



California State Association of Counties 2008 State Priorities

Approved by CSAC Board of Directors – March 20, 2008

PRIORITY: State Budget

All reports indicate that the state will face serious fiscal challenges in 2008, and it is clear that there are no easy solutions to resolving this significant budget deficit. As a result, CSAC's primary, overarching priority is the 2008-09 state budget. CSAC will focus our advocacy efforts in the following areas:

- Protect county interests during the state budget process to prevent loss of local revenues, cost shifts to local governments, and reductions to county programs without a corresponding change in service responsibilities. While Proposition 1A confers significant constitutional protections for local revenues, counties are mindful that changes in state/local partnership programs and services could have dramatic consequences at the local level.
- Advocate for program modifications that clearly reflect the state's priorities in funding state/local partnership programs. Specific areas of immediate focus will include, but are not limited to, the areas below*:
 - Work to assure maximum fiscal support for: Mental Health Services for Special Education Students (AB 3632), Proposition 36, child welfare services, and Adult Protective Services.
 - Work to protect revenues and authority that support public safety as well as criminal justice intervention and prevention programs.
 - Advocate for increased funding for Adult Protective Services.
 - Support cost of doing business increases for County Mental Health Plans under the Medi-Cal program.
 - Secure funding for county property tax administration systems.
 - Support continuation of Williamson Act subventions.
 - Support funding for the Department of Fish and Game's In Lieu Fee obligation to California's counties pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 1504.
 - Support an equitable allocation of the local streets and roads funding from Proposition 1B.
 - Advocate for adequate funding for forest health initiatives, including fuels management.
 - Secure payment for presidential primary election, as promised in the legislation implementing the separate primary.
 - Support for maximum funding of Proposition 42.
 - Timely disbursement of payments.

**This list is not intended to be exhaustive and, in fact, is likely to change throughout the budget process.*

PRIORITY: Climate Change

CSAC expects considerable legislative and administrative focus on various climate change policies and strategies, many of which will directly affect counties. With the passage of Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, climate change discussions and the required targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) are triggering examination and potential changes in a number of issue areas that involve county government. The following priorities outline specific issue areas from the adopted CSAC Climate Change Policy that will direct our focus in the ongoing efforts and debate:

FINANCE

The effects of climate change and the implementation of GHG emissions reduction strategies will have fiscal implications on county government. As such, CSAC supports the use of grants, loans, incentives, and revenue-raising authority to assist local governments with the implementation of GHG emissions reductions strategies. Further, CSAC maintains that resources from both the private sector and all levels of government must be utilized to address this complex problem.

LAND USE

Understanding that land use planning plays a direct role in transportation patterns, affecting travel demands and in return vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and fuel consumption, CSAC will support and advocate land use planning strategies and policies that focus on how and where to accommodate and mitigate expected growth in the State. These strategies and policies must protect critical lands when it comes to development, recognize the need to protect agricultural lands, encourage and support a vibrant agricultural business, and protect natural resources, wildlife habitat, and open space.

In order to achieve the aforementioned goals, CSAC will advocate for incentives for regional and countywide blueprint plans to ensure that rural, suburban, and urban communities plan for growth more strategically. In addition, CSAC will advocate for additional funding so that all communities have the financial ability to engage in such strategic planning efforts.

CSAC will remain engaged in legislative and administrative efforts to develop climate change strategies related to land use and transportation and advocate for counties consistent with adopted CSAC Climate Change policy.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

Recognizing that counties have the opportunity to address GHG emission reduction targets through their individual general plans and supporting CEQA documentation, CSAC will support and advocate for recommendations and technical advice for local governments and regional agencies in the CEQA Guidelines to address acceptable methodologies for climate change analysis, significance threshold and mitigation measures for long-range plans and project level review.

Further, CSAC will support efforts to minimize the risk to counties and lead agencies until the CEQA Guidelines are finalized as required by law in 2010.

