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# Humboldt County



## 2023 State and Federal Legislative Platform

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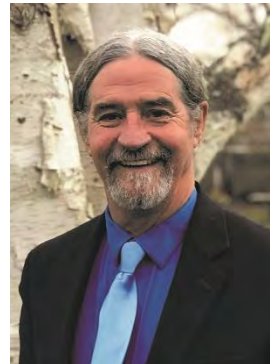
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# Contents

<b>STATE LEGISLATIVE GOALS</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE GOALS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>HUMBOLDT COUNTY PROPOSALS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>CANNABIS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
STATE CANNABIS .....	3
Allow Inactivity (“Following”) Of Cultivation Licenses.....	3
Allow Direct Sales By Farmers .....	3
Prohibit Insurers From Cancelling Homeowner Insurance Policies Or Spiking Rates For On-Site Cannabis.....	3
Exempt Water Storage Improvements From Property Tax Reassessment .....	3
Support Small Farms.....	3
Retain Local Control Of Cannabis .....	4
Require State Agencies To Coordinate With Local Governments .....	4
Fully Fund County Cannabis-Related Expenditures.....	4
Provide Funding To Support Additional Enforcement Of Illegal Water Diversions.....	4
Allow On-Site Processing And Testing .....	4
Support Non-Competitive Or Direct Allocation Of State Cannabis Tax Revenue For Small And Rural Counties.....	4
Support State Cannabis Tax Revenue For Youth And Early Childhood Prevention Efforts .....	4
FEDERAL CANNABIS .....	4
Support Cannabis Regulations At The Federal Level.....	4
<b>AGRICULTURE</b> .....	<b>5</b>
STATE AND FEDERAL AGRICULTURE .....	5
Invasive Species Program Funding .....	5
USDA/California County Cooperative Wildlife Services (WS) Program.....	5
STATE AGRICULTURE .....	6
Industrial Hemp .....	6
Marketplace Equity And Consumer Protection.....	6
State Organic Program .....	6
Allowing For Safe And Reusable Compost From Mamallian Carcasses .....	7
Invasive Weed Management Funding .....	7
Funding For Local Pesticide Enforcement Activities.....	7
Funding For California Fairs Network.....	8

FEDERAL AGRICULTURE .....	8
United States Postal Service (USPS) Inspection Authority .....	8
<b>AVIATION</b> .....	<b>9</b>
STATE AVIATION .....	9
State Assistance With Recruitment Of Air Service .....	9
Increase California Aid To Airports Program (CAAP) Funding .....	9
FEDERAL AVIATION .....	9
Remove Cap On Passenger Facility Charge And Reduce Local Matching Requirement .....	9
Homeland Security – Full Funding Of Security Mandates For Commercial Airports .....	10
<b>CHILD SUPPORT</b> .....	<b>10</b>
STATE CHILD SUPPORT .....	10
Access To Appropriate Tools And Information.....	10
<b>CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY</b> .....	<b>11</b>
STATE AND FEDERAL CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY .....	11
Infrastructure To Support Energy, Zero Emissions Goals.....	11
Renewable Energy .....	11
Offshore Wind .....	12
Funding For Energy Conservation And Renewable Energy Generation Projects .....	13
Sea Level Rise Adaptation .....	13
Support Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Programs .....	15
STATE CLIMATE RESILIENCE.....	15
Support For Climate Resilience .....	15
<b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b> .....	<b>16</b>
STATE AND FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.....	16
Infrastructure To Support Energy, Lower Emissions .....	16
STATE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT .....	16
Historic Preservation, Façade Improvement and Beautification .....	16
Housing And RHNA Allocations .....	17
Building In Wildland Interface .....	18
Grant Funding For Infill Development.....	18
Funding For Assistance On Local Coastal Plans .....	18
Funding For Discrepancies Between State And Federal Building Codes.....	19
FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.....	19
Provide Maximum CDBG Funding .....	19
Increase Funding For The HOME Program .....	19

Americans With Disabilities Act Reforms .....	19
Boost Mobile Broadband Deployment And Accessibility While Preserving Local Zoning Authority .....	20
Funding For Broadband Service To Rural Areas .....	20
Develop Legislation, Bond Grant Guidelines That Include Brownfield Remediation .....	20
Dredging Humboldt Bay and Marina .....	21
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>22</b>
STATE AND FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .....	22
Childcare .....	22
Rural Broadband And Net Neutrality .....	22
Funding For Broadband Service To Rural Areas .....	22
STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .....	23
Economic Development Practices And Policies .....	23
Expanding Use For Existing Broadband And Utility Lines .....	24
Vacation Rentals And Transient Occupancy Tax Collection .....	24
<b>GENERAL GOVERNMENT .....</b>	<b>24</b>
STATE AND FEDERAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT .....	24
Infrastructure To Support Energy, Lower Emissions .....	24
STATE GENERAL GOVERNMENT .....	25
Separating Superior Court Expenses, Court Retirement Systems From Counties .....	25
Mitigation Of Impacts From Tribal Gaming Compacts .....	26
Fulfill The Provisions Of The Payment In Lieu Of Taxes Act Related To Fish & Game Property .....	26
Restoration Of Property Tax Administration Program .....	26
Funding For Newly Formed Cities .....	27
FEDERAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT .....	27
Local Authority To Levy Internet Sales Tax .....	27
Limit Corporate And Union Contributions In Elections .....	27
Funding For Postal Service .....	28
Immigration Reform, Legal Protections For Immigrant Residents And Unaccompanied Minors .....	28
Protecting Public Safety Funds .....	29
State And Local Tax Deduction .....	29
Protecting Tax Exempt Bonds .....	29
Long-Term Funding Solution For Payments In Lieu Of Taxes .....	30
<b>HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES .....</b>	<b>30</b>
STATE AND FEDERAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES .....	30

