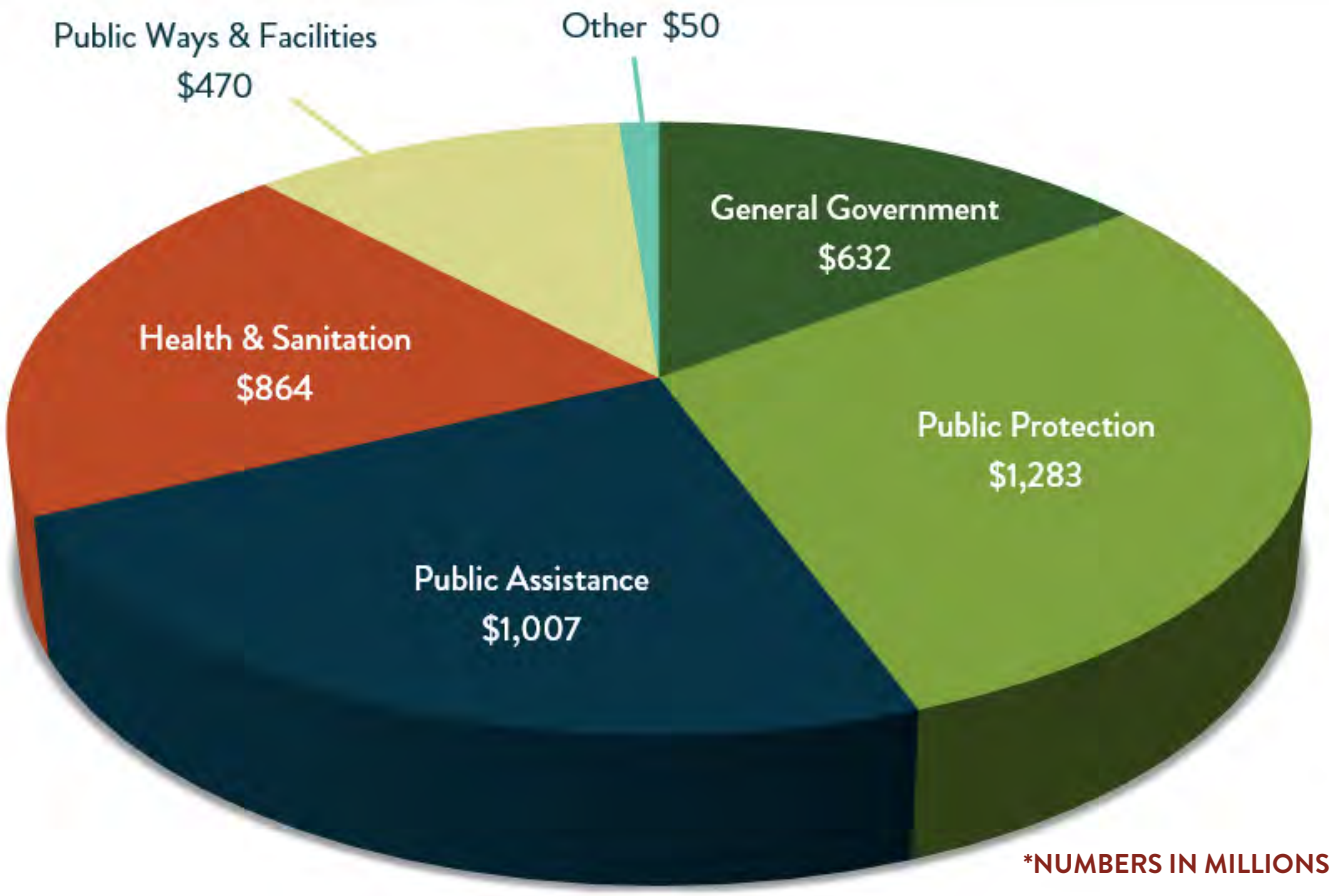
As a full-service community, Kern County recognizes the need for active legislative engagement at the state and federal levels to protect and enhance the interests of Kern County's residents and businesses. Accordingly, County officials maintain close relationships with state and federal representatives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





# ABOUT KERN COUNTY

## FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 BUDGET BREAKDOWN




*NUMBERS IN MILLIONS

# CONTACTS

### COUNTY STAFF

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Townsend Public Affairs
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Chief Lobbyist
600 Pennslyvania Ave SE, Suite 360
Washington, D.C. 20003
BGoldeen@Townsendpa.com



# 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 | |
|---|---|
| $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.




# STATE & FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

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ITEM #6

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** **Kern County Board of Supervisors Legislative Program Committee**
Supervisor Phillip Peters, District 1
Supervisor Jeff Flores, District 3

**From** **Townsend Public Affairs**
Ben Goldeen, Federal Advocacy Director
Spencer Street, Senior Associate
Christopher Townsend, President

**Date:** September 22, 2026

**Subject:** Legislative Program Committee Federal Affairs Report

This report provides an overview of key federal developments affecting Kern County, including updates on the County's Fiscal Year 2027 Community Project Funding requests, congressional activity on major legislation, federal agency actions, and emerging policy issues under consideration in Washington.

## Fiscal Year 2027 Appropriations Update

The following table provides a status update on Kern County's Fiscal Year 2027 community project funding requests.

| Project | Delegation Member | Dollar Amount of Request | Status/Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Panama Road Rehabilitation Project | Rep. Valadao | $4,900,000 | Included in H.R. 9170, the House Transportation-HUD appropriations bill. Awaiting further action. |
| California City Boulevard Extension Project | Rep. Obernolte, Rep. Fong, Sen. Schiff | $3,000,000 | Included in H.R. 9170, the House Transportation-HUD appropriations bill. Awaiting further action. |
| Kern County Emergency Communications Project | Rep. Valadao | $3,200,000 | Included in H.R. 8845, the House Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill. Awaiting further action. |

H.R. 8845, the Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Bill was reported out of the House Appropriations Committee on May 13, 2026 by a vote of 32-28. No further action has been taken on the bill. Similarly, H.R. 9170, the House Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bill was reported

out of the House Appropriations Committee on June 3, 2026 by a vote of 34-27 and awaits consideration by the full House.

Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations will continue to be debated in Congress throughout the fall. Enactment of a continuing resolution extending current funding levels through December 11, 2026 will provide negotiators additional time to reach a bipartisan and bicameral agreement following the November elections.

### Update on Kern Valley Health District Support

Townsend Public Affairs assisted the Board of Supervisors to advocate for federal approval of the Kern Valley Health District's pending FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant application. The grant funding would support a shovel-ready, approximately $32 million seismic upgrade project at the Kern Valley Hospital Facility needed to maintain compliance with California's 2030 hospital seismic safety requirements. Although the application cleared FEMA regional review and was nearing final approval, it was halted following the suspension and review of BRIC grants for compliance with a 2025 Executive Order.

On September 2, the County submitted a letter to Senators Alex Padilla and Adam Schiff and Representative Vince Fong urging them to contact FEMA leadership and seek reinstatement and final approval of the application. Townsend Public Affairs received confirmation from the office of Representative Fong that they have contacted FEMA requesting a status update on the pending grant award. TPA continues to support coordination with the congressional delegation and relevant federal and state partners to emphasize the project's urgency and the potential loss of the Kern River Valley's only local emergency and acute care facility if the required seismic improvements cannot move forward.

### Update on VA Bakersfield Community Based Outpatient Clinic

Townsend Public Affairs is working with Kern County Board of Supervisors leadership to advocate for construction of the long-delayed Bakersfield Veterans Affairs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic. On July 20, the County submitted a letter to Senators Alex Padilla and Adam Schiff supporting H.R. 8469, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2027. The letter specifically urged retention and enactment of Section 260, which would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to begin construction of the clinic by September 30, 2027.

The proposed 40,000-square-foot facility on Knudsen Drive would expand local access to primary, dental, and specialty care, reducing the need for Kern County veterans to travel long distances for treatment. The County emphasized that the project has received environmental clearance and survived significant litigation, yet remains the only one of 14 VA clinics authorized by Congress in 2009 that has not been delivered.

Townsend Public Affairs continues to engage the County's congressional delegation in support of Section 260 and a firm construction timeline for the facility. H.R. 8469 was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives on May 15, 2026 by a vote of 400-15 and awaits further consideration by the U.S. Senate. Negotiations between the House and Senate over the bill will continue throughout the fall with the goal of reaching a bicameral compromise ahead of the December 11, 2026 government funding deadline.

### Update on Proposed Reforms to Federal Grantmaking Process

Townsend Public Affairs worked with Kern County staff to analyze the Office of Management and Budget's proposed revisions to 2 CFR Part 200, the Uniform Guidance, which determines the process through which federal grants are awarded and administered. The County urged OMB to

limit and clarify federal award termination authority, narrow event-services requirements to federally funded activities, establish objective standards for pre-award and subrecipient reviews, provide sufficient implementation time and technical assistance, and preserve notice-and-comment procedures for future substantive changes.

Townsend Public Affairs shared the County's comments with members of the Kern congressional delegation and requested meetings with congressional staff to discuss the proposal's near-term implications and seek support for addressing provisions that could disrupt local budgets, grant administration, and continuity of services. Meetings were held in August with congressional delegation staff to provide further detail of the anticipated impacts.

Language was included in the continuing resolution signed into law on September 2, 2026 delaying implementation of the rule until December 11, 2026. The rule will continue to be debated in Congress as the House and Senate negotiate final government funding bills for the coming fiscal year.

## Federal Legislative Update

### Congress Passes Continuing Resolution, Averting the Potential for a Government Shutdown Until December, Extending Surface Transportation Funding, Delaying OMB Proposed Rule

On September 1, the House passed HR 6500, a Continuing Resolution (CR) maintaining FY26 funding levels past the end of the fiscal year on September 30, through December 11. The President is expected to sign the measure, and has already indicated support via a Statement of Administration Policy. As is normal in CRs, they do not contain funding for congressional earmarks, also known as Community Project Funding (CPF) or Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) requests.