Finally, CSAC will advocate for critical state and federal assistance to local governments for the development of data and standardized methodologies for quantifying GHG emissions, GHG

emissions sources and levels, VMT, and other necessary information in order to address mitigation of emissions in environmental documents and long-range plans.

RURAL SUSTAINABILITY

Rural California, whether non-developing areas or county unincorporated areas throughout the State, is critical to accomplish GHG reduction targets. To that end, CSAC will support the development of policies that not only fiscally compensate counties for city-oriented growth, but also recognize the contribution counties make towards GHG reduction goals through growth policies that encourage growth in cities, and protect critical agricultural and resource lands. CSAC will also ensure such actions result in eligibility for transportation and other infrastructure funding. Climate change strategies must recognize the importance of safety, maintenance, and connectivity of existing infrastructure systems.

ENERGY

CSAC will support incentive-based green building programs that encourage the use of green building practices, incorporating energy efficiency and conservation technologies into state and local facilities.

CSAC will support the use of procurement practices that promote the use of energy efficient products and equipment.

WATER

CSAC will support the incorporation of projections of climate change into state water planning and flood control efforts.

CSAC will also support the study and development of alternate methods of meeting water needs, such as desalinization, wastewater reclamation, watershed management, the development of additional storage, and water conservation measures, while continuing to ensure that local impacts of new facilities are mitigated.

FORESTRY

CSAC will support responsible optimum forest management practices that ensure continued carbon sequestration in the forest, provide wood fiber for biomass-based products and carbon-neutral biomass fuels, and protect the ecological values of the forest in a balanced way.

CSAC will further support the state's development of general forestry protocols that encourage private landowners to participate in voluntary emission reduction programs and encourage National Forest lands to contribute to the state's climate change efforts.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Support policies and legislation that aim to promote improved markets for recyclable materials and greater manufacturer responsibility and product stewardship.

PRIORITY: Corrections Reform

In 2007, the Legislature enacted significant reforms in the areas of adult and juvenile corrections. AB 900, the Public Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Services Act of 2007, significantly invests in state and local adult detention infrastructure and, primarily through the establishment of secure community reentry facilities, commits to a strengthened rehabilitative

approach to reduce recidivism by improving inmates' community reintegration. In addition, SB 81 — the corrections trailer bill to the 2007–08 budget — realigns to counties the responsibility for treatment and supervision of a specific population of youthful offenders. In view of these significant policy changes and what is expected to be a multi-year implementation effort, CSAC will engage on many fronts on behalf of counties. Our efforts in this area will continue to be guided by the County Policy Principles and Guidelines on Corrections Reform adopted in November 2006.

Specific areas of expected action and advocacy efforts include:

- Supporting efforts to assure counties have adequate resources to carry out new program and treatment responsibilities and appropriate local mitigations are in place;
- Coordinating with state agencies, boards, and commissions — including working groups and committees of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Corrections Standards Authority, as well as the Reentry Advisory Committee and the California Rehabilitation Oversight Board — to ensure appropriate county representation, open and clear communication, and improved coordination; and
- Working to develop appropriate levels of capacity to ensure treatment and services are available to serve existing and new caseloads, which may include embarking on a joint workforce development enterprise with the state and exploring ways to encourage support and involvement of private enterprise.

PRIORITY: Eminent Domain

CSAC is committed to meaningful, practical eminent domain reform. Counties recognize that Californians are eager for significant constitutional reforms to eminent domain practices.

To that end, the CSAC Board of Directors has adopted a policy that states, in part, “eminent domain is a necessary and useful tool for important public projects. However, counties also recognize the importance of protecting private property from eminent domain for purposes of private development.” Given the likelihood of one or more ballot measures regarding this issue in 2008, CSAC will continue to be actively involved in all legislative and initiative efforts in this area.