Investment In Public Health Prevention Services.....	30
Public Health Infrastructure And Prevention Funding .....	30
<b>STATE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Funding For CARE Court .....	31
Protecting Older And Vulnerable Adults .....	31
Adverse Childhood Experiences .....	31
Helping Families Move Out Of Poverty .....	32
Housing And Homelessness.....	32
County Workforce And Program Flexibility .....	32
Mental Health Services Act .....	33
<b>FEDERAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Supporting Children And Families .....	33
Temporary Assistance For Needy Families Reauthorization .....	33
Support Food Security .....	34
Support For Investment In Low Income Housing .....	34
Support For Investment In Aging, Caregiving And Long-Term Care.....	34
Support For Mental Health And Substance Use Disorder Resources.....	34
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>STATE NATURAL RESOURCES.....</b>	<b>35</b>
California Water Resilience Portfolio Initiative .....	35
Long-Term Funding For Natural Resource Affairs .....	35
Williamson Act Funding Restitution, Restoration Through Cap And Trade .....	36
Incentives For Water Storage .....	36
<b>FEDERAL NATURAL RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Potter Valley Project.....	36
Wildfire Preparedness And Response .....	37
Long-Term Funding For Natural Resource Affairs .....	37
<b>PUBLIC SAFETY.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>STATE PUBLIC SAFETY .....</b>	<b>38</b>
Funding for abandoned vehicles, and increase to Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Fee .....	38
Accountability, Transparency And Behavioral Health Services In Law Enforcement.....	38
Stable Funding For Juvenile Justice .....	38
Tribal Officers As Peace Officers.....	39
Funding For Mental Health Diversion Statute.....	39

Funding For Indigent Legal Defense .....	39
Funding For Increased Enforcement Of Illegal Water Diversions .....	40
Emergency And Disaster Preparedness Assistance, Funding For Emergency Operations Centers.....	40
Community Level Wildfire Preparedness And Protection.....	40
Enhancing Existing Firebreaks .....	41
Additional Funding For Court Security .....	41
<b>PUBLIC WORKS .....</b>	<b>42</b>
STATE PUBLIC WORKS.....	42
Continue Safety Practices For Expressway Between Arcata And Eureka Until Improvements Are Made.....	42
Surveyor Monument Preservation .....	42
Humboldt Bay Transportation Infrastructure .....	42
Local Rehabilitation Project Eligibility For Stip Funding .....	43
Redwood Creek Levee Rehabilitation And Estuary Restoration .....	43
Complete Streets.....	44
Account For Rural Considerations In Food Waste Collection Requirements .....	44
California Redemption Value Recycling.....	45
Funding For Preventative Road Maintenance.....	45
Access To Self-Help Funding.....	45
FEDERAL PUBLIC WORKS .....	46
Klamath Basin .....	46
Water Resources .....	46
Federal Transportation Funding .....	47
Redwood Creek Multi-Benefit Estuary Restoration And Flood Control Project .....	47
Reauthorization Of Secure Rural Schools.....	47
Funding For Rural Water Supply And Wastewater Projects.....	47
Funding For Nuclear Storage .....	48



# STATE LEGISLATIVE GOALS

Humboldt County's primary, overarching goals for 2023 include:

SUPPORT EFFORTS FOR ADVANCEMENT OF CLIMATE RESILIENCY PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

SUPPORT STATE APPROPRIATIONS FOR PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO INCREASE PRODUCTION OF HOUSING

SUPPORT LEGAL CANNABIS CULTIVATORS

INCREASE EFFORTS RELATED TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EFFECTIVE POLICING

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT ADVOCATES FOR MAXIMUM LOCAL CONTROL AND FLEXIBILITY IN THE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION OF COUNTY PROGRAMS

SUPPORT RELIEF FROM STATE MANDATES AND/OR ELIMINATION OF STATUTORY BARRIERS

OPPOSE ATTEMPTS TO SHIFT COSTS FROM STATE TO COUNTIES

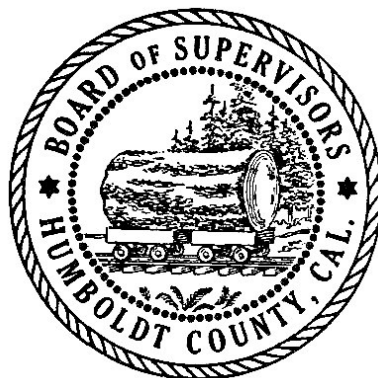
OPPOSE REDUCTIONS TO THE CURRENT LEVEL OF STATE FUNDING FOR COUNTY PROGRAMS

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO BRING MODERN SERVICES TO RURAL COMMUNITIES

SUPPORT AND ADVANCE LOCAL INTERESTS IN NATURAL RESOURCE DISCUSSIONS

PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF THE COUNTY'S ABILITY TO FUND LOCAL PROGRAMS

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES



# FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE GOALS

Humboldt County's primary, overarching federal legislative goals for 2023 include:

SUPPORT INCREASES IN FEDERAL FUNDING FOR KEY COUNTY PROGRAMS

SUPPORT AND ADVANCE LOCAL INTERESTS IN NATURAL RESOURCE DISCUSSIONS

SUPPORT FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND EFFORTS TO MITIGATE IMPACTS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE

- Investing in equitable and sustainable offshore wind development

SUPPORT INCREASING THE FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP IN COUNTY PROGRAMS

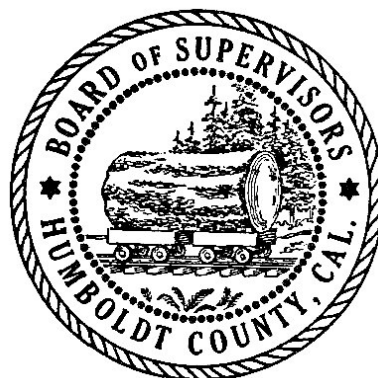
- Allowing cannabis regulations and decriminalizing cannabis at the federal level
- Support funding for public infrastructure programs, including transportation, water, housing and homelessness programs
- Support increased federal investments to boost capacity for local public health programs and initiatives

SUPPORT RELIEF FROM FEDERAL MANDATES AND STATUTORY BARRIERS

- Support broadening of allowable uses of Secure Rural Schools Act (Title III) funding

SUPPORT FEDERAL FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENTS

- Support for enhancing broadband service to the rural north coast of California
- Preserve local control in technology considerations



# HUMBOLDT COUNTY PROPOSALS

## CANNABIS

### STATE CANNABIS

Humboldt County is home to world-renowned cannabis farming. Small family cannabis farms make up a large majority of the cultivation sites in Humboldt County and in the traditional cannabis growing areas of the state. For Humboldt County the cannabis industry has been a significant contributor to the economy. Humboldt County has been diligent about converting these cultivation sites into legal operations, which benefits both the environment and industry. Recently, statewide overproduction due to permitting large corporate farms (some farms are now in the one million pounds per year category) importing cannabis from outside the state, and unpermitted cannabis entering the legal market have resulted in a dramatic reduction in the price a farmer can sell their product for. The declining product value, and ongoing impacts of drought and wildfire, have resulted in severe strain on Humboldt farmers.

**Allow Inactivity (“Fallowing”) Of Cultivation Licenses** Allow a cultivator to reduce their cultivation area, or hold their ground fallow, with a corresponding reduction in fees and taxes without having to modify or expire their license. This allows cultivators to make better decisions about how to position their product in the marketplace or in response to other factors (such as drought), rather than being incentivized to maximize cultivation area.

**Allow Direct Sales By Farmers** Including on-farm sales, farmer’s market sales, and eventual direct shipping in interstate commerce modeled on the existing system for wine.

**Prohibit Insurers From Cancelling Homeowner Insurance Policies Or Spiking Rates For On-Site Cannabis**

**Exempt Water Storage Improvements From Property Tax Reassessment**

All water users, including cannabis farmers, are currently reassessed on property taxes as a result of installing water storage. In a drought, it is essential that tax policy encourage the adoption of sustainable water practices.

**Support Small Farms** Large cannabis farms are dominating the marketplace, and farms are set to get even larger in the future. Humboldt supports efforts to support small farms to ensure small cultivators can remain competitive in the marketplace.

**Retain Local Control Of Cannabis** including the discretion to either adopt new programs in full, to modify the program as they see fit, or to opt out of programs completely.

**Require State Agencies To Coordinate With Local Governments** in cannabis enforcement efforts and land use decisions.

**Fully Fund County Cannabis-Related Expenditures** including legislation that clarifies that cannabis-related expenditures are reportable expenses for the purpose of calculating Unclaimed Gas Tax reimbursements to County Agricultural Commissioners or cannabis expenditures will not count against Maintenance of Effort calculations.

**Provide Funding To Support Additional Enforcement Of Illegal Water Diversions**

**Allow On-Site Processing And Testing** of cannabis on small, licensed farms

**Support Non-Competitive Or Direct Allocation Of State Cannabis Tax Revenue For Small And Rural Counties**

**Support State Cannabis Tax Revenue For Youth And Early Childhood Prevention Efforts**

## **FEDERAL CANNABIS**

### **Support Cannabis Regulations At The Federal Level**

Cannabis is currently listed as a Schedule 1 drug under the *Controlled Substances Act* (CSA), which is reserved for drugs that have “no currently accepted medical use.” Consequences of this action have prevented state and local governments from being able to address clear and compelling public health and safety issues pertaining to the use, production and distribution of cannabis and products which contain cannabis. In addition, federal law prohibits federally insured banks from being able to knowingly accept money from cannabis transactions, forcing the industry into an underground economy conducive to crime.

The county supports legislation that allows cannabis to be regulated at the federal level, including removing cannabis from Schedule 1 of the CSA. The county takes the position that any change to the legal status of marijuana at the federal level must be accompanied by a thorough regulatory framework that delineates the clear roles and responsibilities of the jurisdictions involved.

Finally, the county supports the continuation of the Blumenauer amendment, which prohibits the Department of Justice from using federal resources to prosecute individuals or businesses that are acting in compliance with state medical marijuana

laws. The county also supports efforts to expand these protections to state-legal recreational laws. In addition, the county supports federal legislation that would ensure greater access to banking for cannabis-related businesses and allow proper medical research on the effects of cannabis use.

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **STATE AND FEDERAL AGRICULTURE**

#### **Invasive Species Program Funding**

A number of significant invasive species are routinely introduced and detected in California that threaten agriculture and the environment. Continued funding of Pest Exclusion, Pest Detection Trapping and Survey Activities, Rapid Response, Pest Management and Eradication (if feasible), and Public Education Outreach Programs is critical for protecting California's resources.