The bill pushes the deadline to fund the federal government via the appropriations process past the midterm elections. The appropriations process has been stalled due to the continued absence of Senator Mitch McConnell, without whom Republicans lack a majority on the Senate Appropriations Committee. The House has passed their drafts of all 12 appropriations bills. Despite optimism the Senate will produce their bipartisan drafts before the October recess,

The bill also extends funding and the authorization for programs under the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which were set to expire on September 30 alongside government funding. Additionally, the bill would delay implementation of any Final Rule by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) increasing the Administration's control over the federal grantmaking process. It is currently unclear whether agencies can separately pursue their own rulemaking to implement OMB's proposal.

### Senate Agriculture Committee Marks Up Farm Bill, Democrats Oppose Despite SNAP Changes

On August 6, the Senate Committee on Agriculture held a business meeting to consider a proposed compromise on the Farm Bill, covering agriculture programs and food assistance for five years. Congress last passed a complete Farm Bill in 2018 and has used extensions since 2023.

The compromise bill makes revisions to HR 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act's (OBBBA), new cost-sharing arrangements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), pushing implementation of the administrative cost sharing arrangement one year in exchange for a higher local share, up to 20%, in states with payment error rates in excess of 10%. While initially thought to be a sufficient compromise, Democrats still expressed opposition to the plan, arguing against the higher penalties and asked for a two-year delay.

The House passed their version, HR 7567 on April 30, though it lacked widespread Democratic support. Ultimately, the bill is subject to the filibuster in the Senate and will require 60 votes to pass out of the chamber, and it will need to again pass the House.

**21st Century ROAD To Housing Act Becomes Law**

On July 10, an amended version of HR 6644, the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act became law. The bill represents the most significant change in federal housing policy in over three decades and makes meaningful reforms to McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act, alongside other reforms to 42 USC, which governs federal housing policy across a number of titles. The bill contains no advance appropriations or additional funding. Versions of the legislation have passed between the House and Senate since July of 2025, and many provisions were modified in the final compromise agreement. The final enrolled bill text and a section-by-section analysis are now available.

The bill creates new flexibility in formula and entitlement programs like Community Development Block Grants, limits and streamlines National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews, introduces new grant and technical assistance programs, and eases financial regulations for developers and community banks funding affordable housing development. Importantly, the bill does not preempt any local zoning, permitting, or building codes.

The bill will be implemented over the next one to three years, as agency staff begin work to promulgate new federal rules and regulations, stand up new programs, and receive feedback on draft regulations through the rulemaking process.

**EPA Revitalizes Local Government Advisory Committee**

On August 12, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the revitalization of the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC), a group of local elected officials who provide independent policy recommendations on regulatory reforms to EPA leadership.

The revitalized board will consist of nine reappointments and 13 new appointees. While none are from California, they represent cities, counties, and state governments from 19 states, and, according to EPA, their first meetings will focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI) data center siting and permitting regulations. That meeting will be announced in the Federal Register per notice requirements.

**HHS Announces Head Start Reform Rulemaking**

On August 6, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced, and on August 7 posted, a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to reform the Head Start program. Head Start is a free early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent-support services program for low-income children and families. It can be administered by cities, school districts, and counties depending on the subset of funding and services provided.

The 200-page NRPM proposes eliminating a number of administrative requirements and reducing efforts to enroll multilingual families alongside changes to physical activity and nutrition standards. Recipients would also be required to reduce administrative costs from a maximum of 15% to 5%. HHS believes the reduction in administrative costs will save the program $2.2 billion, a portion of which could be reinvested to enroll more students, but advocates are concerned that changes to base requirements could lower the national standard for early childhood education.

Public comment on the NPRM is open through October 6, 2026. HHS would still need to issue a proposed rule and a final rule before implementation of any of the changes. Each of these steps would likely require a public comment period of at least 60 days.

**Appeals Court Rules on Federal Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund**

On August 4, an Appeals Court ruled against the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) March 2025 attempt to cancel $20 billion in funding for the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), created by the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act. The GGRF provided loans to banks to make investments in low or zero emission industrial and energy infrastructure projects.

While the GGRF had its remaining funding rescinded by HR 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), effective July of 2025, plaintiffs are challenging the recission of funding ahead of that date, arguing that the EPA improperly withheld funding until it was rescinded. A previous court order from a federal district judge had enjoined both the banks transferring the funding and the EPA from taking further action.

The new order was delayed for a few days to allow the EPA to appeal to the Supreme Court, leaving the final impact of the order unclear.

**EPA Proposes to Limit Federal New Source Review Requirements, Defaulting California Projects to CARB Standard**

On July 7, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a Proposed Rule titled, "Minor New Source Review Program Air Permitting Public Participation Requirements for State Implementation Plans." The Proposed Rule would limit federal requirements for public participation in New Source Reviews (NSR), leaving decisions about public participation requirements for State and local minor NSR programs turned over to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and local air quality districts meeting other requirements under the Clean Air Act (CAA).

In California, the changes are not likely to impact requirements for New Source Review (NSR) since generally California maintains higher standards than the CAA, though CARB could opt to adopt a lower standard for public engagement in the future if the rule becomes final. The Proposed Rule would only apply to the construction of new minor stationary sources, while modifications to existing stationary sources would continue to be regulated under the CAA's minor NSR programs. New stationary sources are considered "minor" if they do not have the potential to emit air pollutants in amounts equal to or exceeding the "major source" statutory thresholds within parts C and D of CAA Title I.

**DOJ and DHS Issue Interim Final Rule on Local Counter-Drone Measures**

On July 6, the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) posted an Interim Final Rule in the Federal Register titled, "Counter-UAS Authority for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Law Enforcement and Correctional Agencies" implementing Sec. 8601 of S 1071,

the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26 NDAA), the Safer Skies Act. The Safer Skies Act, alongside Representative Lou Correa's DRONE Act, allows State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Law Enforcement (SLTT) to purchase and operate commercial drones for public safety purposes and provides limited authority for drone mitigation measures.

The Interim Final Rule breaks SLTT authorities over commercial drones into two categories. Detection, identification, monitoring, tracking, and warning commercial drone pilots, including through confiscation of their equipment is permitted, but the drone's flight cannot be mitigated. The second part of the rule defines the circumstances under which SLTT law enforcement can disrupt, disable, interfere, seize control over, or disable, damage, or destroy a drone, deploying Counter Uncrewed Aerial Systems (CUAS) equipment. SLTT officers must first be certified by a national schoolhouse to use the equipment, which has faced a bottleneck since opening, and will only have access to technology approved by the Secretaries of Defense, Homeland Security, and Transportation along with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), since current CUAS equipment can significantly damage cellular networks and interrupt radio and broadband access.

The Interim Final Rule is open for comments through September 4, but went into effect July 1.

## County Federal Legislative Positions

| Bill Number | Bill Title | Sponsor | Position | Summary | Latest Major Action |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H.R. 8469 | Making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2027 | Rep. John Carter | Support | This bill provides FY2027 appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and related agencies, including a requirement to begin construction of the Bakersfield VA Outpatient Clinic | Received in the Senate<br>5/20/2026<br>Passed the House 400-15<br>5/15/2026 |
| H.R. 7437 | Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act | Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet | Support | A bill to improve federal transportation programs by ensuring funding reaches communities efficiently and is used where it delivers the | Referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure<br>2/9/2026 |

| Bill Number | Bill Title | Sponsor | Position | Summary | Latest Major Action |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | greatest public benefit | |
| H.R. 7296 | SAVE America Act | Rep. Chip Roy | Support | A bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to require proof of United States citizenship to register an individual to vote in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes. | Passed the House as S.1383 by yea-nay vote 218-213<br>2/11/2026 |
| S.1272 | Trade Review Act | Sen. Maria Cantwell | Support | A bill to provide for notification to, and review by, Congress with respect to the imposition of duties. | Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance.<br>4/3/2025 |
| S. 4603 | Golden Mussel Eradication and Control Act of 2026 | Sen. Schiff | Support | A bill to amend the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 to establish a demonstration program with respect to the golden mussel. | Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.<br>5/20/2026 |

| Bill Number | Bill Title | Sponsor | Position | Summary | Latest Major Action |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H.R. 3944 | Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2026 | Rep. John Carter | Support | A bill to fund the Department of Veterans Affairs and military construction projects for Fisal Year 2026. | Became law (P.L. 119-37) as part of H.R. 5371<br>11/12/2025<br><br>Amended in the Senate, passed the Seante by Yea-Nay vote 81-15<br>8/1/2025<br><br>On passage passed the House by the Yeas and Nays: 218 – 206<br>6/25/2025 |
| H.R. 3132 | CHOICE for Veterans Act of 2025 | Rep. Jack Bergman | Oppose | To amend title 38, United States Code, to allow for certain fee agreements for services rendered in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of initial claims and supplemental claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. | Ordered to be Reported by the House Committee on Veterans Affairs by the Yeas and Nays: 12 - 11.<br>5/6/2025 |

| Bill Number | Bill Title | Sponsor | Position | Summary | Latest Major Action |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H.R. 2499 | To Codify Executive Order 14248 | Rep. Abraham Hamadeh | Support | The bill would codify Executive Order 14248 entitled “Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections,” giving it the full effect of law. | Introduced and referred to the Committees on House Administration, Judiciary, and Ways and Means. 3/31/2025 |
| S. 1240 | Defending America’s Future Elections Act | Sen. Alex Padilla | Oppose | S. 1240 seeks to repeal Executive Order 14248, entitled "Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections", and prohibit federal coordination and use of certain data sources to verify voter<br><br>eligibility. | Introduced and referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration 4/1/2025 |
| H.R. 22/S. 128 | SAVE Act | Rep. Chip Roy/Sen. Mike Lee | Support | A bill to require documentary proof of US citizenship when registering to vote in federal elections. | H.R. 22 Received in the Senate 4/10/2025<br><br>House. On passage Passed by the Yeas and Nays: 220 - 208 (Roll no. 102) 4/10/2025 |