CSAC will support efforts to offer voters meaningful and practical eminent domain reform. While counties recognize that eminent domain is a necessary and useful tool for important public projects, we also appreciate the importance of protecting private property from eminent domain for purposes of private development. Further, CSAC opposes efforts to address a broader agenda of limiting local governments' land use authority, undermining counties' ability to provide public health and safety protections, and thwarting viable options to address the state's water crisis under the guise of eminent domain reform.

PRIORITY: Forest Management and Fire Protection

Recent catastrophic fires in California demonstrate the need for a cohesive fire safe strategy that reduces the volatile high-risk forest fuels, encourages sound land use practices, and ensures defensible space for protection of life and property. Following the 2003 wildfires in Southern California, CSAC, in partnership with the League of California Cities, adopted a joint

policy statement that expresses support for multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency coordination, collaboration, and communication to standardize and improve pre-fire mitigations, prevention, and response to any fire hazard in the forest, rangeland, watershed, and wildland urban interface areas in the State of California. This policy direction combined with CSAC's longstanding policy regarding land use, fuels management, sustainable forestry practices, and biomass energy will provide a foundation for any actions taken in response to forestry/fire protection legislation introduced during the 2008 legislative session.

CSAC supports legislative efforts that will increase coordination, collaboration, and communication between the state and local governments in the development of better land use policies and wildland fuel management programs.

CSAC will oppose forestry/fire protection legislation that preempts local land use authority, or imposes minimum staffing and response time standards for county fire services.

In a related area, CSAC will support legislative and regulatory proposals that provide the broadest access to the most effective technologies for disseminating information to California citizens in the case of natural or manmade disaster or public health emergencies.

PRIORITY: Health Care Reform

California counties have a unique perspective on health care reform. Counties are charged with preserving the public health and safety of communities and, as the local public health authority, are vitally concerned about health outcomes.

Further, counties are the foundation of California's safety net system. Under California law, counties are required to provide services to the medically indigent. To meet this mandate, some counties own and operate county hospitals and clinics that serve Medi-Cal patients and rely heavily on Medicaid reimbursements. Rural counties have particular difficulty developing and maintaining health care infrastructure and ensuring access to services. Additionally, county welfare departments determine eligibility for the Medi-Cal program, and county mental health departments are the health plan for Medi-Cal Managed Care for public mental health services.

As the Governor and the Legislature discuss health care reform, counties will advocate for county interests in a number of key policy areas, including development of any county share of cost proposals that provides maximum protections, public hospital rates and patient mix, In-Home Supportive Services impacts, and eligibility system impacts. To the extent implementation discussions begin in 2008, CSAC will work with all counties to ensure the county perspective is represented.

PRIORITY: Human Services Funding Deficit

State funding for human services programs administered by counties, such as child welfare, Adult Protective Services, and food stamps administration, has been frozen at 2000-01 levels, leaving counties in the difficult position of either reducing critical services or absorbing the costs of these mandated programs. According to the Schwarzenegger Administration's own estimates, the state should be paying counties \$835 million more each year for administering these and several other important human services programs.

County advocates have worked diligently over the past five years to remedy the funding gap through a variety of methods, but to no avail. The future of the state budget in the coming years also plays a role in the level of success counties might achieve, and it is critical that all counties band together this year to bring the cost of doing business issue to the forefront.

CSAC will work with county supervisors, welfare directors, and county counsels to identify opportunities and approaches for enhancing advocacy on this issue, with the goal of resuming a process to fully fund counties for their administration costs for critical human services programs. To this end, the CSAC Human Services Funding Deficit working group is developing a road map for the work counties will need to undertake in 2008 to gain traction on this issue.

PRIORITY: Infrastructure Investment

While the Legislature reached consensus on eligibility criteria and allocated revenues from several accounts from the 2006 infrastructure bond package (Propositions 1A-1E and Proposition 84), CSAC will remain engaged in implementation efforts, which will continue into 2008. In addition, debate continues regarding defining eligibility criteria for a number of accounts. Counties have a direct interest in more than \$30 billion of the \$42 billion in bond proceeds and will continue to be active in transportation, housing, planning, flood protection, water supply, and construction materials issues. CSAC is already engaged in developing legislation and active in discussions that will define how these funds will be invested. CSAC will advocate for equitable access by counties in a manner that benefits rural, suburban, and urban communities statewide.

