

## 2013 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM CONTRA COSTA COUNTY



Each year, the Board of Supervisors adopts a Federal Legislative Platform that establishes priorities and policy positions with regard to potential federal legislation and regulation. The 2013 Federal Legislative Platform includes 12 funding needs for FFY 2014; 4 requests for the reauthorization of the federal transportation act; and 6 requests for the reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act.

### **FEDERAL RELATED FUNDING NEEDS**

*The following list is a preliminary ranking in priority order. Adjustments to the priority order may be appropriate once the President releases his budget. The current priority ranking gives preference to those projects that we know will not be included in the President's budget, with lower priority to Army Corps of Engineers projects which may be in the budget. Also, Army Corps project requests will be adjusted to be consistent with Corps capability.*

**1. Delta LTMS-Pinole Shoal Management, CA** – **\$3,000,000** for the Army Corps of Engineers to continue a Long Term Management Strategy (LTMS) for levee rehabilitation, dredging and sediment reuse in the Delta, similar to the effort completed in the Bay area. Levee work, reuse of dredged sediments, dredging and other activities have been difficult to accomplish due to permitting problems and a divergence of priorities related to water quality. Significant levee rehabilitation is critical to the long term stability of these levees and to water quality and supply for the 23 million Californians who depend upon this water. Stakeholders from the Department of Water Resources, Ports, Army Corps, levee reclamation districts, local governments and other interested parties are participating in the LTMS. A Sediment or Dredged Material Management Office will be established, and in the longer term, preparation of a Sediment Management Plan will consider beneficial reuse of dredged materials as one potential source of sediment for levees. (Note: \$500,000 appropriated for FFY 2005; \$225,000 for FFY 2006; \$500,000 for FFY 2007; \$462,000 for FFY 2008; \$235,000 for FFY 2009; \$100,000 for FFY 2010; \$0 since.)

**2. Safe and Bright Futures for Children Exposed to Domestic Violence** – **\$400,000** to implement the federally funded plan to diminish the damaging effects of domestic violence on children and adolescents and to stop the cycle of intentional injury and abuse. A three year assessment and planning process resulted in a program plan that is working to align and create a system responsive to the needs of children exposed to domestic violence through identification, early intervention; raising awareness; training professionals; utilizing and disseminating data; establishing consultation teams to support providers in intervening and using best practices; and developing targeted services. Exposure to domestic violence reshapes the human brain and is the primary cause of trauma in children's lives. It influences personality, shapes personal skills and behaviors, impacts academic performance, and substantially contributes to the high cost of law enforcement, civil/criminal justice and social services. Exposure to domestic violence is associated with greater rates of substance abuse,

mental illness, and adverse health outcomes in adulthood, and substantially contributes to the high cost of law enforcement, civil/criminal justice and social services. (Note: \$428,000 appropriated for FFY 2009; \$550,000 for FFY 2010.)

**3. Mt. Diablo Mercury Mine Clean-up** – **\$483,000** for the Army Corps of Engineers to complete the Technical Planning Process for the Mt. Diablo Mercury Mine Clean-up Project. The project will clean up the mine in a cost effective, environmentally-sound manner with minimal liability exposure for the County and involving all stakeholders through an open community-based process. The Corps initiated a Technical Planning Process in June 2008 to develop a preliminary remediation plan, identify applicable permit and environmental data requirements and complete a data collection and documentation program for the clean-up of the Mt. Diablo Mercury Mine. Several phases of the planning process have been completed, and this appropriation will allow the Corps to continue the planning process, which will include looking at watershed issues downstream of the mercury mine. The mine site is located on private property on the northeast slope of Mt. Diablo at the upper end of the Marsh Creek watershed. (Note: \$517,000 appropriated in FFY 2008.)

**4. Bay-Delta Area Studies, Surveys and Technical Analysis** – **\$2,500,000** for the Delta Counties Coalition to carry out technical analysis and planning associated with participation in the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) or implementation of any projects resulting from the Plan. The technical analysis and planning will focus on issues related to the planning of water delivery projects and conservation plans that are included in the BDCP.

**5. Lower Walnut Creek, California** – **\$600,000** for the Army Corps of Engineers to continue their general reevaluation of the lower five miles of the Walnut Creek Channel to restore flood capacity, provide environmental enhancement and ecosystem restoration. The project is designed to help improve flood protection in a densely populated area, while leaving the creek in a natural state, thus providing habitat for migratory birds, fish and other wildlife; increasing neighborhood livability; and allowing for linkages with recreational and park land. (Note: \$188,000 appropriated for FFY 2006; no FFY 2007 appropriation; \$562,000 for FFY 2008; \$287,000 for FFY 2009; \$0 for FFY 2010; \$0 since.)

**6. CALFED Bay Delta Reauthorization Act Levee Stability Improvement Program (LSIP)** – **\$8,000,000** for the Army Corps of Engineers for levee rehabilitation planning and project implementation. The CALFED Reauthorization Act, passed in January 2004, authorized \$90 million, which may be appropriated for levee rehabilitation work. The Corps has prepared a “180-Day Report” which identifies projects and determines how these funds would be spent. Since that time, the breakdown of CALFED, coupled with the Army Corps’ attempts to define an appropriate and streamlined process, has delayed funding and resultant levee work. (Note: \$500,000 appropriated for FFY 2006; \$400,000 for FFY 2007; \$4.92 million for FFY 2008; \$4.844 million for FFY 2010.)