| Bill Number | Bill Title | Sponsor | Position | Summary | Latest Major Action |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H.R. 471 | Fix Our Forests Act | Rep. Bruce Westerman | Support | This bill establishes requirements for managing forests on federal land, including requirements concerning reducing wildfire threats, expediting the review of certain forest management projects, and implementing forest management projects and other activities. | Hearing Held, Senate Agriculture Committee 3/6/2025<br><br>Received in the Senate 1/28/2025<br><br>House, passed 279-141 1/23/2025 |
| S.1462 | Fix Our Forests Act | Sen. John Curtis | Support | This bill establishes requirements for managing forests on federal land, including requirements concerning reducing wildfire threats, expediting the review of certain forest management projects, and implementing forest management projects and other activities. | Ordered to be favorably reported by Senate Agriculture Committee<br>10/21/2025<br><br>Hearing held, Senate Committee on Agriculture<br>5/6/2025 |
| H.R. 3109 | REFINER Act | Rep. Bob Latta | Support | This bill requires the Department of Energy to direct the National Petroleum Council to publish a report on petrochemical refineries located in the United States. | House. On passage Passed by the Yeas and Nays 230-176 (Roll no. 303)<br>11/20/2025 |

# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

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Chris Parlier..... District 2
Jeff Flores..... District 3
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Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

July 20, 2026

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
Hart Senate Office Building, 331
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Schiff
Unites States Senate
Hart Senate Office Building, 112
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Support for H.R. 8469 – Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2027 – Section 260, Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Bakersfield, CA**

Dear Senator Padilla and Senator Schiff,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to convey the deep concern of our community regarding the long-delayed Bakersfield Veterans Affairs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), and to express our strong support for H.R. 8469 – the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2027, particularly Section 260, which would finally require the Department of Veterans Affairs to begin construction on this long-promised facility no later than September 30, 2027.

**The Urgent Problem**
In 2009, Congress approved fourteen new VA clinics nationwide. Today, the Bakersfield clinic remains the only one still undelivered, despite the clear need and full federal authorization. Our veterans continue to rely on an outdated facility on Westwind Drive whose lease has already expired. As a result, the VA is forced to pay roughly $400,000 per month under a holdover clause, an extraordinary waste of federal resources that benefits only the private landlord, not the veterans the facility is meant to serve.

The planned 40,000-square-foot CBOC at 5512 Knudsen Drive would expand primary care, dental care, and specialty services, all critical offerings that would prevent local veterans from traveling long distances, including to Los Angeles, for basic treatment.

**Years of Litigation and Obstruction**
For more than a decade, progress has been stalled by aggressive litigation largely driven by entities affiliated with the owners of the current Westwind Drive facility. These groups have repeatedly filed lawsuits under CEQA, NEPA, and the Endangered Species Act, claiming environmental harm to the Bakersfield kit fox. Local officials and veteran advocates have repeatedly raised alarm that these

lawsuits amount to “green mail” or the strategic use of environmental laws to slow federal construction and maintain a profitable, expired lease.

**Environmental Clearance and Recent Breakthroughs**
In April 2025, the VA released its Final Environmental Assessment concluding that the Knudsen Drive site poses no significant environmental impacts. Notably, the report found that failing to build the clinic generates greater regional air quality impacts, because local veterans are forced to drive long distances for care.

In July 2025, a Kern County Superior Court judge ruled in favor of the City of Bakersfield, affirming that the city’s air quality analysis fully complied with CEQA and allowing the project to proceed, though opponents may still pursue appeals.

**Why Section 260 Is Essential**
Despite environmental clearance, judicial validation, and congressional authorization, the project remains stalled. Section 260 of H.R. 8469 is the first measure that would impose an unequivocal requirement on the VA: construction must begin no later than September 30, 2027. This statutory deadline is critical to ensure that bureaucratic indecision and litigation tactics can no longer obstruct delivery of a facility that has already been delayed for almost two decades.

**Broader Importance of H.R. 8469 to Kern County**
Kern County is home to a large and proud population of veterans, service members, and military families supported by major installations such as Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake and Edwards Air Force Base. Federal investments provided through this appropriations bill strengthen the infrastructure, modernization, and quality of life on these bases and in the surrounding communities.

H.R. 8469 also includes critical support for:

- Military construction and modernization
- VA medical care, mental health services, and housing assistance
- Veteran homelessness initiatives
- VA Community Care programs
- Mental health and suicide-prevention funding

These investments are especially vital in rural and underserved regions like ours, where access to VA facilities and services is often limited and where the delay of the Bakersfield CBOC has had severe and lasting impacts.

The record is clear, the Bakersfield VA clinic has undergone thorough environmental review, survived years of litigation, and has full congressional authorization. Every month of delay costs taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars while local veterans continue to wait for the care Congress promised them in 2009. Section 260 offers the only practical path to ensuring this facility is finally built.

On behalf of Kern County and our military community, we respectfully urge swift passage of H.R. 8469 with the inclusion of Section 260. Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to our veterans and service members.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Kern House Delegation
Jose Lopez, Kern County Veterans Services Director
Townsend Public Affairs

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September 2, 2026

The Honorable Alex Padilla
U.S. Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Schiff
U.S. Senate
SD-B40B, Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Vince Fong
U.S. House of Representatives
243 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20003

**Re: Immediate Action Needed – Kern Valley Healthcare District FEMA BRIC grant application approval for seismic upgrades**

Dear Congressional delegates,

California law requires all Acute Care Hospitals to meet seismic safety standards by 2030 or face closure. Kern Valley Healthcare District (KVHD) serves one of the most underprivileged and medically underserved areas in the state. If this hospital is forced to shut down due to seismic noncompliance, thousands of residents will lose access to the only local emergency and acute care facility they rely on.

For years, the KVHD has worked tirelessly to meet the 2030 mandate. Construction plans were completed and fully approved by the California Department of Health Care Access and Information on April 14, 2024, with extensions granted through April 14, 2027. The project is shovel-ready, professionally estimated at $32 million, and waiting only for the funding needed to break ground.

KVHD, in coordination with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), submitted a FEMA BRIC grant application (BRIC 22 EMF-2022-BR-044-0020) to secure the needed funding. The grant application has already cleared FEMA regional review and was just two weeks from final document signing when a federal executive order abruptly halted all BRIC grants for that cycle. This left our community without any viable path forward and has placed the hospital at immediate risk.

**We urgently need our elected officials to intervene.**

The Washington, D.C. FEMA office and Administration must be pressed, without delay, to reopen and approve this already-vetted regional FEMA project. Lives, access to care, and the future stability of an entire rural region depend on swift action. It is our understanding that the KVHD grant is literally sitting on a desk in Washington D.C simply awaiting sign-off and final approval by FEMA leadership.

We respectfully request that you contact FEMA leadership immediately and advocate for reinstating and approving this critical seismic safety grant. The Kern River Valley cannot afford further delays, and the community cannot afford to lose its hospital. On behalf of the entire Board of Supervisors, we thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Simon Kriech, Cal OES
Jacob Parsley, Cal OES
Concepcion Chavez, Cal OES
Amelia Muccio, Hagerty Consulting
Robert Easterday, Kern Valley Healthcare District
Ben Goldeen, Townsend Public Affairs

ITEM #7

Shaw
Yoder
Antwih
Schmelzer
& Lange

1415 L Street
Suite 1000
Sacramento
CA, 95814
916-446-4656

**MEMORANDUM**

| | |
|---|---|
| To: | Kern County Board of Supervisors Legislative Program Committee |
| | Supervisor Phillip Peters, District 1 |
| | Supervisor Jeff Flores, District 3 |
| From: | Paul Yoder, Partner, SYASL |
| | Dylan Elliott, Advocate, SYASL |
| Date: | September 22, 2026 |
| Subject: | Legislative Program Committee State Affairs Report |

The Legislature closed out its 2026 session after an extended final push, working through Sunday, late into Monday night, and into a limited final day on Tuesday, September 1. That extra day was possible because, while most legislative business must conclude by midnight August 31, the California Constitution allows certain measures, namely those with urgency statutes, to be taken up on or after September 1. Several late-amended bills, most notably AB/SB 113 (the Budget Bill Jr.) and SB 492 (wildfire liability), would not have satisfied the 72-hour in-print requirement by the time they went into print and required extra time to be heard.

**Bills Sent to the Governor**

Despite uncertainty heading into the final sprint, legislative leaders finalized agreements on several consequential proposals before adjourning:

- **SB 577 (Laird)** established a negotiated package of reforms governing childhood sexual assault claims.
- **AB/SB 113, 193 and 187** made up the end-of-session budget package. Together, these bills included $2.7 billion in Proposition 4 climate bond proceeds, $450 million in discretionary Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) revenue, and wage parity provisions for goat herders.

As of the time of this report's writing, Governor Newsom has signed over 170 bills and has not yet vetoed any. This number includes bills sent to him prior to the final sprint at the end of this year's session. Between August 20th and final adjournment, the Legislature sent over 900 bills to the Governor. For those measures, Governor Newsom has until midnight on Wednesday September 30th to act on the remaining measures on his desk except for AB 113 (the Budget Bill Jr.) and SB 931 (Dolly Parton, authored by Senator Grove). For those two measures, because they contain urgency statutes, the Governor will have twelve days to act on them once they are formally presented to him. During his tenure, Governor Newsom has not allowed a bill to become law without his signature and has averaged a veto rate of 14%.