Further, CSAC is engaged in joint efforts to develop comprehensive needs assessments of both the local transportation system and flood control system. These efforts will get underway in 2008 and will be utilized to advocate for additional investments in both of these critical infrastructure systems.

Specific priority areas include the following:

TRANSPORTATION

Proposition 1B – \$2 Billion Local Streets and Roads (LSR): The Legislature appropriated \$950 million from this account in FY 2007-08. CSAC will advocate for an additional appropriation from the LSR account for FY 2008-09.

Proposition 42: CSAC supports fully funding Proposition 42. Even with the influx of additional funding for transportation from the infrastructure bond package of 2006, revenues are still not keeping pace with current needs and backlogs.

Proposition 1B – General: While many of the accounts contained in the bond have been defined legislatively, numerous other accounts under Prop 1B will require legislative action to define eligibility, timing, and processes for access. CSAC will remain diligent in monitoring and advocating for effective and efficient investment to support a multi-modal, interconnected transportation system.

PLANNING AND RESOURCE

Proposition 84: CSAC will support for criteria consistent with the CSAC Climate Change policy for the allocation of \$580 million contained in Proposition 84 for sustainable communities,

including funds for parks, local and regional planning, and urban greening projects. CSAC will remain proactive in ensuring that access is available throughout the state, recognizing the need to invest in rural, suburban, and urban communities.

FLOOD PROTECTION

Levee Certifications: Under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Map Modernization Program, cities and counties that have levees are required to certify their levees in accordance with FEMA Regulation 65-10. This certification process requires local agencies to perform an analysis that is comprehensive, labor intensive, and costly. CSAC will work with other stakeholders to seek funding for levee certification work being conducted by county agencies.

Proposition 218: CSAC will support a constitutional amendment to exempt fees and charges for storm water and flood control fees and assessments from Proposition 218. Such an exemption would provide cities and counties with the flexibility needed to adopt fees and assessments to fund clean water programs and flood control projects. This will be particularly important if the availability of state funding is conditioned on a local match.

Water Quality: Many communities do not have an adequate revenue base to build new wastewater facilities or upgrade their outdated wastewater facilities to meet current standards. CSAC will continue to advocate for state and federal financial assistance to small and disadvantaged communities to build or upgrade such facilities to meet the current standards.

TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Broadband deployment: CSAC will support efforts to speed the deployment of broadband infrastructure, particularly to rural and other underserved areas, while retaining local control of rights-of-way. Support related efforts to increase broadband adoption.

PRIORITY: Other-than-Pension Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)

Counties believe in and support good employee relations and employee compensation that is fiscally prudent yet adequate to attract and retain a qualified and competent career workforce.

In 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger issued a proclamation creating the Public Employee Post-Employment Benefits Commission to report to the Legislature and Governor on the unfunded liabilities for other post-employment benefits facing all levels of government. The final report was issued in January 2008 and includes recommendations that endorse prefunding OPEB costs and proposals to increase transparency, strengthen governance, and improve communication with employees and the public.

It is expected that legislation will be introduced in 2008 to address specific recommendations made by the Commission. Additionally, it is likely that one or more ballot measures will be circulated regarding this issue in 2008. CSAC will continue to be actively involved in all legislative and initiative efforts in this area.

Local control is the primary policy cornerstone of CSAC's platform. Counties recognize that the needs and desires of employees must be balanced against the public's right to economical and

stable government. CSAC opposes efforts to remove Boards of Supervisors' authority to negotiate a total compensation package, including retirement benefits, since they are responsible for funding that obligation.

