

OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

December 16, 2014

Matthew H. Hymel
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Honorable Board of Supervisors
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San Rafael, CA 94903

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Re: 2015 LEGISLATIVE PLAN AND GUIDELINES

Dear Supervisors:

RECOMMENDATION: Approve, with modifications as may be deemed appropriate by your Board, the proposed:

- 2015 Federal Legislative Plan as contained herein;
- 2015 State Legislative Plan as contained herein; and
- 2015 Legislative Policy Guidelines contained in Attachment A

OVERVIEW

We bring to your Board the proposed legislative plan for the 2015 calendar year. As always, your Board retains the opportunity to amend the plan at any time during the year to reflect new or emerging legislative priorities. This plan, including input from departments, our Federal and State lobbyists, the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), Marin Transit District, Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART), and your Board, gives staff the opportunity to react quickly to legislative issues consistent with your Board's priorities and policy guidelines. For 2015, there are several high level priority areas to note, including:

- **Climate change issues**, including new language to support efforts to plan for and fund sea level rise vulnerability assessments and adaptation strategies;
- **Flood protection and watershed management**, including new water bond funding opportunities for Marin-eligible projects per Proposition 1, authorizing \$7.5 billion in new bond capacity for a variety of water related projects and initiatives, as well as monitoring discussions regarding water conveyance/diversion efforts for Bay/Delta environmental concerns;
- **"Cap and trade" investment**, including pursuit of funding for Marin-eligible projects consistent with AB 32 greenhouse gas reduction mandates – including efforts to obtain funding for a SMART extension to Larkspur;
- **Protecting existing revenue sources**, in light of ongoing Federal budget challenges, as well as any new State realignment proposals; and
- **Improved access to health care**, including efforts to preserve and enhance the Federal Affordable Care Act.

STATE PLATFORM

The State's financial position continues to improve with the economy. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) recently projected there would be \$2 billion more in revenues in Fiscal 2014-15 than was assumed when the budget was adopted in June. While good news, this additional revenue is fully offset by higher General Fund Proposition 98 Education requirements. Ending Fiscal 2015-16, the LAO is estimating \$4.2

billion in total reserves assuming no new budget commitments. Of this amount, however, \$4 billion is dedicated under Proposition 2 (approved last month) for an estimated \$2 billion deposit into the 'rainy day' fund next year, with another \$2 billion dedicated toward existing State debts. Thus, with Proposition 98 and new Proposition 2 requirements to build State reserves and to pay down debts, the Governor is restrained with respect to new program spending proposals.

2014 State Platform Review

You will recall that in 2014 the Governor signed all three of your Board's sponsored bills, including AB 1537 (Levine) to accommodate a lower default affordable housing density of 20 units per acre; AB 745 (Levine) to adjust administrative contracting for the Open Space District to account for inflation over the past 30 years; and AB 2231 (Gordon/Levine) to re-implement the State Property Tax Postponement Program, which helps eligible elderly and disabled residents on fixed incomes remain in their homes by deferring payment of property taxes until the property is sold.

2015 State Platform Highlights

With this context, we highlight below a few specific State platform priorities, though we are not at this time recommending any sponsored bills for 2015:

- **Vote-by-mail to increase voter turnout and reduce local costs**, exploring efforts to provide additional permissive authority to implement more vote-by-mail local elections or special elections while balancing concerns that reduced polling places may inhibit opportunities for some disabled voters;
- **Public Safety funding**, supporting efforts to monitor any State clean-up legislation regarding Proposition 47 (2014), which reduces a number of felony sentences to misdemeanors and is anticipated to result in more State prison inmates being housed in County jails – as well as working to protect Marin County's AB 109 Public Safety Realignment allocation;
- **Affordable housing**, including continued support of efforts to include a broader range of options that would be eligible to receive State housing element credits, including, for example, senior housing and assisted living units; and
- **Senior and Aging issues**, with improved coordination this year to include issues and priorities of concern to the Marin Commission on Aging, including support for Product Take-Back legislation to include pharmaceuticals.

FEDERAL PLATFORM

In acknowledgement of continued fiscal challenges at the Federal level, including a ban on earmarks since 2010, Federal funding for local projects has been severely constrained (a national, not Marin, issue). However, the draft legislative plan continues to indicate our top priorities in case any opportunities should arise over the course of the next year. Some highlights of these priority Federal requests include:

- Seeking funding to support **Climate change**, including sea-level rise vulnerability assessment and adaptation strategies;
- **Surface transportation**, supporting efforts to reinstate guaranteed spending levels for local governments, flexible funding of surface transportation projects, and balancing highway and transit investments;
- Seeking additional funding for **watershed management and ecosystem restoration** projects to address flood control and levee repair issues; and

- Supporting efforts to identify non-County funding for the **Marin Emergency Radio Authority** next generation communications system.

Staff will continue efforts to coordinate with TAM, SMART and Marin Transit regarding legislative advocacy for countywide transportation issues to better ensure local coordination of priorities among our delegation. As always, the County's Federal and State legislative advocacy resources will also remain available to assist in the implementation of your Board's most critical countywide projects and issues.

With your Board's approval, including any amendments to the plan, we will work with Assembly Member Marc Levine and our new State Senator, Mike McGuire, to ensure they are aware of your Board's priorities and concerns going into 2015. While our plan includes initiatives that may not be achievable in the short-term, as opportunities arise the plan provides policy direction to guide our legislative program in a manner consistent with your Board's long-term vision for the County.

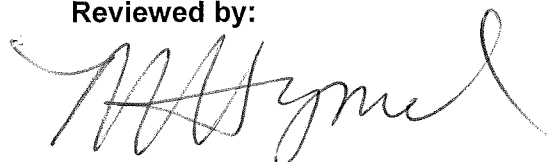
Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or concerns.

Submitted by:



Daniel Eilerman
Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed by:



Matthew H. Hymel
County Administrator