**Wildfire Liability Collapse**

A deal on wildfire liability was the notable exception to an otherwise productive close to session. A late compromise on SB 492 (Senator Becker, Assemblymember Petrie-Norris) fell apart in the final hour before the two Chambers gaveled out. While the Senate appeared ready to move forward, Assembly Democrats caucused Tuesday morning and ultimately decided not to bring the bill up for a vote.

Speaker Robert Rivas explained that the compromise did not adequately address the structural nature of California's wildfire liability problem, saying Californians expected more than "half measures." Assembly members also cited concerns about the compressed process and the limited time available to evaluate such consequential policy. Utilities took a different view, arguing that the compromise did not go far enough to reduce their wildfire-related financial exposure. Both PG&E and Southern California Edison saw their stock prices fall as it became clear the final deal omitted many of the structural liability changes they had sought.

For local governments, the final version of SB 492 had already removed earlier provisions that could have shifted wildfire-related costs onto counties, including provisions affecting recovery for damaged public infrastructure, emergency response costs, and lost property tax revenue. As a result, the version of the bill that ultimately died had largely resolved the direct concerns counties had raised during negotiations.

The consequences of the failed agreement were swift. On Wednesday, PG&E announced it would defer approximately $2 billion in planned 2027 California investments, reducing its planned capital spending from roughly $13.4 billion to $11.4 billion. The deferred work includes some electric and gas infrastructure projects, including work tied to connecting new customers and power generation to the grid. PG&E said it will continue critical safety programs and compliance obligations, including its Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

Separately, Governor Newsom sent a September 1 letter to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) expressing concern that financial instability in the utility sector could drive up already high utility bills and constrain investments needed to support the state's economic growth and clean-energy goals. He directed the Commission to monitor credit-rating agencies and financial markets and to prepare a report by November 1 examining the statewide effects of the Legislature's failure to enact structural reforms. The report is expected to address potential credit-rating downgrades, increased borrowing costs, limitations on access to capital, consequences for customer bills, and broader impacts on economic development.

Assembly Energy Committee Chair Cottie Petrie-Norris and other Assembly leaders plan to hold informational hearings this fall on wildfire liability, utility accountability, the needs of wildfire survivors, and the financial stability of the Wildfire Fund. There has also been discussion of a possible special session, though the Governor has not called one.

The Legislature will reconvene December 7 for the organizational session opening the 2027-28 Legislative Session, then recess until January 4, 2027. In the meantime, attention turns to the Governor, who has until 11:59 p.m. on September 30 to sign or veto bills sent to his desk during the final days of session.

**Legislation**
Now that all legislation introduced this year is either dead or on the Governor's Desk, please see a full list of the bills for which Kern County has a position on that are now on the Governor's Desk here.

In our November report, we will provide a high level summary of the disposition of bills tracked by the County throughout the year, but we want to bring to your attention several specific bills now on the Governor's desk of specific note to the County:

SB 661 (Hurtado): Transfers from the General Fund (GF), the Local Public Safety Fund (LPSF), and the Local Revenue Fund (LRF) to the Aeronautics Account in the State Transportation Account certain revenues derived from the imposition of state sales and use tax (SUT) on jet fuel and dedicates those revenues to specified airports and aviation-related purposes.
*Kern County Board of Supervisors position: Support*

AB 1383 (McKinnor): Modifies the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA) to increase pensionable compensation, defined benefit retirement formulas, and contribution cost sharing.
*Kern County Board of Supervisors position: Oppose*

AB 1156 (Wicks): Allows additional Williamson Act cancellations that facilitate the development of a solar facility located within a critically-overdrafted basin or subbasin to qualify for reduced or eliminated cancellation fees provided those cancellations include a community-benefits agreement.
*Kern County Board of Supervisors position: Oppose*

AB 1547 (Bains): Requires the University of California (UC), by January 1, 2028, to complete a feasibility study for the establishment of a UC medical school branch campus in Kern County.
*Kern County Board of Supervisors position: Support*

SYASL continues to advocate on Kern County's positions and perspective on these measures, along with the others for which the County has a position, with the Governor's Office now that they have reached his desk.

**Budget Allocations in SB/AB 113 (Budget Bill Jr.)**

Throughout the course of this year, specific earmark requests seemed increasingly unlikely due to the fiscal circumstances being faced by the state. However, in the final budget actions passed by the Legislature during this session, Legislators were provided a limited opportunity to request allocations in support of their districts. As such, Kern County received several direct appropriations through the Budget Bill Jr., SB/AB 113 as outlined below. While not all encompassing of the priority funding asks the County sought this year, we do find it important to note that Kern County was among the highest receiving jurisdictions for direct allocations.

1. Community and Emergency Disaster Center – $2,000,000 – Emergency services facility
2. Kern Medical – $2,000,000 – Mobile dental unit (2 chairs + X-ray)
3. Meadows Field Airport – $750,000 – Airport infrastructure/regional aviation expansion

4. Office of Emergency Services – $500,000 – Cybersecurity/counterterrorism preparedness for schools, water systems, critical infrastructure
5. Office of Veterans' Services – $100,000 – Grants for veteran-owned businesses/entrepreneurs
6. Public Health Services Dept. – $88,000 – Rural cancer prevention, screening, patient navigation

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August 25, 2026

The Honorable Monique Límon
Senate President Pro Tempore
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento CA, 95814

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Speaker California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento CA, 95814

**RE: Rural Equity and Statewide Policy Concerns Reflected in AJR 23**

Dear Senator Límon and Assembly Member Rivas,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to provide perspective on Assembly Joint Resolution 23 (AJR 23). We believe this resolution reflects an increasingly urgent concern shared by many rural and inland communities who feel that large portions of California feel unheard, unseen, and disproportionately burdened by statewide policymaking.

Kern County has long been a willing partner in advancing California's economic, environmental, and energy goals. Our residents take great pride in contributing to the prosperity of the entire state. However, recent years have brought mounting frustration as major policy decisions, particularly around energy, land use, water, and taxation, have imposed significant strain on the very regions that help keep California running.

For decades, Kern County has served as the backbone of California's energy supply. Our oil and gas sector is not only central to statewide economic stability but also provides thousands of local jobs and supports vital public services. Yet the continued effort to eliminate this industry, often through accelerated regulatory restrictions rather than collaborative planning, has left our community feeling targeted rather than supported. Kern is working diligently to transition and diversify, but the pace and structure of state-level mandates threaten our ability to do so responsibly and sustainably.

Similarly, policies that grant broad tax advantages to large-scale solar developments have created an uneven playing field. These incentives reduce Kern's local tax base and limit our capacity to fund public safety, infrastructure, and essential services. While we support renewable energy and recognize its critical role in California's future, current policies do not adequately account for the fiscal impacts borne almost entirely by rural counties like ours.

Our agriculture industry, another cornerstone of Kern's identity and economy, is increasingly constrained by the implementation of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act requirements.

Water scarcity is a real and pressing challenge, and we fully recognize the need for long-term stewardship. Yet many rural communities feel the weight of compliance without receiving the commensurate support, flexibility, or infrastructure investment necessary to keep our agricultural sector viable.

In many ways, the sentiment expressed through AJR 23 mirrors a dynamic familiar at the statewide level. Just as California has, at times, felt targeted by what it views as aggressive or heavy-handed policy tactics by the federal government, many rural counties experience a similar sense of being pressured or overwhelmed by state policies that impose sweeping change without sufficient collaboration or regard for local conditions. This parallel is not meant to equate the two circumstances, but to highlight how deeply frustrating it can feel when decisions are made far from home and communities believe their voices are marginalized.

Moreover, this dynamic runs counter to the vision our nation's founders intended for our democratic system. They understood that a healthy republic depends on broad inclusion and meaningful representation. When significant portions of the population feel left out of critical policy discussions, it undermines the very principles of balance, participation, and shared governance that our founders considered essential to the nation's stability and unity.

These issues are not isolated. Collectively, they illustrate a broader trend where rural and inland counties often lack a meaningful seat at the table when statewide decisions are made. Kern County remains committed to partnership, innovation, and problem-solving. But we cannot ignore the growing sentiment that policies developed in Sacramento frequently overlook the realities facing communities outside California's coastal population centers.

For these reasons, our Board believes the frustration expressed through AJR 23 is so palpable that it deserves serious reflection within the Legislature. We respectfully urge lawmakers to consider how current approaches to energy, taxation, agriculture, and local governance are affecting inland California, and to prioritize stronger collaboration with the counties that provide the workforce, land base, and resources essential to the entire state's prosperity.

Kern County stands ready to work constructively with the Legislature to develop balanced, durable solutions that support both our local communities and California's long-term statewide goals. We appreciate your attention to these concerns and hope AJR 23 will serve as an opportunity for renewed dialogue and partnership.

Respectfully,

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor of California
The Honorable Heather Hadwick, California State Assembly, District 1
The Honorable Leticia Castillo, California State Assembly, District 58
The Honorable Alexandra Macedo, California State Assembly, District 33

The Honorable Joe Patterson, California State Assembly, District 5
The Honorable Kate Sanchez, California State Assembly, District 71
The Honorable Megan Dahle, California State Senate, District 1
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Nathan Barankin, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Christine Aurre, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor
California State Association of Counties
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

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August 11, 2026

Senate President pro Tempore Monique Limón
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

Speaker of the Assembly, Robert Rivas
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Request for immediate legislative action on goat herder wage standards and impacts on wildfire mitigation efforts**

Dear pro Tem Limón and Speaker Rivas,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to urge immediate legislative action to address an emerging statewide crisis affecting California's wildfire prevention capacity due to the State's current wage interpretation for goat herders and its resulting impact on prescribed grazing operations.

Targeted grazing by goats has become one of the most effective and environmentally responsible methods for reducing hazardous vegetation in areas too steep, remote, or rugged for machinery or hand crews. State agencies, including Cal Fire and the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, recognize prescribed goat grazing as an essential tool for wildfire mitigation and long-term landscape resilience.