CSAC believes that retirement systems should be established and maintained on actuarially sound principles and should be fiscally responsible. To that end, CSAC has adopted Pension Reform Principles to guide its legislative policy.

CSAC believes each county must maintain maximum discretion to determine what OPEB benefits are appropriate for its retirees, and how to most appropriately fund any such benefits.



California State Association of Counties 2008 Federal Priorities

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CSAC's contract for federal affairs services with Waterman and Associates provides for a nine-issue agenda. CSAC staff, in consultation with Waterman and Associates, developed the following list of federal issues of significance to California's counties.

CLIMATE CHANGE

CSAC will urge Congress to pursue national and international programs to develop carbon-neutral energy sources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Federal funding of cost-effective technologies to reduce greenhouse gases should be continued. CSAC further urges Congress to address global warming, regardless of its source. CSAC supports immediate and long-range efforts by the federal government to involve all levels of stakeholders to mitigate possible sources of climate change now through a series of incentives and through more federal funding for all means of emissions reduction.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG)

CSAC will oppose further reductions to CDBG funding.

FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION

CSAC will monitor reauthorization of the Farm Bill and collaborate with agricultural interests on issues that directly impact California's counties.

FEDERAL HEALTH CARE ISSUES

CSAC will monitor federal efforts to expand health care coverage. Counties support additional funding for California's State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP) and will continue to defend against Medicaid budget reductions that will harm county service delivery in California.

FOREST HEALTH

CSAC will support adequate funding from Congress and the Administration for forest health initiatives including fuels management in national forests.

SAFE, ACCOUNTABLE, FLEXIBLE, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS (SAFETEA-LU) REAUTHORIZATION

CSAC will engage in policy discussions and administrative actions related to the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU. Reauthorization is due in 2009 and discussions already are underway to develop the new program. California has initiated an effort with various stakeholders to develop statewide consensus principles, which will be used for advocacy purposes to direct revenues to programs of benefit and interest to California. Furthermore, CSAC will support increased funding for the Highway Trust Fund as current spending continues to outpace revenues, and it is projected that the account will be exhausted at some point during the 2009 federal fiscal year.

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES SELF DETERMINATION ACT OF 2000
CSAC will support reauthorization and funding of the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self Determination Act of 2000 (PL 106-393).

STATE CRIMINAL ALIEN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SCAAP)

CSAC will seek maximum program funding to offset counties' costs of incarcerating undocumented criminals.

TRIBAL GAMING

CSAC will remain active on federal legislation that supports CSAC policy to ensure affected counties consent prior to any lands being taken into trust by tribal governments, and oppose legislation that restricts revenue-sharing or local agreements and reservation shopping over the objection of the affected county. Furthermore, CSAC will support legislation that requires judicially enforceable agreements between counties and tribal governments when tribes are permitted to engage in gaming under federal legislation. These agreements should fully mitigate local impacts from a tribal government's business activities and fully identify the governmental services to be provided by the county to that tribe.

CSAC will continue to provide comments consistent with adopted CSAC policy in response to regulations proposed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC), and Department of Interior (DOI) related to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), Class II Gaming, Restored Land Regulations and Fee Land to Trust Land Regulations.

CSAC Internal Monitoring

In addition, CSAC will continue to provide internal monitoring on a number of issues that are of significance to California's counties.

HOMELAND SECURITY

CSAC will monitor and support increased federal homeland security funding for local counterterrorism programs, including the State Homeland Security Grant Program, the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, and the Urban Area Security Initiative. CSAC will support a revised formula for the distribution of homeland security grant funding — including a reduction in the per-state minimum allocation — in order to target funding to areas where the threat of terrorism is the greatest.

LEVEE CERTIFICATIONS

CSAC will work with various stakeholders in seeking federal funding for levee certifications as required by FEMA.

PAYMENT-IN-LIEU-OF-TAXES (PILT)

CSAC will support full funding of PILT.