



County of Yolo

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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2009 STATE LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGET PRIORITIES

December 16, 2008

The Board of Supervisors has the following state legislative and budget priorities that address specific Yolo County issues. This list does not include legislative and budget issues of importance to counties statewide.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Co-sponsor legislation to reform the Williamson Act and preserve subventions. The Governor and the Legislature are considering elimination of Williamson Act subventions. Such an action could end this program if counties decide to non-renew contracts, making it more difficult for the state to implement its aggressive policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by providing an incentive to counties to develop in the unincorporated area and to farmers to sell their land for uses other than agriculture. Elimination of subventions also would result in a \$1.1 million loss to Yolo County annually. Yolo County will co-sponsor legislation, potentially with the California State Association of Counties and other interested organizations, to reform the Act as an alternative to eliminating subventions (see Appendix A). If the state eliminates the subvention program, Yolo County will seek statutory language that allows counties to cancel Williamson Act contracts immediately. Without such language, the county's only option is to non-renew Williamson Act contracts and wait 10 years for property taxes to reach market rate.

Sponsor legislation to increase fees set by the state that fail to cover Yolo County costs. Many county fees set by the state do not cover the cost of providing the service. Yolo County would raise \$500,000 per year if allowed to charge fees that reflect the actual cost of providing the service. Appendix B includes a description of the fee proposal, including the amount charged and the actual cost to Yolo County, excluding civil code fees. Yolo County will sponsor legislation to raise these fees to the cost of providing the service. The legislation would also authorize the county to charge a fee on property-related documents filed with the Clerk-Recorder to fund preservation of the archives, a service that is currently paid out of the county's General Fund.

Sponsor legislation to allow Yolo County to reduce the speed limit on Road 99. Yolo County needs legislation to allow the county to reduce the speed limit on Road 99 – a designated bike route - from 55 mph to 35 mph to allow neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs) to travel between Davis and Woodland, as well as improve bicycle safety. Yolo County needs legislation because current traffic warrants do not justify a decrease in the speed limit and NEVs are not allowed to legally travel on roads with speed limits over 35 mph. Currently NEVs cannot travel between Davis and Woodland because there are no roads with a 35 mph speed limit. This measure will help meet the state's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

Engage in legislation to reform the foster care system. Yolo County will participate and assist with Speaker Karen Bass' efforts to improve the foster care system.

Engage in efforts to pass a state economic stimulus bill. Work to ensure counties benefit from a state economic stimulus bill. Ensure Proposition 1B Local Streets and Roads funding can be used for bike paths.

Engage in efforts to pass a water bond. President Pro Tem Steinberg stated he wants to pass a water bond in the first 120 days of the legislative session. Yolo County will work to ensure the water bond supports Yolo County's efforts to protect habitat and preserve agriculture.

Secure funding outside the state General Fund for payment of fees in-lieu of property taxes for lands acquired by the state. Yolo County recognizes the state government may purchase land as part of any proposed solutions to Delta issues. Past public acquisitions for habitat conservation and flood control have significantly reduced revenue available to local governments to provide services. The Department of Fish and Game, for example, owes Yolo County close to \$1 million for fees in-lieu of property taxes owed on the nationally-renowned Vic Fazio Yolo Wildlife Area. Despite statutory language requiring payment, the department has not paid since 2001. Yolo County supports establishment of a funding source outside of the General Fund to pay existing and future obligations for state-owned land.

Engage in legislation to establish a Delta conservancy. Support legislation to develop a conservancy capable of addressing multiple Delta management goals, including a non-state entity for land management. The conservancy should have a reliable, adequate funding source outside the state budget process.

Engage in legislation related to Delta governance. Ensure local government representation in any new governance structure for the Delta. The new governance structure should ensure reliable, adequate funding for management of public lands through "good neighbor" practices, protection of agriculture, support of small communities, habitat restoration and other investments necessary for Delta sustainability.

Track population cap as eligibility criteria. Yolo County currently has 197,000 residents and expects to pass the 200,000 mark next year. Growth will occur in existing rural towns and the county will remain a rural county, with the majority of its land in agriculture and open space. Past legislative proposals have capped rural county eligibility at 200,000 people. Yolo County should compete for grant funding with other rural counties, not large or suburban counties. Any legislative definition of "rural" going forward should cap eligibility at 250,000 people.

STATE AGENCY PRIORITIES

Secure emergency communications funding. Last year, Yolo County successfully advocated for up to \$5 million for Delta emergency communications in SB 2x 1 (Perata). Yolo County is working with the four other Delta counties and the Yolo Emergency Communications Agency to secure some of this funding for local emergency communications improvements. The Department of Water Resources will develop guidelines for distributing the money in January and plans to allocate the money in the spring of 2009.

Appeal decision regarding reimbursement for Huff's Corner repairs. The state Office of Emergency Services had denied Yolo County reimbursement for Huff's Corner repairs to protect

the City of Woodland and the unincorporated area from flooding after damage caused by the 2006 winter storms. Yolo County will appeal the decision.

Support request to Department of Water Resources to study our rural levees first. Yolo County appreciates the state's decision to undertake a study of rural levees in 2008 and 2009. In January 2008, the Board of Supervisors sent a letter to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) requesting DWR study Yolo County's rural levees first. Yolo County deliberately avoided development in the floodplain, but the small communities of Knights Landing and Clarksburg are in danger of flooding as a result of levee failure. Without geotechnical evaluations of levee stability, Yolo County cannot evaluate solutions to help protect these residents. As of December 2008, Yolo County still had not received information about the condition of its levees.

Ensure Delta mercury Total Maximum Daily Load recognizes projects with a public benefit. The Regional Water Quality Control Board's proposed Delta mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) will increase the costs of projects with a public benefit (e.g. flood management and habitat restoration), as well as extend the time needed to complete projects. The TMDL should provide flexibility for projects with a public benefit, such as habitat restoration, flood management, and water supply improvements.

Ensure Caltrans completes right-of-way acquisition for the I5-113 interchange in 2009. Caltrans must complete acquisition of right-of-way for the I5-113 interchange in 2009 for the project to receive economic stimulus funding from the federal government.

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Support California State Association of Counties' efforts to protect county funding for key programs. The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) continues to advocate for protection of important sources of revenue for programs administered by counties, as well as other budget issues. Yolo County will continue to support these efforts.

Support use of Mental Health Services Act funding for core mental health programs. Utilize MHSA resources to sustain the current crumbling mental health system as it transforms to a community-based, non-institutional, culturally appropriate, service-driven system. Integrate core programs and MHSA programs into one system, so individuals and families can have access to needed support and services.

Advocate to allow Proposition 1B Local Streets and Roads funding to pay for bike paths. Despite the state's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, local governments are unable to use Proposition 1B Local Streets and Roads funding to pay for bike paths.