However, recent changes to California's wage requirements for goat herders now threaten the continued viability of these operations. Although a UC Davis study completed in 2026[1] confirmed that goat herding and sheep herding constitute substantially the same work, wage parity between the two professions has not been maintained. As of July 1, 2026, H-2A sheep herders and goat herders earned roughly $58,000 annually, including housing, food, and transportation. Under the State's new wage interpretation, goat herder compensation is projected to increase to an estimated $240,000 annually beginning in August, while wages for sheep herders would remain unchanged.

Because prescribed grazing operations typically rely on mixed groups of sheep and goats, this inconsistent wage structure creates an impossible financial burden for grazing providers. Without legislative correction, operators will be forced to reduce or eliminate services entirely. The resulting loss of targeted grazing capacity would severely compromise California's wildfire resilience efforts at the very moment our state faces increasingly frequent and destructive fires.

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[1] https://www.dir.ca.gov/Reports/California-Sheepherders-and-Goat-Herders-SB-143-Study.pdf

We respectfully request that the Legislature act swiftly to restore wage parity and provide clarity so grazing operators can continue delivering this vital public safety service. Failure to address this issue will directly reduce statewide fire-mitigation capacity, increase vegetation fuel loads, and place communities, particularly those in high-risk wildfire zones, at heightened danger.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to protecting California's communities and natural landscapes. Kern stands ready to support efforts to resolve this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor of California
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Joe Tyler, Director Cal Fire
Kern County Fire Department
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

Shaw
Yoder
Antwih
Schmelzer
& Lange

1415 L Street
Suite 1000
Sacramento
CA, 95814
916-446-4656

August 24, 2026

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
1021 O Street, Suite 1000
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: AB 1156 (Wicks) – Continued Opposition Despite Proposed Amendments**

Dear Assemblymember Wicks,

On behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, I write to express continued opposition to AB 1156 (Wicks). Although the author has proposed amendments intended to address stakeholder concerns, the revisions do not resolve Kern County's core objections regarding local authority, contract integrity, and long-term fiscal impacts.

The Williamson Act is built on a voluntary contractual relationship between counties and landowners. For nearly six decades, counties (not the State) have administered, monitored, and implemented these contracts even when the State ended funding for Williamson Act subventions nearly two decades ago. AB 1156 would fundamentally alter that balance. Under the proposed amendments:

- Applicants may request cancellation fee waivers directly from the Secretary of Natural Resources;
- A 10-year ministerial "extension-to-waiver" mechanism guarantees fee elimination once a solar project is constructed; and
- The Governor's Office would be authorized to nullify Williamson Act contracts for certified Environmental Leadership Development Projects (ELDP) following local permit approval.

These provisions substantially expand State authority over agreements to which the State is a not party to, and they transfer decision-making power away from counties that have historically served as stewards of agricultural lands.

The Williamson Act includes rigorously defined cancellation criteria to ensure that transitions away from agricultural use occur transparently and only when warranted. The fee waiver mechanisms added to AB 1156, particularly the ministerial extension leading to automatic waiver, undermine this framework by creating new pathways that bypass long-standing standards.

The proposed ELDP nullification process represents an even more consequential departure. Although local agencies would retain CEQA lead status, the State's authority to void contracts after local permit approval effectively sidesteps local judgment regarding whether established cancellation criteria have been met.

Kern County hosts more utility-scale solar than any county in California and expects additional projects as SGMA-driven fallowing expands. Kern recognizes the importance of renewable energy development, but not at the expense of weakening agricultural land protections or diminishing the stability of long-term local land-use agreements.

AB 1156 incentivizes conversion of contracted agricultural land without providing corresponding safeguards that ensure communities hosting these projects do not bear disproportionate impacts. The proposed amendments do not address fiscal concerns related to contract dissolution, tax equity, or the cumulative effect on county services.

Likewise, while AB 1156 differs in subject matter from recent legislation concerning solar tax valuations (SB 1329, McNerney), it reflects a similar pattern: State-driven policy changes that reshape local land-use or fiscal frameworks in ways that consistently disadvantage rural counties that host California's clean energy infrastructure. Kern County remains committed to supporting the State's renewable energy objectives, but sustainable implementation requires preserving county authority, contract integrity, and equitable fiscal treatment.

For these reasons, Kern County respectfully maintains its opposition to AB 1156, and urges the Legislature to pursue solutions that genuinely support SGMA-impacted regions and renewable energy deployment without undermining local control or the foundational structure of Williamson Act contracts. Kern stands ready to work collaboratively on policies that advance renewable energy goals while protecting the agricultural, fiscal, and governance interests of rural counties.

Sincerely,



Paul J. Yoder
Legislative Advocate

CC: Honorable Chair and Members, Assembly Local Government Committee
Honorable Chair and Members, Assembly Energy & Utilities Committee
Honorable Chair and Members, Assembly Agriculture Committee
Honorable Chair and Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Honorable Chair and Members, Senate Local Government Committee
Honorable Chair and Members, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
Honorable Chair and Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, Kern State Legislative Delegation

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July 28, 2026

The Honorable Sabrina Cervantes
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7330
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2656 (Petrie-Norris), Public employee notice for AI services – OPPOSE**

Dear Senator Cervantes,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, in lockstep with CSAC, UCC, RCRC and a broader coalition, to express our opposition to AB 2656 (Petrie-Norris), which will require local agencies to provide a recognized employee organization no less than 45 days' written notice before taking an action to develop, purchase, or require the use of any generative artificial intelligence (AI) to perform a service that is within the scope of work of the job classification represented by the recognized employee organization.

Like much of the public sector, local agencies are cautiously testing the use of artificial intelligence tools in day-to-day operations. Tools that promise to streamline routine activities (like the notetaking tools included in virtual meeting software such as Zoom and Teams) allow our employees to focus their time and attention on the most important components of serving the public. Often, these tools are routine elements of daily o ice life, like ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot, and such tools are frequently included in off-the-shelf software ubiquitous in the modern o ice environment.

When tools become available that assist with specific aspects of public service (like charting in a health clinic or monitoring drinking water safety), they are often vetted in partnership with employees with the mutual goals of ensuring staff is empowered to focus on certain aspects of their work and providing more efficient and effective outcomes that benefit the public. We fail to see the benefit of imposing delays on routine purchases of tools that are simply available for employees to use.

It is not clear how local agencies should interpret the notice requirements before they may develop an AI tool. When does development truly begin? When does it end? How could this requirement apply to training of an AI tool? How will the "taking an action" trigger be interpreted? It is unclear how these agencies should interpret these provisions of the law, which could lead to overreporting and delays.

Importantly, local agencies remain subject to the statutory provisions of the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA) and Ralph C. Dills Act, which require local agencies to meet and confer with recognized employee organizations regarding changes to employees' wages, hours, or terms and conditions of employment. Existing law provides a robust framework for determining when particular uses of generative AI may actually have a significant and adverse effect on the employment relationship, in which case notification (and more) is already required. This bill is therefore both redundant and unnecessary.

Finally, non-education local agencies are subject to last year's AB 339 (Chapter 687, Statutes of 2025), which requires additional notice to recognized employee organizations regarding a range of local agency contracting activities, even when those activities do not rise to the level of triggering meet-and-confer obligations under the MMBA's usual standards. This additional notification requirement has been incredibly burdensome for local agencies and has required a significant amount of time, legal resources, and training to implement. Adding further unworkable provisions under this bill would exacerbate these concerns and represent another state mandate for which the state may be obligated to provide reimbursement under Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors opposes this measure and respectfully urges you to vote **NO on AB 2656**.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

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August 5, 2026

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable John Laird, Chair
Senate Committee on Budget & Fiscal Review
1021 O Street, Suite 8720
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Dr. Corey Jackson, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
1021 O Street, Room 6120
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
1021 O Street, Suite 6630
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Urgent Request to Delay CWS-CARES Launch and Strengthen Accountability Measures**

Dear Chairs Gabriel, Laird, Jackson, and Menjivar,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to respectfully urge the Legislature to delay the planned October 26, 2026 launch of the Child Welfare Services–California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES) by six to eight months and adopt the Trailer Bill Language (TBL) and Budget Bill Language (BBL) proposed by the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) to ensure essential accountability and oversight.

Counties cannot safely implement CWS-CARES on the current timeline. With less than three months until go-live, the system remains incomplete, critical functionality is still in development, persistent testing gaps plague implementation, and ongoing county readiness activities still need to be completed. Frontline workers participating in Production Simulation continue to identify significant defects, unresolved issues previously raised during Extended User System Testing, and note missing or malfunctioning core features required for daily child welfare practice.

Launching an unfinished system puts children at risk. System failures, data gaps, and workflow breakdowns could lead to uninvestigated abuse or neglect, unnecessary removals, placement instability, compromised worker safety, and even child fatalities. Counties also lack the time and resources needed to train staff effectively; training materials remain incomplete, access issues persist, and in-person schedules are uncertain. Even if those processes were in place, staff cannot be trained on functionality that is still under development, making safe implementation at this stage impossible.

These risks fall directly on county child welfare agencies, social workers, and the vulnerable children we serve. A delay, paired with clear, enforceable readiness milestones, is the only responsible path forward. CWDA estimates that a six- to eight-month extension would require $100 million to $180.7 million in State General Fund depending on federal match availability. This investment is modest compared to the catastrophic consequences of launching an unsafe system.