Humboldt County supports protecting existing revenue sources, enhanced state and federal funding and full cost recovery for programs to prevent the introduction and potential spread of invasive pests. Humboldt supports local flexibility in expenditures and research on invasive species pathways.

#### **USDA/California County Cooperative Wildlife Services (WS) Program**

Increased urbanization and suburbanization has led to a reduction and fragmentation of wildlife habitat. At the same time, wildlife populations continue to expand because of reduced hunting, changes in animal protection status, and the loss of various control mechanisms. Conflicts between people and wildlife are common necessitating professional services to mitigate conflict and reduce the potential for human health and safety impacts to residents. Funding for USDA's Wildlife Services program has traditionally been secured through cooperative agreements between federal, state, and county governmental agencies. California Counties that contract with WS have seen increased costs for WS program due to limited or no increase in funding to the California Wildlife Services Program. Additionally, Wildlife Services contracts with California counties have been challenged based on their lack of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Humboldt County supports legislation or administrative rulemaking to allow farmers to take feral hogs without a depredation permit or hunting license when the hogs are damaging crops or agricultural infrastructure and supports wildlife management tools and/or methods that have proven effective. Humboldt County also supports collaborative efforts to fund and complete CEQA documentation for all Wildlife Services in California.

Humboldt County supports a 50:50 cost ratio for each respective county and the federal government, and distributing enhanced funding according to need.

## **STATE AGRICULTURE**

### **Industrial Hemp**

States are required to develop regulations on hemp that include THC testing procedures, including inspections done at least annually; bookkeeping procedures to keep track of land approved for hemp cultivation and plans for “effective disposal” of hemp plants with too much THC. County Agricultural Commissioner’s have limited funding mechanisms and resources to carry out local responsibility or service for new mandates and/or programs. When statutory fees are insufficient to fund mandates or programs, county general funds are required to subsidize the difference.

Humboldt County opposes legislation creating local mandates or programs that do not provide 100% funding and resources for additional regulatory activities to be carried out by Agricultural Commissioners or Sealers. Humboldt County also opposes any legislative initiatives that impair or restrict local land use authority.

### **Marketplace Equity And Consumer Protection**

Weights and Measures Programs are important to businesses and consumers in California. Weights and Measures regulatory activities ensure that there is a “level playing field” for business and industries. Likewise, these programs are critical in providing protection for consumers and a method for making value comparisons by providing equity in the marketplace. The Division of Measurement Standards (DMS) within the California Department of Food and Agriculture is the lead agency for weights and measures. DMS has incurred significant general fund reductions that have diminished their ability to provide consumer protection.

The county supports legislation that improves consumer confidence in labeling, weighing and measuring. The county also supports funding for metrology, quantify control, package inspection, and funding that preserves and enhances resources for weights and measures programs at the state and local level.

### **State Organic Program**

State statutes and regulations on organic products protect consumers, and others in the food production chain by establishing standards under which fresh agricultural products/foods may be labeled and/or sold as “organic.” Today every person engaged in California organic production, processing or sale must register with the State Organic Program (SOP). Through this efficient and cost-effective program, a meaningful framework has been established that supports the integrity and enforcement of organic production in California.

The county supports legislation that strengthens the SOP and organic production.

### **Allowing For Safe And Reusable Compost From Mammalian Carcasses**

In California there are only four rendering facilities permitted to dispose of and recycle animal carcasses. The geographic location of these companies (Sacramento, Modesto, Fresno and Long Beach) makes routine or emergency access to their services by northern California animal owners effectively mute. There is an urgent need for alternative, environmentally friendly carcass disposal avenues, including composting. Importantly 14 CCR 3.1 § 17855.2 (a) explicitly states that composting of untreated mammalian flesh is prohibited. With a state-wide increase in frequency of disasters, including heat waves, disease outbreaks, and natural disasters including wildfire and flooding, there are ample scenarios where rendering is simply not feasible geographically or at the scale needed to dispose of these carcasses safely. Relative to disposal of all animal carcasses including roadkill, pet, and commercial livestock mortalities, this is an issue for all Californians. Composting is permitted in every state in the Union, other than California. Decades of experience and a rich body of scientific research has demonstrated composting to be environmentally safe and economically feasible.

The county supports legislation that removes hurdles to composting and land application of mammalian flesh.

### **Invasive Weed Management Funding**

Invasive noxious or non-native weeds continue to proliferate on public and private lands throughout California, threatening the state's critical infrastructure, its biodiversity, and ecological integrity. Weed Management Areas (WMA's) have been formed around the state to bring together all stakeholders concerned about invasive weed control within their respective areas.

Humboldt County supports stable federal and state funding sources for Weed Management Areas and programs for the control of harmful non-native or invasive weed pests. Humboldt County prioritizes manual (non-chemical) methods of invasive weed control both for the community wide economic benefits derived through jobs created by this approach and as a reflection of the prevailing public concern over the use of pesticides.

### **Funding For Local Pesticide Enforcement Activities**

The County Agricultural Commissioner's, under the direction of the Director of the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), are responsible for enforcing pesticide laws and regulations at the local level. Working together with DPR, the pesticide use enforcement program promotes reduced risk pest management strategies, assesses human health risks from pesticides, licenses pest control businesses and monitors pesticide residue in the environment. In the budget-trailer bill (Chapter 741, Statutes of 2003; SB 1049), intent language indicates that the

Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) should fund County Agricultural Commissioners' local pesticide regulatory programs with \$22 million annually. The Legislature failed to appropriate adequate funding to DPR to meet this level and no authority was provided to County Agricultural Commissioner's to establish fees to cover their program costs. As approximately \$19 million in County general funds are contributed per fiscal year to maintain the integrity and quality of the pesticide regulatory system that Californians have grown to expect, it is critical to find a way to fund these local programs.