**7. Suisun Bay Channel/New York Slough Maintenance Dredging** – **\$11,000,000** for the Army Corps of Engineers for maintenance dredging of this channel to the authorized

depth of minus 35 feet. Continued maintenance is essential for safe transport of crude oil and other bulk materials through the San Francisco Bay, along the Carquinez Straits and into the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta. Dredging for this channel section is particularly costly due to requirements on placement of dredged materials in upland environments. An oil tanker ran aground in early 2001 due to severe shoaling in a section of this channel, which creates a greater potential for oil spills (*Note: \$4.559 million appropriated for FFY 2005; \$4.619 million for FFY 2006; \$2.82 million for FFY 2007; \$2.856 million for FFY 2008; \$2.768 million for FFY 2009; \$3.819 million for FFY 2010.*)

**8. San Pablo/Mare Island Strait/Pinole Shoal Channel Maintenance Dredging** – **\$2,500,000** for the Army Corps of Engineers for maintenance dredging of the channel to the authorized depth of minus 35 feet. The Pinole Shoal channel is a major arterial for vessel transport through the San Francisco Bay region, serving oil refineries and bulk cargo which is transported as far east as Sacramento and Stockton. (*Note: \$1 million appropriated for FFY 2005; \$2.988 million for FFY 2006; \$896,000 for FFY 2007; \$1.696 million for FFY 2008; \$1.058 million for FFY 2009; \$2.518 million for FFY 2010.*)

**9. San Francisco to Stockton (J. F. Baldwin and Stockton Channels) Ship Channel Deepening** – **\$2,900,000** for the Army Corps of Engineers to continue the Deepening Project. Deepening and minor realignment of this channel will allow for operational efficiencies for many different industries, an increase in waterborne goods movement, reduced congestion on roadways, and air quality benefits. Phase one work focused on establishing economic benefit to the nation and initial salinity modeling in the channel sections. The second and final phase includes detailed channel design, environmental documentation, cost analysis, additional modeling, and dredged material disposal options. (*Note: \$500,000 appropriated for FFY 2005; \$200,000 for FFY 2006; \$200,000 for FFY 2007; \$403,000 for FFY 2008; \$1.34 million for FFY 2009; \$0 for FFY 2010; \$0 for FFY 2011; \$800,000 for FFY 2012.*)

**10. Contra Costa County's VHF Public Safety Radio System** – **\$1,063,200** for Contra Costa County operation of a VHF Public Safety Radio System serving several governmental agencies (including emergency medical services) within the county. This system will soon become a backup (VHF overlay) to the East Bay Regional Communication System (EBRCS) once that system is completed and actuated. To comply with upcoming Federal Communications Commission (FCC) narrow band requirements, the VHF system must be upgraded to ensure seamless compatibility with certain aspects of the EBRCS, should that system fail. To prevent the VHF system from being compromised, several significant security enhancements are necessary at various site locations. This includes camera monitoring and alert systems.

**11. State Route 4 / Old River Bridge Study** – **\$1,000,000** to work with San Joaquin County and the State of California on a study of improving or replacing the Old River Bridge along State Route 4 on the Contra Costa / San Joaquin County line. The study would determine a preferred alternative for expanding or replacing the existing bridge, which is part of State Route 4. The existing bridge is narrow, barely allowing two vehicles to pass each other, and is aligned on a difficult angle relative to the highway on either side, requiring motorists to make sharp turns onto and off of the bridge. The

project would improve safety and traffic flow over the bridge. (Note: no appropriations for this project as yet.)

**12. Knightsen/Byron Area Transportation Study - \$300,000** to re-evaluate the Circulation Element of the County General Plan (GP) to improve its consistency with the Urban Limit Line (ULL) and related policies that ensure preservation of non-urban, agricultural, open space and other areas identified outside the ULL. Policies will be evaluated to provide a more efficient and affordable circulation system for the study area, serve all transportation user-groups, support the local agricultural economy and accommodate the commuter traffic destined for employment centers outside the study area. Zoning and development regulations would be updated to implement the study recommendations.

## **REAUTHORIZATION OF FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ACT**

*The prior federal transportation policy and spending act, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), expired in 2009. Through continuing resolutions SAFETEA-LU was renewed on ten occasions until the new program, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Action (MAP-21) - a two year bill – was signed into law on July 6, 2012. MAP-21 is a 27-month bill that will go through September 30, 2014. Staff will monitor progress on development of a new bill or reauthorization of MAP-21 which will be needed by FFY 2015. The following are priority projects for which funding will need to be secured in the next multi-year transportation bill.*

**1. Vasco Road Safety Improvement Project -- \$18 million** for improvements to a 2.5-mile accident-prone section of Vasco Road. Project components include widening the roadway to accommodate a concrete median barrier and shoulders on either side of the barrier, construction of the barrier, and extension of an existing passing lane. The project will eliminate cross-median accidents which have caused numerous fatalities in recent years, and will provide increased opportunities for vehicles to safely pass (unsafe passing is a major cause of accidents and fatalities on this segment of the increasingly busy two-lane undivided road). The project will include provisions for wildlife undercrossings to preserve migration patterns. The funds will complement \$10 million programmed for the project in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

**1.b Vasco Road Safety Improvement Project Continuation -- \$30 million** for improvements to the remaining 9 miles of accident-prone sections of Vasco Road. Alameda County has been working on constructing improvements in their jurisdiction and it would be desirable for the two counties to work together to complete the gap left in the concrete median barrier near the County line. In addition to completing this gap, Contra Costa desires to extend the concrete median barrier further north of the recently completed median barrier project to the Camino Diablo Road intersection.

**2. North Richmond Truck Route -- \$25 million** to construct a new road or other alternate access improvements that will provide truck access between businesses and the Richmond Parkway, moving the truck traffic away from a residential neighborhood and elementary school. This project will increase safety, improve public health around the school and residential area by reducing diesel particulate emissions from those areas, increase livability of the neighborhood, improve local access to the Wildcat Creek

Regional Trail, stimulate economic development in the industrial area of the community and provide a better route for trucks traveling to and from the Richmond Parkway. The alignment was developed through a community planning process funded through an Environmental Justice planning grant from Caltrans.