In summary, moving ahead as planned would endanger foster children, overwhelm frontline workers, and shift unacceptable liability onto counties. As a result, we respectfully urge you to adopt CWDA's critical TBL and BBL actions to protect California's most vulnerable children and families.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Staff, Senate Committee on Budget & Fiscal Review
Staff, Assembly Committee on Budget
County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA)
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Kern County Department of Human Services
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

Phillip Peters ..... District 1
Chris Parlier..... District 2
Jeff Flores..... District 3
David Couch..... District 4
Leticia Perez..... District 5

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

July 20, 2026

The Honorable Shannon Grove
Senate District 12
1021 O Street, Suite 7150
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Melissa Hurtado
Senate District 16
1021 O Street, Suite 6510
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Stan Ellis
Assembly District 32
1021 O Street, Suite 5350
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Tom Lackey
Assembly District 34
1021 O Street, Suite 5340
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jasmeet Bains
Assembly District 35
1021 O Street, Suite 5730
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Proposed Sustainable Aviation Fuel Tax Credit - OPPOSE**

Dear Kern delegates,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to respectfully oppose the proposed Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) tax credit included in the Governor's January budget proposal. As drafted, this proposal would divert critical transportation dollars to a new SAF subsidy with uncertain additional benefits, no clear limitation to in-state production, and no adequate showing that the credit is necessary given recent changes in federal credits and market conditions.

This proposal would divert diesel excise tax revenues away from the roads, bridges, freight corridors, and local streets they are intended to support. The proposal is estimated to reduce diesel excise tax revenues by as much as $165 million per year initially, growing to $300 million annually over time, with potentially even larger impacts depending on credit claims. That means less funding for local streets, roads, and bridges. In our county alone this could lead to a reduction of between $754,000 and $2.7 million annually, funds which are critically needed to address our existing road and bridge maintenance backlog.

This proposal comes at the exact wrong time. California is already facing an estimated $31 billion transportation funding shortfall over the next decade. With roads, highways, bridges, freight corridors, and local streets already facing significant maintenance and safety needs, the state should not further reduce diesel excise tax revenues to subsidize SAF.

It also cuts against the voter-approved principle that fuel tax revenues should support transportation purposes. Article XIX of the California Constitution provides that fuel tax revenues are to be used for the research, planning, construction, improvement, maintenance, and operation of public streets and highways, as well as certain public mass transit guideways and related facilities. California should not reduce voter-protected transportation resources to fund a new SAF subsidy.

The proposal is also not sufficiently targeted to California production. As drafted, the credit could provide substantial benefits to out-of-state SAF producers while reducing California transportation revenues. California should not cut into funding for its own roads and safety programs to subsidize production and economic activity elsewhere without a clear showing of additional in-state jobs, investment, and measurable benefits.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors urges you to reject the proposed SAF tax credit as part of the budget package. If California considers SAF incentives in the future, they should be narrowly targeted, limited to truly additional in-state production, structured to protect transportation funding, and tied to measurable benefits.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

# BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

Phillip Peters ..... District 1
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Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

August 11, 2026

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 1013 (Cervantes), Automated license plate recognition (ALPR) restrictions - OPPOSE**

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our opposition to SB 1013 (Cervantes), which would impose significant new restrictions and operational requirements on law enforcement use of automated license plate recognition (ALPR) systems. While well-intentioned, the bill would hinder the ability of agencies to investigate crimes efficiently, collaborate across jurisdictions, and retain critical information needed for emerging cases.

Of particular concern, the bill's prohibition on default access to national ALPR databases and its limitations on interagency data sharing would slow or obstruct cross-jurisdictional investigations where timely access to vehicle information is often vital. The bill's strict data-retention mandate, requiring deletion of non–hot-list scans after 30 days, creates the risk that potentially important information will be purged before agencies even know it is needed, particularly in cases that develop over time.

Additionally, the administrative burdens imposed by the bill, which include expanded logging requirements tied to case numbers, detailed privacy policies, mandatory data-security and privacy training, and heightened employee access controls, would significantly increase costs for agencies already facing resource constraints. These operational impacts would effectively stymie investigative flexibility and impede the effective deployment of ALPR technology as a public-safety tool.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors opposes this measure and urges the Legislature to work with law enforcement stakeholders to develop safeguards that enhance privacy without compromising community safety or investigative capability.

Sincerely,

Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Kern County Sheriff's Office
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

**COALITION TO PROTECT COMMUNITY SERVICES | *California JPIA***

# Establish Proportionate Liability for Local Governments

Under California's joint and several liability rule, a city found just **1% at fault can be forced to pay 100% of a plaintiff's economic damages**—when the other responsible co-defendants can't pay. Every dollar consumed by disproportionate liability judgments and inflated settlements is a dollar unavailable for community services that our residents rely on: police and fire protection, roads and infrastructure maintenance, parks, libraries, senior services and youth sports programs.

Establishing proportionate liability means that local governments named in lawsuits would be required to pay only their actual share of fault, as determined by the court. Not only is this more fair, but it would help to solve a rapidly escalating problem—a fiscal crisis of runaway liability costs for cities and other local government agencies that have limited taxpayer funding to provide much needed public services.



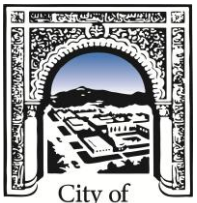
# COALITION TO PROTECT COMMUNITY SERVICES | *California JPIA*

















































































































**COALITION TO PROTECT COMMUNITY SERVICES | *California JPIA***

August 17, 2026

To Members of the Legislature:

On behalf of the Coalition to Protect Community Services, we write to express our strong support for meaningful tort reform in civil actions against public entities, consistent with the priorities of other local government organizations statewide.

Specifically, we support:

- Proportionate (several) liability for economic damages in civil actions against public entities, so that taxpayers pay only for the share of harm attributable to the public agency.
- Caps on damages in civil actions against public entities, ensuring that injured parties are fairly compensated, while also preserving the capacity to deliver essential public services.

Local governments across California are facing a growing liability crisis. In many cases, it is not a result of agencies improperly delivering services or mismanaging risk—but because the current legal framework systematically exposes public entities to liability far beyond their actual share of responsibility.

For cities and special districts, rising settlements and liability costs pose an existential threat to the services we provide. **Multi-million dollar claims against local agencies—arising from public roadways, sidewalks, public property, and routine government services—have increased sharply, and the rising costs are unsustainable**. Insurance premiums paid by local agencies have grown 370%, climbing from $115 million in 2016 to $541 million in 2025. And since 2019, public entity liability costs have more than tripled, now exceeding $7 billion in known exposure.

When a local government agency faces a liability judgment, the cost is borne collectively by liability risk pools—meaning it is ultimately funded by the taxpayers of every member community across California—or directly by the local agency if it is not a member of a risk pool. Dollars spent defending and paying out lawsuits are dollars diverted from public safety, road maintenance, parks, and the core local services these agencies exist to provide.

We stand ready to work with the Legislature, the Administration, and all involved stakeholders to craft a practical and meaningful solution to this growing problem.

## Can we count on your support to help safeguard essential public services?

CALIFORNIA JOINT POWERS INSURANCE AUTHORITY

*Providing Innovative Risk Management Solutions for Our Public Agency Partners*

8081 Moody Street, La Palma, CA 90623 | (562) 467-8700 | cjpia.org

## COALITION MEMBERS — as of August 17, 2026

1. California Contract Cities Association
2. California Joint Powers Insurance Authority
3. City of Alhambra
4. City of Arcadia
5. City of Artesia
6. City of Atascadero
7. City of Azusa
8. City of Bakersfield
9. City of Barstow
10. City of Bellflower
11. City of Blythe
12. City of Camarillo
13. City of Carson
14. City of Cerritos
15. City of Chino Hills
16. City of Clovis
17. City of Commerce
18. City of Corona
19. City of Diamond Bar
20. City of Duarte
21. City of El Cajon
22. City of Fontana
23. City of Fountain Valley
24. City of Goleta
25. City of Hawaiian Gardens
26. City of Indian Wells
27. City of La Mirada
28. City of La Palma
29. City of La Puente
30. City of La Quinta
31. City of La Verne
32. City of Lake Forest
33. City of Lakewood
34. City of Lomita
35. City of Monrovia
36. City of National City
37. City of Needles
38. City of Norwalk
39. City of Palos Verdes Estates
40. City of Paramount
41. City of Pismo Beach
42. City of Port Hueneme
43. City of Rolling Hills
44. City of Salinas
45. City of San Clemente
46. City of San Dimas
47. City of San Juan Capistrano
48. City of San Luis Obispo
49. City of San Marcos
50. City of Santa Paula
51. City of Signal Hill
52. City of Solvang
53. City of Temple City
54. City of Thousand Oaks
55. City of Torrance
56. City of Victorville
57. City of West Covina
58. City of Wildomar
59. County of Fresno
60. County of Kern

61. Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA)
62. Foothill Transit
63. Public Agency Risk Management Association (PARMA)
64. Rossmoor Community Services District
65. Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
66. Town of Apple Valley
67. Town of Yucca Valley

September 9, 2026

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Director Caroline Thomas Jacobs
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
3650 Schriever Avenue
Mather, CA 95655

**Subject: Request for Immediate State Action (Executive Order) to Protect California Communities Before the 2026–27 Winter Season**

Dear Governor Newsom and Director Thomas Jacobs:

On behalf of the below signatories, we respectively request immediate state action to help local agencies prepare for the impending 2026-27 winter storm season. As of August 24, 2026, NOAA is predicting a 69% chance of a historic El Nino that would exceed the strength of previous El Nino events dating back to 1950. Further, NOAA and the European Climate Centers are also predicting increasing likelihoods of wet winter seasons across California.

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts is predicting a greater than 50% chance that rainfall totals in most of California will be in the highest 20% of the climatological record for the December through February 2027 period (exhibit attached). The model also predicts a greater than 70% chance of extreme rainfall for much of coastal California. It is now very likely that California will experience stronger and more persistent storms, including repeated atmospheric river events across California.