Humboldt County supports the provision of long-term stable funding for county pesticide regulatory activities. The County supports legislation or budgetary proposals that maintain or increase funding through the pesticide mill fee that is sufficient for pesticide regulatory activities to protect the safety of workers, the public and the environment and provides funding for education, outreach and compliance assessment activities related to the safe use of pesticides.

#### **Funding For California Fairs Network**

As a result of the stay-at-home order and response to Covid-19, more than 26 fairs, have canceled, postponed, or drastically altered their annual fair, and more fairs will be forced to make that decision in the coming weeks. Educational, entertainment and family events have also been canceled or postponed. The resulting financial hardship is not only felt by fairs, but also local businesses.

The county supports legislation that provides funding for local fairs and the network of California Fairs.

### **FEDERAL AGRICULTURE**

#### **United States Postal Service (USPS) Inspection Authority**

Detector dogs routinely profile parcels containing fruit or plant material at terminal inspections. United States Postal Service packages in First Class, Priority or Express Mail profiled by detector dogs require a magistrate issued warrant or permission of sender or receiver to gain entry to the parcel for inspection purposes. Many parcels do not get inspected because required authorizations are not obtained. There is significant evidence that the postal pathway contributes to the introduction of exotic, invasive agricultural pests.

Humboldt County supports statutory and/or rulemaking efforts to facilitate inspector access to First Class, Priority or Express mail packages containing plant material profiled by detector dogs.



## **AVIATION**

### **STATE AVIATION**

#### **State Assistance With Recruitment Of Air Service**

Humboldt County, like many rural communities throughout the state, struggles to recruit new air service for its airports. Small communities must have instruments like minimum revenue county guarantees and others in order to attract additional airlines to service their communities. The state can provide an important role in ensuring rural airports remain competitive in this recruitment process.

As state aeronautical funding grows the county supports the state developing a match program to pay for the local share of the Small Community Air Service Grant. The county also supports additional funding to recruit air service to rural airports.

#### **Increase California Aid To Airports Program (CAAP) Funding**

The CAAP program, managed by the California Department of Transportation underneath the California Transportation Commission provides for direct subvention to General Aviation Airports of \$10,000 per year that is used for maintenance. The program also provides grants and loans for airport projects. The subvention amount has not been changed since the program started, while maintenance costs continue to rise.

The county supports legislation that increases funding for CAAP. Going forward, this funding should be tied to inflation.

### **FEDERAL AVIATION**

#### **Remove Cap On Passenger Facility Charge And Reduce Local Matching Requirement**

Small airports, including the California Redwood Coast–Humboldt County Airport, rely on passenger facility charge (PFC) revenue to fund critically important infrastructure and safety initiatives, including the construction and repair of runways, taxiways, and other airfield projects. PFC revenues – combined with federal grant funding from other key sources, such as the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) – have allowed Humboldt County’s Aviation Department to maintain and improve local aviation infrastructure while providing a large number of jobs in the community. Unfortunately, federal law does not allow airport operators to make adjustments in their PFCs, thus eroding their ability to fund aviation projects. Humboldt County supports legislative efforts that would remove the federal cap on PFCs in order to allow the County to collect sufficient revenue from airport users to better fund critically needed infrastructure and safety improvement projects.

Other recent changes to federal aviation law also hinder the ability of small airports to fund key projects, including provisions of the 2012 FAA reauthorization Act that require small airport operators to increase their local match. In Humboldt County, this requirement – along with the aforementioned inability to adjust the PFC, has resulted in a reduction in the number of aviation projects performed.

Finally, Humboldt County supports the maximum level of funding for key aviation programs, including the AIP and the Small Community Air Services Development Program (SCASDP).

#### **Homeland Security – Full Funding Of Security Mandates For Commercial Airports**

After the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was created to provide for safe aviation travel in the United States. As an outcome, airports were required to increase security. The Humboldt County Department of Aviation contracts with the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office to provide the additional security required. DHS reimburses the county on an hourly rate for the required service, but does not pay the full hourly rate of the mandated security and has been reducing the hourly rate of reimbursement annually.

The county supports funding to cover the costs of providing mandated security at the California Redwood Coast – Humboldt County Airport.

## **CHILD SUPPORT**

### **STATE CHILD SUPPORT**

#### **Access To Appropriate Tools And Information**

Having the right tools for the job is important for any organization. For Local Child Support Agencies (LCSAs), this means keeping and bolstering SLMS (State Licensing Match System), securing digital court reporting procedures, and expanding interagency data sharing. SLMS' existence is contentious because it suspends licenses of those who fail to pay child support promptly, but directors of LCSAs argue that it is one of the most effective methods to ensure that obligated parents consistently pay child support on time. It is also vital to secure new tools like digital court reporting in order for obligated parents to more easily and affordably pursue the option of appeal. Therefore, the county would support any legislation that led to digitalized recordings being permitted in the court, or digitalized court reporting.

The county supports legislation that will lead to broader interagency data sharing. The county supports legislation that allows LCSA's to have appropriate tools for enforcement. The county supports efforts to digitize court records.

## **CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY**

### **STATE AND FEDERAL CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Humboldt County is home to one of the world's most significant ecosystems, with incredible capacity to sequester carbon, world class wind resources, and critical biodiversity. Now in jeopardy due to heat gain, fires, drought, sea level rise and other climate amplified threats, we must work quickly to mitigate and adapt our natural and human made systems for community and climate resilience.