**3. Eastern Contra Costa Trail Network** -- \$5 million for a joint planning, environmental review, right-of-way acquisition and constructions of a coordinated network of trails for walking, bicycling and equestrian uses in eastern Contra Costa County including facilities and projects improving access to existing or planned transit stations. Eligible trails include, but are not limited to, (1) the Mokelumne Trail overcrossing of the State Route 4 Bypass; (2) Contra Costa segments of the Great California Delta Trail; (3) a transit supportive network of East Contra Costa trails in unincorporated County areas and the cities of Antioch, Brentwood, Oakley and Pittsburg.

**4. eBART Extension Next Phase Study/Environmental and Engineering** -- \$10 million for environmental review and engineering work on the project identified in the Bay Area Rapid Transit District's (BART) eBART Next Segment Study in eastern Contra Costa County. With regard to additional stations and eBART rail corridor alignment tasks may include, but not necessarily be limited to, completion of environmental review, and partial completion of engineering. Additional work may include, but not necessarily be limited to, evaluation and refinement of alignment and stations, development of capital and operating costs, land use analysis, completion of environmental review including appropriate mitigations, development of preliminary engineering, and public outreach. (Potential Program: FTA – New Starts, FHWA/FTA Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality)

- **Rural Road Funding Program** – The County supports the creation of a new funding program that will provide funds for converting or upgrading rural roads into more modern roads that can handle increasing commuter traffic in growing areas, such as East County. These roads do not often compete well in current grant programs because they do not carry as many vehicles as roads in more congested urban or suburban areas. As a result, improvements such as widening, realignment, drainage improvements and intersection modifications often go unfunded, leaving such roads with operational and safety problems as well as insufficient capacity.
- **Transportation Funding for Disabled, Low-income, and Elderly Persons** – Transit services for elderly, disabled, and low-income persons are provided by the County, by some cities, by all of the bus transit operators, and by many community organizations and non-profits that provide social services. Increased funding is needed to provide and maintain more service vehicles, operate them longer throughout the day, upgrade the vehicle fleet and dispatching systems, improve coordination between public providers and community groups that also provide such services to their clients, and expand outreach programs to inform potential riders of the available services, among other needs. The County supports continuation and increased funding levels for federal funding programs dedicated to transit services for these population groups. All of the

demographic trends point to a growing need for such services in the future. For example, the 65-and-older population in the Bay Area is projected to more than double by the year 2030.

- **Highway Bridge Program** – The County supports the continuation of the Highway Bridge funding program that will provide funds for rehabilitating and replacing our aging bridges. The County has several aging bridges with deficient sufficiency ratings. Without federal transportation funding, these expensive projects would be deferred because they often exceed the County's funding capacity. Many of the bridges are on critical commute corridors, goods movement corridors, inter-regional routes, and farm to market routes. Failure of these important transportation assets can cause major disruptions to the transportation network.

## **REAUTHORIZATION OF WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT (WRDA)**

*The Water Resources Development Act of 2007 became law in November, more than seven years after the last authorization bill. Senator Boxer proposed a new draft WRDA bill in November 2012. The following are prioritized projects the County would submit for inclusion as the bill moves forward.*

**1. Army Corps Vegetation Policy** – Proposed amendments to 1996 Water Resources Development Act, Section 202: Flood Control Policy, (g) Vegetation Management Guidelines include the following: Engineering Technical Letter 1110-2-571 is suspended until that time a new policy is adopted. The policy guidelines shall be revised in accordance with the following: (A) Levee vegetation management guidelines shall represent regional variations based on a process that includes consultation with federal and state resource agencies, and preparation with local and state flood control agencies and corps districts. (B) Guidelines must undergo independent peer review which evaluates the structural and natural resource functions of vegetation on levees and the risks and benefits to the levee structure. (C) Guidelines and exemptions to them shall provide for protection of riparian and aquatic resources, reduction of costs and other community impacts in balance with public safety. (D) Existing projects in which the Corps has integrated vegetation into levees and floodwalls to meet project objectives and regulatory requirements shall be exempt from the guidelines.

**2. Mt. Diablo Mercury Mine Clean-up** – Authorize the Army Corps of Engineers, through their Remediation of Abandoned Mine Site program (RAMS), to perform and complete the Technical Planning Process and site characterization of the Mt. Diablo Mercury Mine in Contra Costa County as a demonstration project with no local match, and authorize the Army Corps of Engineers to construct the clean-up project at the Mt. Diablo Mercury Mine. This authorization will allow the Corps to fund elements of the mine remediation project that any responsible parties cannot. This would also allow the Corps' RAMS program to resolve liability issues associated with a clean-up project on private property and address mercury pollution on a watershed basis. Since this is a demonstration project, the Corps would fund the full Technical Planning Process, Remedial Investigation, design and project construction.

A 1995 study of Marsh Creek indicated the Mt. Diablo Mercury Mine tailings are responsible for 88% of the mercury in Marsh Creek. In addition, mercury levels in fish in Marsh Creek Reservoir downstream of the mine exceed the health standard concentration of 0.5 ppm.

**3. Sacramento San Joaquin Delta Infrastructure Improvements** – Contra Costa County, together with the four other Delta counties of Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano and Yolo, has requested authorization for the Army Corps of Engineers to repair infrastructure in the Delta. This includes levees rehabilitation projects in the Delta as part of an overall system, rather than on a county-by-county or island-by-island basis. As the Administration has recognized, this ecosystem is among the most important in the nation, providing a source of drinking water for more than 25 million people, supporting a \$28 billion agricultural industry, and fostering a thriving commercial and recreational fishing industry that contributes millions to the California and national economies. The project is an authorization of \$2.5 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers to upgrade the levee system, including stockpiling rock to rebuild collapsed levees for emergency response purposes at selected areas of the Delta. Because of the importance of the Delta to the nation's agriculture and economy, the request includes a modification of the Federal/local cost share to 90% federal and 10% local.

