



VENTURA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS 2025 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Ventura Council of Governments (VCOG) Legislative Program is to protect and promote the regional interests of the governmental entities within Ventura County on priority issues and matters that may impact those entities. In this vein, VCOG's legislative efforts are intended to support the fiscal stability of local government, and to provide for and preserve local control of governance and service delivery. The annual adoption of a Legislative Platform will guide the VCOG Board (Board) and staff in evaluating and taking appropriate action upon legislative proposals introduced at the state and federal levels. The goals of VCOG's Legislative Program are to:

- Advocate the region's legislative interests at the state and federal levels;
- Inform legislators and the VCOG Board regarding key issues and legislation that could have potential impacts on the region;
- Participate with other Councils of Government, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), National League of Cities (NLC), Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), and other regional agencies on legislative issues of importance to the region;
- Seek support and assistance for regional projects, services and programs that enhance public services.

PROCESS

The VCOG Legislative Committee, comprised of staff from the ten cities, County, and the League of California Cities representative, shall review the status of legislative proposals and make recommendations to the VCOG Board consistent with the annually adopted Legislative Platform. In addition to the direction provided in the Platform, the Committee will consider positions established by the League of California Cities, California State Association of Counties, National League of Cities, and Southern California Association of Governments. VCOG will not address matters that are not pertinent to the region's local government services, such as partisan, socially divisive, or international issues.

When timely action is needed before the VCOG Board is able to convene to authorize a position, staff is authorized to prepare position letters for the Chair's signature, provided such position is consistent with the VCOG Legislative Platform or positions established by the League of California Cities, California State Association of Counties, National League of Cities or the Southern California Association of Governments. Should any of these positions be in conflict, no action will be taken without specific Board direction.

Should the Chair not be available to sign a position letter, the Vice Chair shall be authorized to sign the letter in lieu of the Chair. If neither the Chair nor Vice Chair is available, the Executive Director shall be authorized to sign in lieu.

All members of VCOG shall receive copies of position letters prepared on behalf of VCOG.

PRIORITIES

The primary priority areas for VCOG's 2024 Legislative Program include:

- Land Use and Environment
- Housing and Blight
- Economic Development
- Public Infrastructure
- Solid Waste Management
- Public Safety
- Resources Management
- Local Governance Sustainability
- Public Health

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

A. LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT

- Support legislation to extend CEQA streamlining provisions for land use projects that are consistent with the SCAG Sustainable Communities Strategy.
- Support use of cap-and-trade revenues and other funding sources for local planning activities to implement the regional Sustainable Communities Strategy.
- Seek to ensure any future funding for SB 375 (Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008) implementation, and similar legislation, including funding for local initiatives.
- Support legislation that would streamline the environmental review process without compromising environmental quality standards or the public's ability to review and comment.
- Support legislation and/or funding for remediation of superfund sites.

B. HOUSING AND BLIGHT

- Support amending state policies to give jurisdictions flexibility to provide affordable housing appropriate for their communities and their region, and remove disincentives and regulatory obstacles.
- Support legislation that provides funding opportunities for affordable housing projects and services.

- Support legislation that addresses occupancy levels and strengthens cities' abilities to reduce overcrowding in residential housing while maintaining adequate parking.
- Support permitting cities to exercise review and land use regulation of group home facilities and residential care facilities in residential neighborhoods including the application of zoning, building, and safety standards.
- Support legislation that defines an equitable process to determine a fair share of new housing needed to respond to growth trends in the region.
- Oppose legislation or regulations that threaten or usurp local control of land use decision-making.
- Support legislation that recognizes the importance of local government jurisdiction regarding planning and zoning issues.
- Support legislation that provides funding for implementing programs to prevent and address homelessness.
- Support Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) reform.

C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Support the creation where appropriate of economic development programs.
- Support the retention of Naval Base Ventura County.
- Support legislation that funds infrastructure improvements at Naval Base Ventura and the Channel Islands Air National Guard Station.
- Support legislation and programs to encourage job attraction and retention, and to promote a healthy business climate for Ventura County.
- Support legislation related to internet sales to insure fair share disbursement of sales tax as opposed to the current structure.
- Support the enactment and expansion of tax increment financing authority for economic development, infrastructure, and community revitalization.

D. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support legislation to provide stable, adequate, and long-term funding for public infrastructure needs including but not limited to transportation alternatives, zero emission vehicle infrastructure, streets and roads maintenance, water and wastewater systems, and broadband systems.
- Support legislative efforts of the Ventura County Transportation Commission, SCAG, Caltrans, Caltrans, and other appropriate agencies to protect transportation funds from being diverted to other purposes.

- Support State funding for a weigh station (Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility) along SR118 between Somis and Moorpark.
- Support legislative efforts to provide flexibility between capital and operations funding for transit,
- Support efforts of the League of California Cities, California State Association of Counties, Association of California Water Agencies, and California Association of Sanitation Agencies to establish an optional funding system for local agencies to finance storm water management, flood control, sewer and water supply projects, set rates to encourage conservation, and reduce water and sewer bills for low income customers.

E. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Support legislation pertaining to VCOG's responsibility for approval of the regional solid waste plan.
- Support legislation that promotes long-term, cost beneficial recycling and conversion technologies.
- Support extended producer responsibility (EPR) legislation that encourages manufacturers to design environmentally friendly products.
- Oppose legislation that would restrict or limit local government's ability to franchise refuse and recycling collection services, to direct municipal or county solid waste flow (flow control), to contractually require haulers to guarantee achievement of AB 939 and SB 1383 goals, or to local government's ability to protect landfill capacity.

F. PUBLIC SAFETY

- Support legislative efforts that strengthen law enforcement's ability to prevent and reduce crime, and support enhanced penalties.
- Support funding opportunities for law enforcement activities and emergency preparedness.
- Support increased local authority and resources to address impacts of early prisoner release policies and criminal recidivism.
- Support legislation that provides funding and resources to local governments to prevent wildfires, mudslides, and other disasters.
- Support Public Safety Power Shutoffs prevention and mitigation efforts.
- Support legislation that requires local input for the development of Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps and provides for an appeal process.

G. RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

- Support and encourage regulations and procedures that promote common sense implementation of State and Federal water quality control laws, and ensure State and Federal agencies work in collaboration to enable compliance with these laws.
- Support legislation to increase the availability and viability of energy efficiency and renewable energy options for public agencies, residential, and commercial customers.
- Support programs to ensure provision of a safe and reliable water supply.
- Oppose legislation that imposes new regulatory burdens on municipal utility systems without providing funding and/or consideration of the feasibility of monitoring and mitigating such requirements.

H. LOCAL GOVERNANCE SUSTAINABILITY

- Support legislation that protects local control and ensures equitable, dependable and predictable funding for vital community services.
- Support legislation that protects planning sovereignty of all land within jurisdictions geographic boundaries.
- Support Legislation to allow virtual meeting participation that does not impact transparency.

I. PUBLIC HEALTH

- Support legislation that protects public health and preserves quality of life.
- Encourage the state of California to fund and sponsor further research into the negative impacts of anticoagulant rodenticides to determine whether the use of these products should be further restricted or banned statewide.
- Support legislation that provides county resources for addressing the mental health/addiction crisis.