#### **Infrastructure To Support Energy, Zero Emissions Goals**

Assets from and investments in rural and Tribal regions are essential to achieving California's carbon neutrality goals outlined in the California Climate Commitment. The North Coast has critical carbon reduction and sequestering assets, and also requires investment in infrastructure to facilitate clean renewable energy and transition to electric vehicles and transport, as well as wildfire resilience and land use practices that support carbon sinks and reduced emissions.

PG&E currently does not have the transmission or distribution infrastructure available to supply additional power to Southern Humboldt County, which without investment in the infrastructure will preclude conversion to electrical power, installation of charging stations, and development of housing and other facilities. The cost of the needed improvement is likely much higher than the local market will support, meaning improvements likely will need to be subsidized. Without improvements, Southern Humboldt will have no choice but to continue burning carbon to power homes and automobiles. This issue is foundational in Humboldt County's ability to attack climate change.

Humboldt County supports investments in and efforts to support the infrastructure needed in rural areas and Tribal regions to reduce carbon emissions, including strengthening state and local capacity for carbon analysis and accounting, and emissions reduction strategies to support climate resilient planning and decision-making.

#### **Renewable Energy**

Humboldt County possesses significant sources of renewable energy, including offshore wind and biomass. However, there are many obstacles that prevent Humboldt from turning these resources into viable energy products that can be used by consumers and governments alike. The economic and environmental benefits to effectively tapping these resources are immense, and Humboldt County needs assistance at the state and federal levels to make its renewable energy resources available for use.

Humboldt County supports legislation that: encourages research and analysis of renewable energy projects; streamlines and eases environmental review processes on the North Coast; increases investment in critical infrastructure, including the Port of Humboldt Bay and the regional electric grid; allows stakeholder involvement; and supports the development of renewable energy.

### **Offshore Wind**

The waters off the coast of Humboldt County hold some of the most significant wind resources in the country, and the effective use of that space to develop offshore wind (OSW) energy will be a key element of the state and federal administrations' strategy to meet climate and renewable energy targets. Both offshore and onshore development of OSW can significantly impact the region's economy, communities, and natural resources. The county is prepared to do its part to ensure the equitable and sustainable economic development of this new industry in the county and region, while helping ensure that any unavoidable impacts are mitigated and minimized. Offshore wind energy development provides a unique opportunity for diversification of the county's economic engines, and should be developed in full collaboration with local stakeholders, including Tribal Nations, local organizations and industries, fisheries and local government entities.

However, Tribal Nations, Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color, and frontline communities bear the brunt of devastating impacts of climate catastrophe, energy vulnerability, and the long-term impacts of extractive over-harvesting of natural resources. Humboldt County and the surrounding region have rich fisheries, which are vital to Tribal Nations, commercial and Tribal fisheries, and marine species, and which will be impacted by this new industry. Necessary infrastructure investments throughout the greater Humboldt Bay region, including investments in the port, peninsula and bay infrastructure, are a critical early step in the overall economic development strategy for OSW, and are needed to minimize community and environmental impacts. While OSW offers tremendous opportunities for employment, career development and other workforce systems, collaboration and resources are needed to most effectively implement these activities.

Humboldt County supports efforts to develop OSW collaboratively with local stakeholders, to mitigate impacts of development, and to provide compensation and support regarding unavoidable impacts. It also supports efforts to increase regional capacity, engagement and planning around OSW, provide community benefits, increase local workforce and supply chain development, investment in necessary infrastructure, including housing, port infrastructure, transmission, roads, health care, child care, and efforts to ensure development benefits Tribal and underrepresented communities.

### **Funding For Energy Conservation And Renewable Energy Generation Projects**

Assessments of renewable energy generation capacity in Humboldt County indicate the county could be a significant exporter of electricity generated from renewable sources. The development of these resources, including solar, wind, biomass and wave energy, will assist the county in reaching AB 32 carbon emission reduction targets and stimulate the county's economy.

The county supports legislation that would accelerate the development of renewable energy resources including price supports, grant funding and utility policy that facilitates export of renewable energy generated from the county. The county also supports incentives and policies to promote residential and commercial energy conservation, including Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing.

### **Sea Level Rise Adaptation**

Global climate change is causing sea levels to rise due to thermal expansion of ocean water and the melting of glaciers and ice sheets. The Humboldt Bay region is vulnerable to flooding hazards, erosion, and loss and change of coastal ecosystems due to sea level rise. The risks associated with global sea level rise are compounded in the Humboldt Bay region by land subsidence associated with the Cascadia Subduction Zone. Extreme flood events from high tides, storm surge, and waves will become more frequent, and the magnitude of these events is expected to become more severe. Developed communities, public infrastructure, agricultural lands, and natural habitats are at risk for adverse impacts. In many locations the railroad around Humboldt Bay has become critical coastal protection infrastructure for protecting inland areas from flooding. However, the railroad has significantly deteriorated over the last 20 years because the North Coast Railroad Authority has not had sufficient resources to perform regular maintenance and repair.