**4. Rodeo Creek, Section 1135 Project** – The Contra Costa Flood Control and Water Conservation District is seeking an 1135 project authorization for the Army Corps of Engineers to prepare a study of the feasibility of restoring and enhancing wildlife resources in Rodeo Creek between San Pablo Bay and Highway 80. The channel was designed and constructed to provide adequate flood protection for the community of Rodeo and to control erosion of the creek. The channel currently does this, but requires extensive, environmentally insensitive maintenance to keep the channel functioning properly. In addition, the current channel design includes barriers to migration of anadromous fish. The Contra Costa Flood Control and Water Conservation District would like to partner again with the Corps of Engineers under the Corps' 1135 program to transform this outdated design into a sustainable, environmentally sensitive facility that better serves the community and the environment.

**5. Rheem Creek, Section 1135 Project** – The Contra Costa Flood Control and Water Conservation District is seeking an 1135 project authorization for Rheem Creek between the mouth at San Pablo Bay and Giant Road. The Army Corps of Engineers' existing flood protection project on Rheem Creek protects a number of commercial, industrial, residential and open space areas in the Richmond / San Pablo area of Contra Costa County. Surrounding the mouth of the creek is a large undeveloped parcel (Brunner Marsh) which has been acquired by the East Bay Regional Park District for a future public park. Development of the adjacent lands as a regional park provides a unique opportunity for an enhanced creek environment in an area that will be very visible to the public.

**6. Walnut Creek, Select Deauthorization** – The Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is seeking to deauthorize the downstream portion of the



Corps' Walnut Creek project. The Flood Control District has been working with the Corps since 2002 on a Feasibility Study to re-evaluate and modify the lower portion of the Walnut Creek channel. Deauthorization of a select portion of the Corps' Walnut Creek project would allow the Flood Control District to move forward with a more cost effective modification project than through the Corps process to modify this same portion of the channel.

## **APPROPRIATIONS AND GRANTS – SUPPORT POSITIONS**

*The following support positions are listed in alphabetic order and do not reflect priority order. Please note that new and revised positions are **highlighted and in italics**.*

***Buchanan Field Airport*** – The County approved a Master Plan for the Buchanan Field Airport in October 2008, which includes a Federal Aviation Regulation Part 150 Noise Study and a Business Plan for project implementation. The comprehensive planning effort has ideally positioned Buchanan Field Airport for future aviation (general aviation, corporate aviation and commercial airline service) and aviation-related opportunities. To facilitate the economic development potential, the Business Plan prioritizes necessary infrastructure improvements for Buchanan Field Airport. Further, as the Airport is surrounded by urban residential uses, enhancing the noise program infrastructure is deemed essential for balancing the aviation needs with those of the surrounding communities. The Federal government, primarily through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), provides funding for planning, analysis, and infrastructure improvements. The County will support funding in all these areas for protection and enhancement of our aviation facility and network.

***Byron Airport*** – The Byron Airport is poised for future general and corporate aviation and aviation-related development, but that future growth is dependent upon infrastructure improvements both on and around the Airport. The Byron Airport Business Plan prioritizes infrastructure and possible additional land acquisition to assist the Byron Airport in fulfilling its aviation and economic development potential. The Federal government, primarily through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), provides funding for planning, analysis, infrastructure improvements and aviation land acquisition. The County will support funding in all these areas for protection and enhancement of our aviation facility and network.

***East Bay Regional Communication System (EBRCS)*** – A project to build the East Bay Regional Communication System (EBRCS), a P25 Radio System infrastructure for Contra Costa and Alameda County. This system will provide interoperable voice communication in both the 800 MHz and 700 MHz frequencies to all public safety and public services agencies within Contra Costa County and Alameda County.

EBRCS will allow for interoperable voice communication within the region that can be integrated with other P25 radio systems outside the geographical area of the EBRCS, for example, with San Francisco. This project will provide Level 5 communications which is the highest level of interoperable communications. This project will allow for



everyday interoperable communications, not just various levels of interoperability during big events or disasters in which radio caches are deployed or gateway devices used.

***Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program*** – Advocate/support funding up to or above the authorized amount of \$2 billion for the EECBG Program established and authorized under the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) of 2007. The County's ability to continue offering programs/services improving energy efficiency and conservation while also creating jobs is contingent upon additional federal funding being appropriated to the EECBG Program in 2012 and beyond. Contra Costa and other local governments have identified and designed many successful programs and financial incentives targeting both the private and public sector which are now being implemented using EECBG funding authorized through the ARRA of 2009. Funding for the EECBG program is necessary to ensure the nation's local governments can continue their leadership in creating clean energy jobs, reducing energy consumption and curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

***Kirker Pass Road Truck Climbing Lane*** – \$10 million for constructing northbound and southbound truck climbing lanes on Kirker Pass Road, a heavily used arterial linking residential areas in eastern Contra Costa with job centers and the freeway system in central Contra Costa. The truck climbing lanes are needed to improve traffic flow and will also have safety benefits. The \$31 million would augment \$3 million in State Infrastructure Proposition 1B funds which the County has allocated for the project.

***Regional Habitat Planning and Conservation*** – \$85 million to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund" to keep pace with land costs and the increasing number of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) throughout the country. In partnership with approximately a dozen counties in northern and southern California, the County will support funding for the Fund *to be restored to \$85 million, the 2010 funding level*. This will provide much needed support to regional HCPs in California and nationally, including the East Contra Costa County HCP. Given the prolific growth in the number of regional HCPs, the Fund needs to be increased even more substantially in subsequent years. The East Contra Costa County HCP has received \$33.5 million from the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund in the past seven years and continuing this grant support is of vital importance to the successful implementation of that Plan. The County will also request that the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) include this Fund increase as a priority on CSAC's federal platform.

