



EASTERN SIERRA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Approved December 19, 2014

SPECIFIC LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

1. **AGRICULTURE:**

Agriculture is a major industry for California second only to tourism. It is a \$37 billion industry that generates \$100 billion in related economic activity. In Inyo and Mono County, agriculture generated over \$79 million according to the Inyo-Mono 2011 Crop and Livestock Report.

Support – Continued funding of weed management programs.

Support – Authority for USDA to set up cooperative agreements with states for pest exclusion programs.

Support – Control and mitigation for the spread of invasive species to protect, conserve and restore public and private lands.

Oppose – Efforts by State agencies to usurp Agricultural Commissioners permitting authority for the spraying of environmentally acceptable pesticides on all agricultural lands.

Oppose – Legislation that negatively impacts water delivery to agricultural uses and productivity.

2. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

Improving and diversifying economic development is one of the main objectives of our organization and one of the core purposes for the formation of this COG. Economic development encompasses a broad range of opportunities and challenges in the Eastern Sierra region. In order to achieve economic growth and prosperity in our Counties, Town and City, this COG should:

Support – Promotion of tourism as the primary economic engine for millions of tourists from around the world that are attracted to the rural natural beauty, colorful history, and variety of year-round recreational activities in the beautiful Eastern Sierra.

Support – Continued stabilization of tourism as the main economic engine in the Eastern Sierra, but also encourage greater diversification of business opportunities that fit environmentally.

Support – Improvement of infrastructure such as transportation corridors, telecommunications, broadband deployment, specifically Digital 395, and airports.

Support – The film industry in our area as well as state efforts to promote film-making in rural areas.

Support – Military bases in our area and encourage lawmakers to recognize the impact base reduction or closures would have on local economies.

Support – Local ability to review major military improvement projects or activities as they relate to adverse impacts on local roads, businesses, and public services.

Support – Technology enhancement and development including but not limited to biomass, solar, wind, and geothermal power generation, and broadband deployment to enhance distance learning and telemedicine.

Support – Small business for their local employment, revenue generation, access to goods and services, and unwavering support of our communities.

Support – Policies and programs that enhance and specifically acknowledge and help to overcome the unique challenges facing rural businesses and entrepreneurs. Encourage flexibility and recognition of disadvantaged communities in our area.

Oppose – Proposals that negatively impact and burden local small businesses.

3. **EDUCATION:**

Rural communities face unique challenges in providing access to a high quality education for all students. These challenges include low student density in some areas, long distances and geographically challenging transportation routes as well as increment weather.

Support – Continued funding for home to school transportation.

Support – Long distance learning opportunities such as on-line learning in our schools and community colleges.

4. **BUDGET AND FISCAL:**

Support – Legislation requiring the State to provide full cost reimbursement to counties and cities for all mandated programs.

Support – Legislation that requires that a secure and dedicated funding stream be identified prior to the adoption of any legislation placing additional mandates on local government.

Support – Legislation to stabilize local government financing, to increase funding to local agencies in an equitable manner, and to permit the most cost-efficient management of State-mandated programs.

Oppose – Efforts by the State and Federal Governments to reduce funding of programs or other traditional State and Federal funding streams by mandating, legislating, redirecting, or strongly encouraging the use of local discretionary funding such as, but not limited to, Children and Families Commission.

Support – Legislation that will continue Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act beyond the current authorization.

Support – State and Federal legislation that restores or enhances royalty payments, and/or the ability of local government to receive revenue from renewable energy projects sited within the local jurisdictions.

Support – Legislation that reaffirms a County’s discretion in and ability to collect taxes on the siting, development and operation of commercial scale and larger renewable energy projects.

5. **GENERAL GOVERNMENT:**

Support – Legislation that realigns governmental services in such a manner as to improve the delivery of services and make government more accountable to the people of California.

Support – Legislative efforts to provide funding for new construction, remodeling, and renovation as well as to offset operating costs for local library facilities through bond measures and/or other funding methods.

Support – Legislation that recognizes the inherent disadvantage rural counties have as it applies to using a population-based criteria (per capita) for allocating state and federal funds and minimizes and/or eliminates the reliance on this funding criteria.

Support – Legislation that reimburses counties for special election costs and for costs associated with electronic voting machines.