Local agencies around Humboldt Bay have been performing technical studies to better understand sea level rise vulnerability, updating Local Coastal Programs, and developing strategies for sea level rise adaptation. Incremental progress is being made but efforts toward sea level rise adaptation face significant challenges. Flooding is driven by natural processes which are dynamic and difficult to predict. The vulnerable lands around Humboldt Bay contain a variety of geomorphic settings and cross ownership and jurisdictional boundaries. Dialogue regarding basic sea level rise response approaches (i.e., protection, accommodation, ecosystem-based adaptation, retreat) remains at an early stage. Adaptation measures to increase flood resilience need to be considered at a landscape scale and require innovative designs. Projects with the potential to impact coastal resources are subject to significant regulatory constraints by the Coastal Act and other laws and regulations. Financial constraints will likely be a major barrier to action, but the risks of no-action are significant.

Humboldt County supports:

- Funding to counties, Tribal Nations and cities along the coast to develop and implement sea level rise adaptation plans. The hydrographic area provides the optimal spatial framework to guide adaptation strategies for sea level rise planning around Humboldt Bay. The geomorphic and hydrologic processes that control the flow of water and sediment must be understood at the landscape scale in order to plan and design effective adaptation measures. Future scenarios and adaptation pathways should be developed based on best available science. Plans should identify multiple lines of defense including natural features and built structures. Adaptation measures may need to span multiple ownerships. In some cases, risk reduction in certain areas could be accomplished through flood accommodation in other areas. In other cases, plans should be developed for strategic relocation and an orderly transition to a new future land use because maintaining the current land use is unsustainable due to flood hazards. Funding should prioritize regional approaches that incentivize jurisdictions working together across common hydrographic areas to maximize the effectiveness of adaptation measures.
- Funding to counties, Tribal Nations and cities along the coast to implement sea level rise adaptation projects. Funding is needed to plan, design, test, implement, monitor, and adaptively manage projects. Funding should prioritize nature-based solutions, multi-objective projects, and actions that benefit public infrastructure and economically disadvantaged communities. Nature-based solutions work with natural processes and landforms to provide protection for both ecosystems and the built environment. Nature-based solutions, and hybrid measures that integrate nature with engineered structural approaches, may provide the optimal total benefits for coastal resilience and risk reduction.
- Funding to the North Coast Railroad Authority (or its successor agency) to maintain and repair its deteriorated and damaged assets along the Humboldt Bay shoreline to mitigate flood risks for Highway 101, the Humboldt Bay Trail, and inland areas. The feasibility of improving railroad infrastructure to serve a coastal protection function for sea level rise adaptation should be assessed.
- Revisions to laws and regulations that modernize the regulatory framework to encourage and support sea level rise adaptation projects. Flexibility is needed with wetland fill policies and other policies in order to enable nature-based strategies, beneficial reuse of sediment, and reasonable improvements to dikes and levees. Requirements for technical studies, mitigation, monitoring, and maintenance should not be overly burdensome to avoid these requirements being a deterrent for urgently needed action.

- Funding is needed where adaptation requires retreat or moving away from properties. There are disadvantaged property owners within Humboldt County who own properties that will lose all value leaving them with no equity to relocate away from rising seawater. Programs to buy these properties and remove improvements is needed to allow for planned retreat from rising seawaters.

### **Support Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Programs**

The property assessed clean energy (PACE) model is an innovative mechanism for financing energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements on private property. For its part, the State of California has implemented a PACE Loss Reserve Fund to ensure that PACE assessments are paid off in the event of a mortgage default. The State has also significantly strengthened consumer protections, enhanced underwriting standards, and established a new regulatory framework for PACE financing in California.

Humboldt County supports strong national consumer protection standards for the program and believes the aforementioned California laws should act as a template to establish federal standards. Humboldt County also supports the right to implement PACE programs and establish property assessment liens for energy conservation and renewable energy investments. Finally, the county supports legislation that would prevent Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and other federal residential and commercial mortgage lending regulators from adopting policies that contravene established state and local PACE laws.

## **STATE CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

### **Support For Climate Resilience**

California's 4th Climate Assessment warns that the costs of climate change could climb beyond \$113 billion annually if action is not promptly taken. Unfortunately, while the county has identified numerous climate-induced challenges, the investment necessary to fund required resiliency efforts is far beyond available financial resources. Funding is needed to support efforts to reduce emissions, increase the pace and scale of forest health and wildfire resiliency activities, and support other action to increase climate adaptation. In response to the urgent need for action the state has enacted legislation, regulations, and executive orders that put the state on a course to achieve robust climate change adaptation measures. These efforts, as well as new legislation and regulatory refinements still under development, aim to improve forest health and fire resiliency, ensure water quality and security, increase carbon sequestration, and facilitate greenhouse gas reductions.

Humboldt supports investing funds from cap-and-trade and existing water bonds and other funding sources to support programs that improve climate resiliency. The county supports state investment in the collaborative process, including regional

intergovernmental planning and knowledge transfer, via regional block grants or other funding, required to implement effective on-the-ground efforts of local and Tribal governments and other organizations.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **STATE AND FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Infrastructure To Support Energy, Lower Emissions**

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### **STATE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Historic Preservation, Façade Improvement and Beautification**

Humboldt County is home to many designated historic structures, community facilities and areas that are in need of preservation and beautification. Earthquakes, emergencies and local climate are among the largest issues that have contributed to deterioration of historic and community structures and business facilities. The deteriorated facilities contribute negatively to local property and sales tax, impact



public safety, and make it difficult to hold community events. Non-profits, community-based organizations, local governments, special districts and the private sector would all benefit from funding and programs to preserve and help improve the appearance of these facilities.

The county supports increased state and federal grant and other funding for rural communities to improve the physical appearance and function of structures.