***San Francisco Bay Improvement Act*** – \$1 billion restoration bill authored by Congresswoman Jackie Speier in 2010 but not passed. The bill, if passed, will help finance restoration of more than 100,000 acres of the Bay's tidal wetlands. Funds from the bill would implement a restoration plan that was adopted in 1993. In addition to benefits for fish and wildlife, wetlands restoration will create new jobs and provide regional economic infusions, as well as protect against the effects of sea level rise on the Bay's shores.

**Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area** – a bill authored by Senator Dianne Feinstein in 2010 but not passed. The bill, if passed, will authorize and fund a National Heritage Area (NHA) for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The NHA designation would be a first step in providing federal resources to agencies in the Delta for economic development and environmental protection. *Contra Costa County supports the legislation and participated in a feasibility study for the NHA through our seat on the Delta Protection Commission, which completed the study in 2012.*

**Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector** – \$30 million for design, engineering and construction of an east-west connector road between two major arterials that link Contra Costa County with Alameda and San Joaquin Counties. The Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector will improve traffic circulation and linkages in the southeastern portion of the County and will provide a new route for truck traffic that will remove a significant portion of truck trips which currently pass through the rural community of Byron. Vasco Road is designated as State Route 84, and Byron Highway is under study as the potential alignment for future State Route 239.

## **2013 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM POLICY POSITIONS**

*The following support positions are listed in alphabetic order and do not reflect priority order. Please note that new and revised policy positions are highlighted and in italics.*

**Affordable Housing and Homeless Programs** –For Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Homeless Assistance Grants, the County will support funding that does not include set-asides or other requirements that limit local communities' ability to respond to the particular needs in their areas. For the Housing Assistance for People with AIDS (HOPWA) program, the County will support legislation to update the formula used to allocate HOPWA grants to reflect local housing costs as well as the number of AIDS cases.

The County supports full funding for HUD homeless assistance programs and funding for full implementation of the Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009.

The County supports funding the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Resources made available through the Trust Fund should be accessible to local housing and community development agencies, including public housing authorities. As the present home mortgage crisis demonstrates, homeownership is not for everyone. While we value and support the role that homeownership plays in meeting affordable housing needs, any new production program should prioritize efforts to address our nation's acute shortage of affordable rental housing.

**Agricultural Pest and Disease Control** – Agriculture and native environments in Contra Costa County continue to be threatened by a variety of invasive/exotic pests, diseases and non-native weeds. The Federal government provides funding for

research, regulation, pest exclusion activities, survey and detection, pest management, weed control, public education and outreach. The County will support funding in all these areas for protection of our agricultural industry and open space. Consistent with the policy position, the County will also support legislation which would authorize and direct the USDA to provide state and local funding for High Risk Prevention programs (also called Pest Detection Funding).

***Beneficial Use of Dredged Materials*** – As the beneficial reuse of dredged materials has a clear public benefit, particularly in the Delta, the County will continue to support beneficial reuse in general and also continue to advocate for funding for a federal study to determine the feasibility of beneficial reuse, considering the benefits and impacts to water quality and water supply in the Delta, navigation, flood control damage, ecosystem restoration, and recreation. The study would include the feasibility of using Sherman Island as a rehandling site for the dredged material, for levee maintenance and/or ecosystem restoration. Language to authorize the study was included in the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) which was passed into law on November 8, 2007.

***Child Care*** – The vulnerable children and families we serve face some of the most difficult circumstances of their lifetimes, as unemployment and loss of health insurance increase rapidly, more families are face foreclosure, and food assistance use hits record highs. Our agencies confront sharply rising caseloads and service demands as state and local budget deficits grow. With respect to issues of child care, the County will advocate for the following federal actions:

- Increase funding to support employment of low-income families through greater access to child care subsidies, and increase the access of children from eligible families to high-quality care that supports positive child development outcomes.
- Provide flexibility at the state and local levels so that quality care can be balanced with access and parental choice.
- Require coordination at the federal level among the various early child care and education funding streams.
- There are approximately 10,450 Early Head Start (0-3) and Head Start (3-5) eligible children in Contra Costa County (US Census Bureau 2008 American Community Survey). This is comprised of 6,793 Early Head Start eligible children and 3,675 Head Start eligible children. The County's funded enrollment is equal to only 21% of the county's eligible Head Start and Early Head Start Children. The County would like to see at least 50% of eligible Head Start and Early Head Start children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start program.

***Child Support*** –The County will advocate for the following federal actions:

- Eliminate the \$25 fee for non-IV-A families.

- Restore the incentive match payments that were prohibited in the Deficit Reduction Act.
- Allow the automatic use of cash medical support to reimburse Medicaid expenditures.
- Allow IV-D agencies to access Health Insurance records for the purposes of Medical Support.

**Child Welfare and Well-being** –The County will advocate for the following federal actions:

- Provide states with financial incentives, as opposed to monetary penalties, under the Child and Family Services Reviews and minimize the significant administrative burden associated with the review process.
- End Title IV-E disallowances from federal audits that take away funds from an already resource-strapped child welfare system. Allow states to reinvest these funds in preventing child abuse and neglect.
- Increase prevention dollars to help maintain children safely in their own homes. Federal funding currently gives disproportional support to out-of-home care rather than to preventing children from coming into care.
- Any increase in Federal Medical Assistance Percentage should include an associated increase in the Title IV-E matching rate to help support children in foster care.