We are aware of the letter submitted by the Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency and its member agencies requesting an Executive Order to expedite urgent vegetation management, debris removal, sediment management, bridge scour protection and related flood-risk reduction activities within vulnerable river channels, tributaries, and flood-control corridors. **We support Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency's request and additionally request that such an Executive Order be extended to the entire state.**

Despite local agencies' best attempts with maintenance, waterways throughout California are grappling with persistent issues such as excess vegetation growth, sediment buildup, and debris emanating from devastating wildlands fires across California, heavy rains from the winters of 2022-23 and 2023-24, abnormally strong monsoonal rainfall in the deserts and Tropical Storms Kay and Hilary.

Order N-10-23, referenced in the Pajaro letter, underscored the importance of completing vegetation management, sediment removal, and debris clearing ahead of the rainy season, with the intent to minimize risks associated with subsequent high-flow events. At the same time, it ensured that appropriate environmental protections remained in place throughout these urgent activities.

Accordingly, we respectfully join and expand Pajaro Regional Flood Management Agency's request that your Administration take statewide action to:

1. Issue an Executive Order authorizing expedited vegetation management, debris removal, sediment management, bridge scour protection, channel-capacity improvements, and related flood-protection activities in waterways presenting significant flood risks;

2. Provide statewide regulatory streamlining consistent with the emergency authorities exercised under Executive Order N-10-23, while maintaining appropriate environmental protections;

3. Temporarily suspend applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and its implementing regulations for specifically identified emergency and preventive flood-risk reduction projects, to the extent permitted by law, where compliance would delay the timely completion of essential work before

the winter storm season. Any such suspension should be narrowly tailored to urgent activities necessary to protect life, property, critical infrastructure, agricultural lands, and public safety;

4. Include preventive and response provisions for California Coastal Act and California Endangered Species Act, which were absent from N-10-23;
5. Direct state agencies to prioritize and expedite permitting, consultation, and technical assistance necessary to complete these projects before the winter rainy season; and
6. Direct the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and other appropriate state agencies to provide all available funding, equipment, personnel, technical support, emergency-planning assistance, and other resources to help local communities prepare for a worst-case flooding scenario this winter.

We further request that Cal OES work directly with local jurisdictions to identify funding and resource gaps, strengthen evacuation and emergency-response planning, support community preparedness and public outreach, and pre-position critical state resources wherever feasible. Our most vulnerable communities, including low-income neighborhoods, farmworker families, rural residents, seniors, and individuals with limited transportation, must not be left unprepared.

The window for preventive action is rapidly closing. Taking decisive action now will help safeguard California communities, agricultural resources, transportation networks, and public infrastructure from potentially catastrophic flooding. Early intervention is far less costly, and far less disruptive to families, than emergency response and disaster recovery after flooding occurs.

We appreciate your continued leadership in advancing California's resilience to extreme weather. We stand ready to work collaboratively with your Administration, Cal OES, and other state and federal partners to reduce flood risks and protect California communities before the approaching winter season.

Sincerely,



Charles Delgado
Legislative Advocate
California State
Association of Counties



Adam Borchard
Executive Director
California Central Valley
Flood Control
Association



Amanda Bloom
Executive Director
California Association of
Environmental Health
Administrators



Supervisor Bill Connelly
Chair, Butte County
Board of Supervisors



Brian Tisdale
Councilmember, City of
Lake Elsinore
Advocacy Committee
Chair, Western Riverside
County of Governments



Supervisor Doug Chaffee
Chair, Orange County
Board of Supervisors



Chris Sneddon
Director, County of Santa
Barbara Public Works
Department



Supervisor Diane Burgis
Chair, Contra Costa
Board of Supervisors



Supervisor Daron
McDaniel
Chair, Merced County
Board of Supervisors



Dina Purvis
Public Works Director,
City of Indian Wells



Elisia De Board
Governmental Relations
and Legislative Officer
County of Sacramento



Elizabeth Espinosa
Legislative Advocate
County of Santa Barbara



Erin Evans-Fudem
Legislative Deputy
County Counsel
County of Santa Clara



Supervisor Eric Lucan
President, Marin County
Board of Supervisors



J.M. Barrett
General Manager
Coachella Valley Water
District



Jason Uhley
General Manager-Chief
Engineer
Riverside County Flood
Control and Water
Conservation District



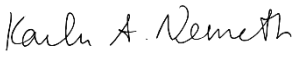
Joseph DeConinck
Chair, CVAG



Josh Gauger
Legislative Advocate
Ventura County



Joshua Golka
Head of State
Government Relations
Valley Water



Karla Nemeth
Executive Director
Association of California
Water Agencies



Len Materman
Chief Executive Officer
San Mateo County Flood
and Sea Level Rise
Resiliency District



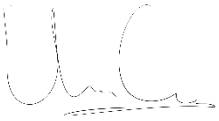
Mark Strudley
Executive Director
Pajaro Regional Flood
Management District



Matthew Parr
Director of Economic
Development and
Government Affairs
County of San Diego



Mayor Daniel Lurie
City and County of San
Fancisco



Mayor Ulises Cabrera
City of Moreno Valley



Mohsen Maali
Acting Director of Public
Works / City Engineer
City of Temecula



Supervisor Monica
Martinez
Chair, Santa Cruz County
Board of Supervisors



Noel Castillo
Chief Flood Control
Engineer
San Bernardino County
Flood Control District



Supervisor Amy Shuklian
Chair, Tulare County
Board of Supervisors

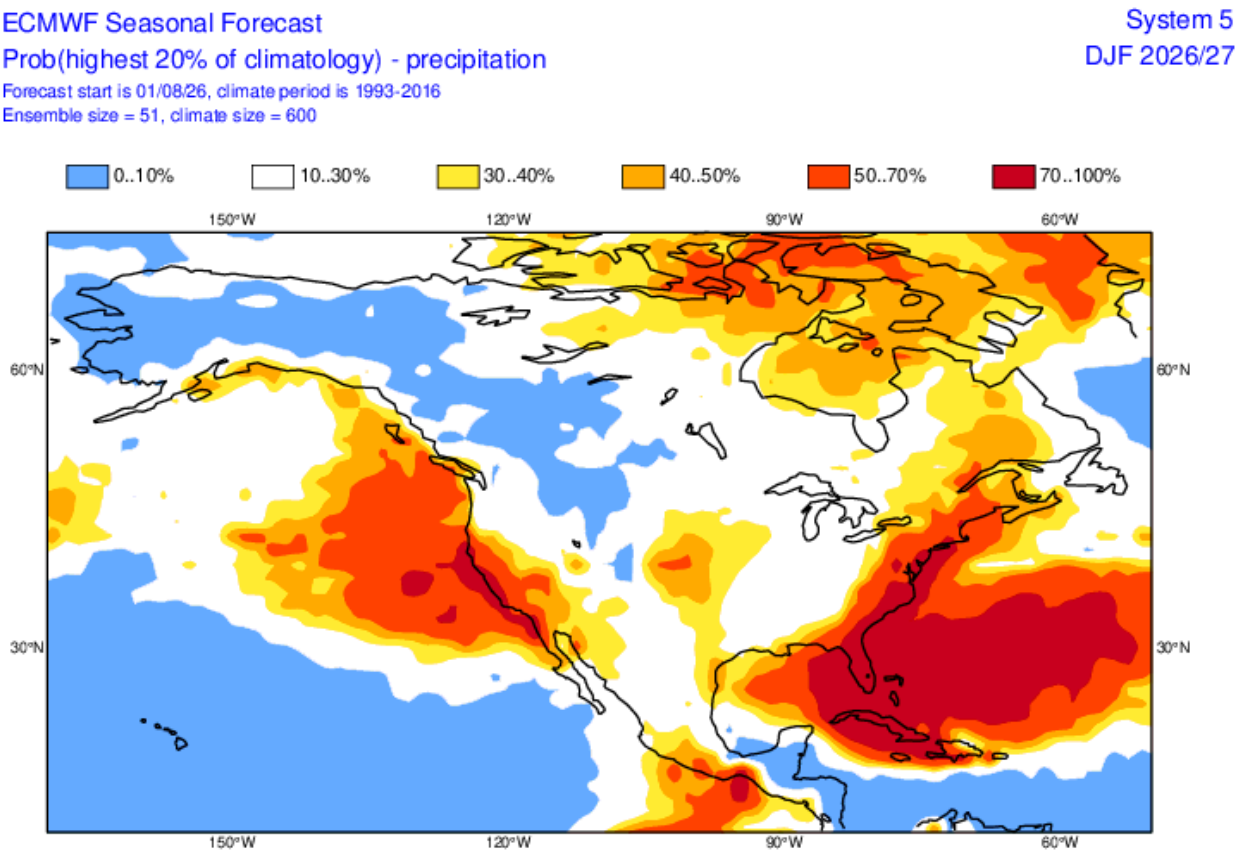


Kam Bezdek
Legislative Affairs
Director
Northern California
Water



Supervisor Phillip Peters
Chair, Kern County Board
of Supervisors

Exhibit:  European Center For Medium Range Forecasts Season Forecast for Dec 2026 through February 2027 chance of rainfall totals in the highest 20% of climatology.




LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES
CSAC
RCRC
RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES OF CALIFORNIA
NAPA COUNTY CALIFORNIA
COLTON
INCORPORATED • 1887
YREKA
"THE GOLDEN CITY"
CITY OF OCEANSIDE
City of Santa Rosa
City of WILLITS
GATEWAY TO THE REDWOODS
Pride of the West
Portola • California
CITY OF LOMITA
FOUNDED 1907
INCORPORATED JUNE 30, 1964
CALIFORNIA
MISSION VIEJO
1988
CALIFORNIA
City of ARCATA
CITY OF SAN MARCOS
VALLEY OF DISCOVERY
INCORPORATED JANUARY 28, 1963
CHARTERED JULY 4, 1994
THE CITY OF BENICIA
CALIFORNIA
VACAVILLE
City of Thousand Oaks
CITY OF WEED
CITY OF BIG BEAR LAKE
INCORPORATED 1980
CITY OF SANTA CRUZ
CALAVERAS COUNTY
CITY OF BREA–ORANGE COUNTY–CALIFORNIA
INCORPORATED FEBRUARY 23, 1917
BEVERLY HILLS
CITY OF AZUSA
INCORPORATED
DEC. 20
CALIFORNIA
CITY OF LOS ALAMITOS
CITY OF NAPA
CITY OF GLENDORA
INDUSTRY
INCORPORATED 1911
CITY OF DEL MAR
CALIFORNIA
CITY OF WALNUT CREEK
THE CITY OF PLEASANTON
DALY CITY
GATEWAY TO THE PENINSULA
CALIFORNIA
Claremont · California · 1887
VISALIA
Stanislaus County


DIAMOND BAR
INCORPORATED
1989


THE COUNTY OF FRESNO
1856


THE CITY OF
HALF MOON BAY
CALIFORNIA


HEMET
CALIFORNIA
YOUR HORIZON IS HERE.