Support – Legislation that reduces State and Federal regulations that impede or increase the cost of the delivery of services by local governments and special districts.

Monitor – Closely, any legislative efforts/initiatives regarding reform of the State Budget process.

Oppose – Legislation that is unduly burdensome to private industry.

Support – Legislation that provides the option for rural counties to conduct elections via “Vote by Mail.”

Oppose – Efforts by Federal and State government to adversely impact Volunteer Fire Departments, including EMT services.

Support – Legislation that mitigates the impacts of natural or man-made disasters on local governments and local property owners.

6. **HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES:**

Support – Blended funding across human service programs, i.e. non-categorical.

Support – Legislation that allows maximum local flexibility to design human services programs, based on the needs of the communities served as well as recognition of the challenge of recruiting and maintaining health professionals throughout the region.

Support – Legislation that protects the physical, emotional, and mental health of children and adults and ensure that funding is flexible and allows for dollars to be spent on locally identified needs especially in the programs affecting our senior citizen population.

Monitor and **Oppose** – Any legislative efforts/initiatives to reopen the realignment legislation or legislation that negatively affects health and human services realignment funds.

7. **TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS:**

Support – Transportation funding legislation that:

- a. Provides revenues without affecting funding sources of other county and city projects;
- b. Continues Federal funding efforts for local transportation projects and transit needs;
- c. Reaffirms and continues State responsibility for highway financing; or
- d. Returns lost maintenance and construction funds for local roads.

Support – State legislative efforts to address identified State highway safety needs in our communities.

Support – State and Federal legislation efforts that benefit our local airports.

Support – Legislation that enhances counties' ability to designate appropriate uses of county roads.

Support – Legislation that recognizes the inherent disadvantage rural counties have as it applies to using a population based criteria (per capita) for allocating state and federal transportation funds and minimizes and/or eliminates the reliance on this funding criteria.

8. **RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT:**

Support – Legislation to provide funding to local governments to create programs to protect river parkways and to reclaim damaged river habitat.

Support – Legislation for the development of programs and strategies that will accomplish the acquisition of reinvestment dollars for watershed management, groundwater basins, fisheries, and waterways.

Support – Federal funding proposals that enhance County ability to acquire Federal and state funding for the purpose of managing watersheds and natural resources.

Support – Legislation and/or state budget efforts to continue to provide funding for noxious weed management.

Oppose – Legislation that eliminates or diminishes the requirement for Federal and State land use agencies to coordinate with local government on decisions affecting the plans and policies.

Oppose – Efforts by Federal and State government to increase fees for and reduce and/or eliminate fire protection services on public lands.

Support – Legislation that protects those local jurisdictions that operate, deliver and store water that recognize and address harmful aquatic species infestation early on from liability as a result of such infestation.

Oppose – Legislation that could negatively impact outdoor recreation and operation of fish hatcheries.

9. **PLANNING AND LAND USE:**

Support – Legislation and budget efforts that continue to maximize the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) revenue from the Federal and State government to counties and continues full funding of PILT without restrictions beyond the current authorization.

Oppose – Legislation that minimizes and/or eliminates local control over land use decisions.

Support – Legislative efforts to enable local governments, utilities, energy developers, California Native American tribal governments, affected landowners and members of the public to actively participate in the renewable energy and utility corridor planning processes.

Support – Legislation that streamlines State requirements regarding General Plans and their updates.

Support – Legislation that maintains county and city ability to protect and enhance their land use authority to determine the highest and best use of their natural resources, including but not limited to mining, water storage, renewable energy, and agricultural resources.

Support – Legislation that protects and/or reinstates the payment of geothermal royalties to local jurisdictions.

Support – Legislation that streamlines the CEQA/NEPA process.

Support – Federal legislation that fully funds federal resource agency planning, programming, and law enforcement capabilities to enable protection of natural resources.

Support – Legislation that gives greater local control over the negative impacts of large corporations who ignore local conditions in favor of shareholder profits.

10. **LAW & JUSTICE:**

Support – Federal and State funding to combat the impacts of illegal methamphetamine production and illegal crop production, especially marijuana, on private and public lands.

Watch – Proposed changes to State and Federal water.