**Community Development Block Grant and HOME Programs** – *The County's ability to continue funding to a variety of nonprofit agencies that provide critical safety net services to lower income residents, including financing the development of affordable housing is threatened by further cuts as part of the Budget Control Act (Act) passed by Congress in July 2011. The Act established mandatory spending caps on most federal programs through 2021, and arranged additional across-the-board annual spending cuts to federal defense and non-defense discretionary (NDD) programs over this same period. Included in non-defense discretionary programs are critical local government oriented programs including the CDBG and HOME programs. These programs are successful and productive, leveraging significant funding from non-federal sources to help spur economic development. The County agrees that reducing the federal deficit is an important component of achieving long-term national economic stability, but targeting solely NDD programs like the CDBG and HOME programs will not achieve significant reductions and will hinder the County's ability to provide critical services to its most vulnerable populations. The County will continue to oppose any further reductions in the CDBG and HOME programs as part of the Budget Control Act or any other means.*

***Cost Shifts to Local and State Government*** – Contra Costa County performs many of its services and programs pursuant to federal direction and funding. Other services and programs are performed at the behest of the state, which receives funding through the federal government. In the past, the Administration's budget has contained significant cuts to entitlement programs and/or caps on entitlements. Such actions could shift cost of services from the federal government to the state and/or local governments (and to the extent that costs would shift to the state, it is highly likely that these would be passed on to the County). The County will oppose any actions that would result in cost shifts on federal entitlement programs or which would result on greater dependency on county funded programs. In addition, the County will support federal and state financial assistance to aid county and local government efforts to meet unfunded federal mandates, such as those contained in the National Response Plan (NRP), the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP), and the National Incident Management System.

***Criminal Debt Collection*** – Nonpayment of court-ordered victim restitution, fines and fees is a problem of epidemic proportions for all jurisdictions. Literally billions of dollars go uncollected each year across the country, resulting not only in financial suffering of victims, but also the loss of public revenue. Many states already allow for the offset of State Tax Refunds, and these programs are successful in achieving revenue recovery. Federal Tax Refunds are already being successfully offset to pay for delinquent child support. The County will support amendments to the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow an offset against income tax refunds to pay for court-ordered debts that are past-due.

***Designation of Indian Tribal Lands and Indian Gaming*** – The Board of Supervisors has endorsed the California State Association of Counties' (CSAC) policy documents regarding development on tribal land and prerequisites to Indian gaming. These policy statements address local government concerns for such issues as the federal government's ability to take lands into trust and thus remove them from local land use jurisdiction, absent the consent of the state and the affected county; the need for tribes to be responsible for all off-reservation impacts of their actions; and assurance that local government will be able to continue to meet its governmental responsibilities for the health, safety, environment, infrastructure and general welfare of all members of its communities. The County will continue to advocate for federal legislation and regulation that supports the CSAC policy documents.

The County will also advocate for limitations on reservation shopping; tightening the definition of Class II gaming machines; assuring protection of the environment and public health and safety; and full mitigation of the off-reservation impacts of the trust land and its operations, including the increased cost of services and lost revenues to the County.

The County will also advocate for greater transparency, accountability and appeal opportunities for local government in the decision-making processes that permit the establishment of Indian gaming facilities. This includes sequencing the processes so

that the Indian Lands Determination comes first, prior to initiation of a trust land request and associated environmental review.

The County will also consider support for federal action and/or legislation that allows Class III gaming at the existing gaming facility only if it can be shown that any change would result in a facility that would be unique in nature and the facility can demonstrate significant community benefits above and beyond the costs associated with mitigating community impacts.

***Economic Development Programs*** – Congress should fund all the complementary programs within HUD’s community and economic development toolkit, ensuring that HUD does not lose sight of the development component of its mission. To that end, the County will support continued funding for the Section 108 loan guarantee program, the Brownfields Economic Development Initiative and the Rural Housing and Economic Development program. Each of these programs plays a unique role in building stronger, more economically viable communities, while enabling communities to leverage external financing in a way the CDBG program alone cannot do.

***Federal “Statewideness” Requirements*** – For many federally funded programs, there is a “statewideness” requirement; i.e., all counties must operate the specific program under the same rules and regulations. This can hamper the County’s ability to meet local needs, to be cost effective and to leverage the funding of one program to reduce costs in another program. Contra Costa County cannot negotiate for federal waivers or do things differently because it is not a state, yet its population is greater than seven states. Recognizing this is a very long-term effort, the County will advocate for relaxation of the “statewideness” rule to allow individual counties or a consortium of counties to receive direct waivers from the federal government and/or adopt the rules and regulations currently in use in another state for specific programs.

***Habitat Conservation Planning*** – The County will advocate for elevating the profile of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) such as the East Contra Costa County HCP within Congress and Administration so that these critical federal/state/local partnerships can receive necessary attention and support. HCPs are flagship programs for the federal government and supporting effective implementation of approved HCPs should be a top priority for the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and HCPs should be a key tool in any federal climate change or economic stimulus legislation.

***Health*** – The County will advocate for the following actions by the federal government: provide enhanced Medicaid FMAP (“FMAP” is the “Federal Medical Assistance Percentage”) for Medicaid. It is the federal matching rate for state Medicaid expenditures. Increasing the federal matching rate for states would free up state general fund money for other purposes and would help counties as well.); suspend the Medicare “clawback” rule; suspend the “60-day rule” that requires states to repay the federal government overpayments identified by the state prior to collection, and even in instances where the state can never collect; ease the ability to cover those eligible for

Medicaid by making documentation requirements less stringent; and prevent the implementation of the following seven federal regulations:

- Outpatient hospital
- Case Management
- School Based Administration & Transportation
- Public Provider Cost Limit
- Graduate Medical Education
- Rehabilitation Services Option
- Provider Tax

**Levee Restoration and Repair** – The County will support legislation such as H.R. 6484, the SAFE Levee Act (Garamendi, CA 10<sup>th</sup>), which will authorize the U.S. Department of the Interior to invest in Delta levee repairs, for all levees that are publicly owned or publicly maintained. The bill also requires a cost-benefit analysis for the tunnel project being planned as part of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan.