HESPERIA
1988


CITY OF
RIO DELL
CALIFORNIA


CITY OF
JACKSON
CALIFORNIA


NOVEMBER 24, 1987
CITY OF HIGHLAND


CITY OF
LAVERNE
SINCE 1906


RPV


CITY OF
ORINDA


CITY OF
MONROVIA
1887


MARIPOSA COUNTY
18
50
MOTHER OF COUNTIES


CITY OF MANTECA, CALIFORNIA
Manteca
the family city
INCORPORATED MAY 28, 1918


COUNTY
OF
Placer


THE SEAL OF
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY CALIFORNIA


NEVADA
COUNTY
CALIFORNIA

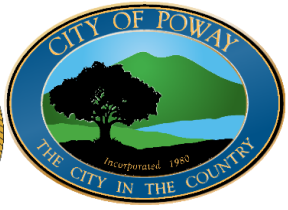

CITY OF
RIVERSIDE

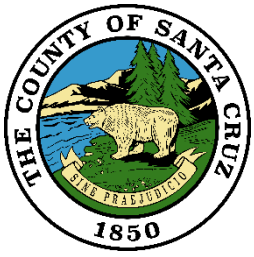

CITY OF ROLLING HILLS, CALIFORNIA


Sunnyvale


CITY OF SAN FERNANDO
INCORPORATED
AUG. 31 1911
CALIFORNIA


KERN COUNTY
CALIFORNIA


CITY OF POWAY
Incorporated 1980
THE CITY IN THE COUNTRY


THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
SINE PRAEJUDICIO
1850


CITY OF
SIERRA MADRE


TEHAMA COUNTY
CALIFORNIA


TRACY

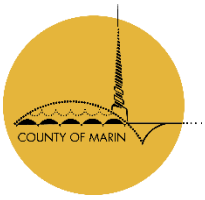

Redwood
City
California
Founded 1867


SUTTER
COUNTY


Temecula
The Heart of Southern California
Wine Country


CITY OF WHITTIER CALIFORNIA
INC. 1898


THE CITY OF CAMARILLO CALIFORNIA
LAS PERSONAS SON LA CIUDAD


COUNTY OF MARIN


City of West Hollywood
California 1984


CITY OF PETALUMA
1858


CITY OF WALNUT
CALIFORNIA


Yuba
COUNTY


MENDOCINO
COUNTY
1850

August 17, 2026

The Honorable Monique Limón
Senate President pro Tempore
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Robert Rivas
Assembly Speaker
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Opposition to Forthcoming Wildfire Liability Reform Package that Would Limit Public Agency Recovery**

Dear Senate Pro Tem Limon and Assembly Speaker Rivas,

On behalf of the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and the undersigned local elected officials, cities and counties, we are calling on you to **reject efforts to limit public agency recovery** when private electric utilities cause wildfires, as proposed in the Governor's wildfire liability reform package, prompted by the SB 254 Report.

This proposal will wrongly shift costs to taxpayers and force devastating consequences on public agencies and wildfire victims already struggling to rebuild their communities. The proposal relies on the false hopes that public property, infrastructure and emergency response costs can be recovered from FEMA or insurance. Limiting public agency recovery will only shift costs to taxpayers and leave public agencies financially stranded – or even worse, bankrupt. **We strongly oppose the following reforms and urge the Legislature to reject them outright from being included in any wildfire package that will advance this legislative session.**

1. **Limiting Public Property and Infrastructure Damages Imperils Public Agencies Tasked with Rebuilding their Communities**

The proposal will have negligent private electric utilities pay just pennies on the dollar to rebuild critical infrastructure and public facilities that are destroyed. Limiting such costs to the mere depreciated value of the public facility or infrastructure will impact the rebuilding of:

- Public facilities and buildings
- Water, sewer, roads, communication, and traffic signal infrastructure
- Parks, schools, libraries, and fire stations

When a private electric utility causes a wildfire, they are required to fully compensate for property damage. Public agencies cannot rebuild damaged infrastructure on recovery dollars that only cover the depreciated value of an asset. Rebuilding public facilities and infrastructure is not a luxury - it is an essential public service for homeowners, businesses, and communities to return home.

2. **Limiting Recovery for Emergency Response and Mutual Aid Forces Public Agencies to Absorb Costs and Increase Financial Risk, Waiting Years For FEMA Reimbursement While Communities Struggle to Recover**

The proposal prevents public agencies from recovering emergency response and mutual aid costs from the very private electric utilities who cause these devastating wildfires and inappropriately suggest FEMA as the solution. Limiting emergency response cost recovery will be catastrophic for small jurisdictions and fracture our mutual aid system upon which the state and communities rely on. There is a federal obligation to pursue negligent parties per the Stafford Act. This will create ambiguity when negligent parties must meet that requirement and will jeopardize federal reimbursement. FEMA has strict rules on recoverability, and some events aren't even eligible for FEMA reimbursement. Since FEMA is a reimbursement model, funds must be spent upfront. Interpretations in FEMA change from Administration to Administration, creating uncertainty whether future relief will even be available for these incidents.

3. **Eliminating Property Tax Losses Leaves Communities Financially Stranded**

Schools, cities, counties, and special districts rely on property taxes to fund basic needs in our communities. The proposal will financially strand public agencies by eliminating the ability to bring claims for lost property taxes. This has tremendous consequences for essential public services, including fire, police, social services programs, drinking water, public infrastructure, and drastically risks school closure.

There is no evidence in the SB 254 Report to suggest that public agency claims are unreasonable or unjustified. **Public agency damages amounted to merely 4% of the total wildfire claims that utilities paid from 2017 to 2024.** Public infrastructure, lost tax revenue, emergency response, and mutual aid are necessary and critical for local governments to function while struggling to rebuild their communities. **If public agencies cannot recover costs from negligent private electric utilities, local taxpayers will pay more instead. The very survivors whose community burned will foot the bill which is NOT an equitable approach to socializing wildfire risk.**

We respectfully request the Legislature to protect public infrastructure, safeguard emergency response and our mutual aid system, and protect taxpayers from this private electric utility bailout – and to reject the Governor's proposal to limit public agency recovery when such utilities cause wildfires.

Sincerely,

Melissa Sparks-Kranz
Legislative Advocate
League of California Cities

John Kennedy
Senior Policy Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California

Jordan Wells
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

**And on behalf of the following cities, counties and local elected officials:**

City of Arcata
City of Azusa
City of Benicia
City of Beverly Hills
City of Big Bear Lake
City of Brea
Calaveras County
Contra Costa County
City of Camarillo
City of Poway
City of Claremont
City of Colton
City of Daly City
City of Del Mar
City of Diamond Bar
Fresno County
City of Glendora
City of Half Moon Bay
City of Hemet
City of Hesperia
City of Highland
City of Jackson
Kern County
City of La Verne
City of Lomita
City of Los Alamitos
City of Manteca
Mariposa County
Mendocino County
Marin County
City of Monrovia
City of Mission Viejo
City of Napa
Napa County
Nevada County
City of Oceanside
City of Orinda
City of Palm Desert
City of Petaluma
Placer County
City of Pleasanton
City of Portola
City of Rancho Palos Verdes
Redwood City
City of Rio Dell
City of Riverside
City of Rolling Hills
City of San Fernando
City of San Marcos
City of Santa Cruz
Santa Cruz County
City of Santa Rosa
City of Sierra Madre
City of Sunnyvale
Stanislaus County
Sutter County
Tehama County
City of Temecula
City of Thousand Oaks
City of Tracy
City of Vacaville
City of Visalia
City of Walnut
City of Walnut Creek
City of Weed
City of West Hollywood
City of Whittier
City of Willits
City of Yreka
Yuba County

Supervisor Anne Contrell, Napa County
Mayor Brett Taylor, City of Visalia
Mayor David Tennessen, City of Camarillo
Councilmember Debby Stegura, City of Rolling Hills Estates
Councilmember Evan Branning, City of Livermore
Mayor Frank J. Navarro, City of Colton
Supervisor Gary Bradford, Yuba County
Mayor Glenn R. Sylvester, City of Daly City
Councilmember Holly Tillman, City of Clayton
Supervisor Jake Withrow, Glenn County
Vice Mayor James Mai, City of Irvine
Supervisor Jill Cox, Trinity County
Supervisor Justin Cummings, Santa Cruz County
Mayor Kevin Wilk, City of Walnut Creek
Supervisor Kim De Serpa, Santa Cruz County
Councilmember Larry Spicer, City of Monrovia
Supervisor Manu Koenig, Santa Cruz County
Supervisor Monica Martinez, Santa Cruz County
Councilmember Nathan Steele, City of Seal Beach
Councilmember Pamela Campos, City of San Jose
Mayor Stephanie Hellman, City of Fairfax
Mayor Sylvia Lemus, City of Cotati
Councilmember Xouhoa Bowen, City of San Leandro

cc: The Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom
Members, California State Senate
Members, California State Assembly