

SONOMA COUNTY LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS PROGRAM

The five District Supervisors (the Board) serve as the Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County, Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, County of Sonoma Public Financing Authority, and County of Sonoma Public Financing Corporation, and as the Board of Commissioners of the Community Development Commission. The Board actively advocates for Sonoma County's interests to influence policy change, drive systemic change, promote social justice, foster accountability, and raise awareness of local issues and the impacts of the state and federal legislation. Under the direction of the Board, the County Executive's Office (CEO) implements the County's Legislative Affairs Program and the Strategic Grant Program in collaboration with County department leadership and, when necessary, state and federal lobbyists. The following policies and protocols outline the roles and responsibilities and provide guidance to department staff, the Board, and the County Executive's Office in advocating for state and federal policies.

Board

- 1) Policy Direction: The Board shall direct the County's federal and state advocacy through the annual adoption of a Legislative Platform, or via subsequent Board direction. CEO Legislative Affairs staff will bring an annual review of the Legislative Platform before the Board for consideration after facilitating feedback from departments, agencies, and districts.
- 2) Position on Pending Legislation: The Board shall distribute position letters on pending state and federal legislation. Utilizing position letters ensures that the most current version of amendments to the pending legislation have been reviewed when analyzing for the Board's position.
- 3) Individual Board Member Positions: Members of the Board may, as distinct members of the Board, publicly state their position on legislative issues, however they may not state that an individual position represents that of entire Board, or the County of Sonoma.
- 4) Ballot Initiatives: The Board may consider positions on ballot initiatives once qualified.
- 5) Representation on State and Federal County Advocacy Organizations: The Board shall nominate Board members to represent Sonoma County as director and alternate to the National Association of Counties (NACo), California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) Board of Directors. As the County representative, the director or alternate shall render votes consistent with the currently adopted Legislative Platform or subsequent majority action by the Board.

County Executive's Office

- 1) Program Oversight: The CEO Legislative Affairs staff is responsible for developing the Legislative Platform, which includes policy positions, procedures, and proposals for the Board's consideration. CEO Legislative Affairs staff serve under the policy direction of the Legislative Platform as adopted by the Board. In limited circumstances, when urgent matters arise and further direction from the Board cannot be obtained expeditiously, the County Executive Officer is authorized to act with discretion and on behalf of the County of Sonoma.
- 2) Impact Analysis and Process: The CEO Legislative Affairs staff, with input from departments and agencies, is responsible for evaluating legislation and analyzing potential impacts to the County of

Sonoma. Analysis includes ensuring alignment with the adopted Legislative Platform. Following the analysis, CEO Legislative Affairs staff will recommend a position for the Chair's consideration, as the Board Chair's position reflects that of the County of Sonoma.

- 3) Legislative Advocacy: The CEO Legislative Affairs staff tracks and advocates for policies and funding aligned with the adopted Legislative Platform, or at the direction of the County Executive Officer. Advocacy is prioritized on issue areas that transcend individual departments and agencies' interests and that are significant to the County Executive Office's primary role in managing, directing, and coordinating County of Sonoma operations. Consistent with County travel policies, the County Executive Officer may approve CEO Legislative Affairs staff to travel out of the County to advance Legislative Platform priorities, or other legislative priorities of the Board.
- 4) Contract Lobbyists: CEO Legislative Affairs staff administer advocacy-related contracts and directs the activities of the County's state and federal legislative lobbyists.

County Departments and agencies

- 1) Legislative Proposals and Position: During the annual review of the Legislative Platform, departments and agencies shall submit any legislative positions and proposals for which they will need CEO Legislative Affairs Program support.
- 2) Legislative Activities: Departments and agencies shall not take actions in conflict with the policy positions of the Board, County Executive Officer, Legislative Program, or subsequent Board action. Departments and agencies shall notify the CEO Legislative Affairs staff of any legislative activity including, but not limited to, public testimony, meetings with legislators, or meetings with legislative or committee staff.
- 3) Request for Board Chair Position Letter on Legislation: Departments and agencies should reserve requests for the Chair's signature for legislation that has impacts transcending a single department. Departments and agencies are encouraged to work through their respective statewide associations to advocate expeditiously within a department's scope of expertise.
- 4) Request for County Position on Legislation: With a minimum of one week's notice, departments and agencies may request CEO Legislative Affairs staff support to analyze bills for consideration by the Chair of the Board. Requests should specifically reference where in the Legislative Platform the policy position is identified.
- 5) Letters of Support from State & Federal Elected Offices: Departments and agencies shall copy CEO Legislative Affairs staff on their external requests for letters of support related to grants and special projects.
- 6) Legislative Correspondence by Appointed Department Head: Departments and agencies may, under their appointed department head's signature, transmit legislative correspondence on issues in alignment with the Legislative Program or subsequent action by the Board. Departments and agencies must copy CEO Legislative Affairs staff on all such correspondence.
- 7) Budgetary Requests: Departments and agencies seeking earmarks or budgetary appropriations from the offices of state or federal elected representatives must seek support from the CEO Legislative Affairs staff in advance of their advocacy.
- 8) Department Correspondence to a Standing Committee: Departments and agencies must seek approval from the County Executive's Office prior to sending correspondence to a standing committee that includes a member of Sonoma County's delegation or sent directly to a member of the Sonoma County

delegation. Please allow 2 business days for the CEO Legislative Affairs staff to review legislative correspondence from a department seeking approval.

- 9) Legislative Correspondence by Elected Officials: Elected officials may take a public position on legislative issues however they may not state that their individual position represents the position of the entire Board, or the County of Sonoma. Elected officials are requested to copy CEO Legislative Affairs staff on all legislative correspondence.
- 10) Impacts & Technical Assistance: Departments and agencies should share technical feedback on how pending legislation might impact their funding or ability to deliver services to the public. Department staff is expected to return feedback requested from CEO Legislative Affairs staff within 5 business days.
- 11) Contract Advocacy: Departments and agencies shall inform CEO Legislative Affairs staff when entering a contract with a legislative advocate, and annually during the review of the Legislative Platform.