**Pension** – The County will support legislation that would modify the Internal Revenue Code and corresponding regulations to permit public employees to make an irrevocable election between their current pension formula and a less rich pension formula.

In 2006, Contra Costa County and the Deputy Sheriff's Association jointly obtained state legislation that would allow members of the Association to make a one-time irrevocable election between their current pension formula and a less rich pension formula, called Tier C. Orange County and its labor organizations obtained similar legislation in 2009. However, neither County has been able to implement this state legislation because such elections currently have negative tax consequences for employees and for retirement plans under federal tax law as interpreted by the Internal Revenue Service.

Like many local government entities nationwide, the County's fiscal position would benefit greatly from reduced pension costs. Allowing local government entities to implement collective bargaining agreements and state legislation that permits employees to elect less rich pension formulas would be a significant step in reducing pension costs.

**Public Housing Programs** – The County will support legislation that results in the transformation of existing programs to improve their effectiveness and efficiency, in tandem with the design of new and innovative responses, both to build upon recent progress and address outstanding issues.

The County will support legislation to protect the nation's investment in Public Housing.

- Enact affordable housing industry proposal to allow public housing agencies (PHAs) to voluntarily convert public housing units to Section 8 project-based rental assistance in order to preserve this vital component of the national



infrastructure.

- Oppose the Administration's proposal to impose a \$1 billion offset against the operating reserves of responsible, entrepreneurial PHAs.
- Support the revitalization of severely distressed public housing units.
- Address safety and security concerns connected to drug-related crime.

The County will support legislation to preserve vital community and economic development programs

- Fully fund the Community Development Block Grant Program in order to create and save jobs, revitalize local economies, and support critical services for vulnerable populations.
- Maintain funding for HUD's cost-effective economic development tools.

The County will support legislation to strengthen and simplify the Section 8 Rental Assistance programs

- Provide adequate funding for Housing Assistance Payment contract renewals and ongoing administrative fees.
- Enact the Section Eight Voucher Reform Act (SEVRA).
- Implement overdue regulatory and administrative revisions that ensure the efficient use of program funds.

The County will support legislation to expand Affordable Housing Opportunities and combat homelessness

- Fully fund the Home Investment Partnerships Program and HUD's homeless assistance programs.
- Capitalize the Housing Trust Fund through a revenue-neutral approach.
- Preserve and strengthen the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program.

The County will support legislation to foster innovation, increase efficiency, and streamline the regulatory environment

- Promote reasonable and flexible federal oversight.
- Incentivize green building and increased Energy Efficiency.
- Support HUD's ongoing transformation efforts.
- Ensure that HUD releases and distributes federal funding in a timely manner.

- Eliminate statutory and regulatory barriers that prevent PHAs and redevelopment authorities from accessing federal programs they are qualified to administer.

**Retiree and Retiree Health Care Costs** – The County operates many programs on behalf of the federal government. While federal funding is available for on-going program operations, including employee salaries, the allocation is usually capped, regardless of actual costs. For retiree and retiree health care, the County's ability to contain costs is extremely limited. The County will advocate for full federal financial participation in funding the County's retiree and retiree health obligations.

**San Luis Drain** – The U. S. Bureau of Reclamation is under a court injunction to evaluate and implement options for providing drainage services for the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. Drainage water from this area contains toxic concentrations of selenium and other hazardous substances. The San Luis Drain is one of the options that was studied. The Drain would pass through Contra Costa County to discharge in the Delta. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has determined to address the problem without building the Drain, but Congress would need to appropriate the funds before this alternative could be implemented. *A federal court ruling found that Reclamation does not have to build the Drain but simply has to provide some way of dealing with the contaminated agricultural runoff water. However, that ruling is under challenge in the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals by water interests who want the Drain built.* The injunction requiring provision of some type of drainage service still looms. The County will continue to oppose the San Luis Drain option and support, instead, drainage solutions in the valley, such as reducing the volume of problem water drainage; managing/reusing drainage waters within the affected irrigation districts; retiring lands with severe drainage impairment (purchased from willing sellers); and reclaiming/removing solid salts through treatment, bird safe/bird free solar ponds and farm-based methods.

**State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP)** – *On May 23rd, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced a change in the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) that will prohibit SCAAP funds from being used to reimburse localities for foreign-born criminal aliens housed in jails that have been classified as "unknown inmates" by the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency. This is a significant change to the SCAAP reimbursement formula and will heavily impact counties across the nation.*

*The County will support the rescinding of this decision and a reinstatement of the previous reimbursement practice, which would more equitably reimburse jurisdictions for the costs of housing undocumented individuals, including those inmates whose status may be unknown to the Department of Homeland Security.*

*SCAAP provides much needed partial reimbursement assistance to states and localities for the costs associated with the detention and incarceration of undocumented criminal aliens convicted of state and local offenses who have been incarcerated for at least four consecutive days. Although it is the federal government's responsibility to protect and*

secure the nation's borders, counties incur millions of dollars in un-reimbursed expenses each year as a result of housing undocumented immigrants that violate state or local laws. Additionally, counties are often times responsible for processing and prosecuting illegal aliens, and, in many cases, must provide medical care and other services to these individuals.

As a result, a disproportionate share of the criminal justice-related costs associated with illegal immigration impacts county governments, and SCAAP related costs to local jurisdictions continue to rise. In past years, DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has provided reimbursement credit to states and localities that have incurred costs for detaining individuals whom they believe to be undocumented criminals; in doing so, the agency has acknowledged the fact that undocumented individuals constitute a high percentage of foreign-born inmates of unknown immigration status because these individuals-who have never before been apprehended and screened by federal immigration agents-will not be in any federal immigration database.

By proceeding with the modified payment methodology, BJA would be unilaterally eliminating reimbursement for a significant portion of undocumented inmates in local jail systems, and future SCAAP awards to many local governments would likely be reduced by more than 50 percent nationwide. This added burden will put additional strains on already tight county budgets.

**Second Chance Act** – The County will support funding for the Second Chance Act, which helps counties address the growing population of individuals returning from prisons and jails. Despite massive increases in corrections spending in states and jails nationwide, recidivism rates remain high: half of all individuals released from state prison are re-incarcerated within three years. Here in California, unfortunately, the recidivism rate is even higher. Yet there is reason for hope: research shows that when individuals returning from prison or jail have access to key treatments, education, and housing services, recidivism rates go down and the families and communities they return to are stronger and safer.

The Second Chance Act ensures that the tax dollars on corrections are better spent, and provides a much-needed response to the "revolving door" of people entering and leaving prison and jail.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – The County will advocate for the following federal actions:

- Increase SNAP benefits as a major and immediately available element of economic stimulus.
- Suspend the restrictions applying to ABAWDs. ("ABAWDs" stands for "Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents" and pertains to adults receiving food stamps who are considered employable.) They are subject to strict time limits on how

long they can receive food stamps. It is difficult administratively to track this, and when unemployment is high, it can result in more adults going hungry.

- Remove the current federal barriers that prevent some nutrition programs from employing EBT technology.

***Streamlining Permitting for Critical Infrastructure, Economic Stimulus, and Alternative Energy Projects –“Green” Job Creation*** – Request that Congress and the Administration recognize the value of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) as a reliable way of streamlining critical infrastructure, economic stimulus, and alternative energy project permitting in a manner that is consistent with federal environmental regulations. HCPs not only facilitate such projects through permit streamlining, but the planning, implementation, management, and monitoring needs associated with regional HCPs plans also create many quality “green” jobs.

***Telecommunications Act of 1996 Revisions*** – The Telecommunications Act of 1996 governs local government’s role in telecommunications, primarily broadband cable that uses the County’s right-of-way as well as consumer protections. As Congress works to update the Act, the County will continue to advocate for strengthening consumer protections and local government oversight of critical communications technologies; local access to affordable and reliable high speed broadband infrastructures to support the local economy; the right of local municipalities and communities to offer high-speed broadband access; coordination and integration of private communication resources for governmental emergency communication systems; preservation of local government’s franchise fees; preservation of the local community benefits, including but not limited to public, education and governmental (PEG) access channels; authority for provision of municipal telecommunication services; preservation of local police powers essential for health, safety and welfare of the citizenry; preservation of local government ownership and control of the local public rights-of-way; and support for ensuring that communication policy promotes affordable services for all Americans.

The Community Broadband Act of 2007, S.1853, encourages the deployment of high speed networks by preserving the authority of local governments to offer community broadband infrastructure and services. The County will oppose all bills that do not address the County’s concerns unless appropriately amended. In addition, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has proposed rule-making (FCC Second Report and Order Docket 05-311 “Franchising Rules for Incumbents”) that, in the opinion of local government, goes beyond the scope of their authority in this area. The County will oppose all such rule making efforts.

***Telecommunications Issues*** – Support the Community Access Preservation (CAP) Act introduced in 2009 by Wisconsin Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin. The CAP Act addresses the challenges faced by public, educational and government (PEG) TV channels and community access television stations. The CAP Act addresses four immediate issues facing PEG channels. The CAP Act would: Allow PEG fees to be used for any PEG-related purpose; require PEG channels to be carried in the same

manner as local broadcast channels; require the FCC to study the effect state video franchise laws have had on PEG; require operators in states that adopted statewide franchising to provide support equal to the greater of the support required under the state law or the support historically provided for PEG; and make cable television-related laws and regulations applicable to all landline video providers.

In addition, the County should support the widespread deployment and adoption of broadband, especially as it serves to connect the educational community and libraries.

***Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*** – The County will advocate for the following federal actions:

- Relieve states of work participation rate and work verification plan penalties for fiscal years 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 in recognition of the serious downturn in the national economy and the succession of more “process-based” regulations issued in the last few years.
- Permanently withdraw the August 8, 2008, proposal that would have repealed the regulation that enables states to claim caseload reduction credit for excess MOE expenditures.
- Rescind the May 22, 2008, HHS guidance that effectively eliminated the ability of states to offer pre-assistance programs to new TANF applicants for up to four months.
- Rescind the final Deficit Reduction Act regulation restricting allowable state maintenance-of-effort expenditures under TANF purposes 3 and 4.
- End federal efforts to impose a national TANF error rate.

***Volume Pricing*** – The National Association of Counties supports greater access for local governments to General Services Administration (GSA) contract schedules. These schedules provide volume pricing for state and local governments and make public sector procurement more cost effective. However, current law does not provide full access to state and local governments for GSA schedules. The County will support legislation that gives local governments access to these schedules and provides the option of purchasing law enforcement, security, and other related items at favorable GSA reduced pricing.

***Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Reauthorization*** – Congress may again consider reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act in 2013. The County will support reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act at current funding levels or higher; keeping the program at the federal level rather than block granting it; maximizing local control, so that we can meet local needs; and establishing reasonable performance measures. In addition, any reauthorization or new workforce legislation should: retain private sector led state and local Workforce Investment Boards (local boards) as

governing bodies; expand, enhance and simplify the WIA Youth Program; redesign the Dislocated Worker program to reflect the new economy; and redesign how the funding of One-Stop facilities is structured.