### **Housing And RHNA Allocations**

State law requires counties to identify sites in unincorporated areas for placement of low and very low-income housing. Rural areas are often characterized by inadequate roads and areas where utilities providing water, sewer and power are not available. Even where these utilities are available in counties, these locations are often significant distances from employment centers and areas where services needed for these income groups can be provided. Rural areas are also characterized by a lack of adequate public transportation making it difficult for people to commute to and from work without using a vehicle. This is inconsistent with the overall state objective to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions by minimizing total miles traveled associated with new development. Rural counties should be given the flexibility to be able to partner with urban areas to meet Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) objectives. It is difficult for developers to obtain necessary financing for affordable housing under these circumstances, placing rural counties at a disadvantage when it comes to meeting RHNA objectives. This becomes increasingly problematic when there is increasing discussion tying funding availability to achieving RHNA allocations. The state has created incentives to develop Regional Housing Trust Funds, but in Humboldt County these discussions fail when the discussion turns to how to address sharing RHNA success. An increased number of housing units could be produced if jurisdictions could collaborate in developing housing and sharing RHNA success outside of an individual jurisdiction.

Humboldt County supports efforts that would increase affordable housing partnering with cities and in areas near employment, services and public transit. The county also supports regulatory exemptions for truly rural areas as a location for very low- and low-income housing. Humboldt County opposes the idea that RHNA goals should require provision of housing at a growth rate which exceeds the population growth rate, which is the case in Humboldt County.

Humboldt County supports legislation that gives rural counties flexibility in meeting RHNA allocations. In addition, the county supports legislation that provides rural counties with assistance for affordable housing, including new tools to incentivize developers to construct housing in the more rural areas. Humboldt County has only a handful of affordable housing developers willing to work in this area, even with the county providing incentives to developers. RHNA compliance is difficult on the

production of homes when there are so few developers interested in developing housing in Humboldt County.

Humboldt County supports administrative action and legislative proposals that would align the various state housing-related agencies and committees in order to ensure that housing funding is coordinated in a fashion that ensures applicants for state bond or grant funding or tax credits are awarded consistent with the county's state-approved housing element, enjoys the support of the county and is fully entitled before attempting to apply for state funding. Lax state oversight of these key criteria has resulted in billions of wasted dollars funding housing projects that are not aligned with state policy or local housing priorities in a time when housing development is urgently needed.

### **Building In Wildland Interface**

Wildfires in California have become more frequent, intense and damaging to peoples' lives and property. Proper planning for development in the wildland interface can help protect communities and residents.

The county supports legislation that promotes planning for fire safety and environmental considerations regarding development in the wildland interface.

### **Grant Funding For Infill Development**

The county's General Plan Housing Element includes designation of "Housing Opportunity Zones" to promote infill housing development. The county adopted an ordinance to relax requirements in these zones. The county would also like to provide financial incentives for residential development in these areas.

The county strongly supports legislation that would provide grant funding from the California Department of Housing and Community Development for infill development incentives in Housing Opportunity Zones.

### **Funding For Assistance On Local Coastal Plans**

Local Coastal Programs (LCPs) identify land uses and standards by which development will be evaluated within the Coastal Zone, and must be certified by the California Coastal Commission. The development and updates of LCPs are expensive endeavors as they involve a series of special studies, background analysis, public hearings and composition of the programs. Humboldt County's existing LCPs, most of which were adopted in the 1980s, were completed with financial assistance from various state and federal agencies. Recent required updates, however, including the requirement of planning for sea level rise and climate change, are imposing costs that are unsupportable by local jurisdictions.

The county supports additional funding to the Coastal Commission to help assist local jurisdictions creating and updating their LCPs.

### **Funding For Discrepancies Between State And Federal Building Codes**

The State of California has building code requirements beyond federal regulations, especially as it relates to the Americans with Disabilities Act and local jails. These requirements add significant time and expense to public projects and inhibit the county's ability to provide important services to the community.

Humboldt County supports funding and legislation to mediate the discrepancies between state and federal building requirements, particularly with respect to public projects.

## **FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **Provide Maximum CDBG Funding**

Funding provided through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program facilitates affordable housing, service provision to low-income and vulnerable citizens, job creation, and efforts to support economic growth. At least 70 percent of the funds must be used on programs benefiting low- and moderate-income individuals.

The county supports the maximum level of funding for the CDBG program. In addition, the county supports allowing permanent housing to be considered an eligible activity for the program and increased operational flexibilities.

### **Increase Funding For The HOME Program**

The County of Humboldt relies on the Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOME Program to develop multi-family housing. Since 2009, funds at the federal level have been cut or have received small increases. Affordable projects will not be constructed in Humboldt County without additional funding.

### **Americans With Disabilities Act Reforms**

The *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) helps ensure all Americans, regardless of ability, can access public and private services and facilities. However, there is a significant lack of funding for counties to comply with this expansive law. In addition, public agencies and businesses are frequently served with ADA lawsuits despite honest attempts to comply with the law, which eliminates the opportunity to an out-of-court settlement.

The county supports common-sense reforms to the ADA and additional funding that would help local agencies and businesses work toward compliance with the Act.

### **Boost Mobile Broadband Deployment And Accessibility While Preserving Local Zoning Authority**

The county supports the deployment and availability of emerging technologies, such as small cell 5G, to rural areas of the nation to ensure equitable economic and educational opportunities for all. By preserving the long-standing, existing local zoning authorities of counties and other local governments in the deployment process, Humboldt County can ensure that the public interest is being served by communications providers regardless of the delivery platform. County officials can also fulfill their responsibilities as trustees of public property and as protectors of public safety and welfare during this deployment process.

Humboldt County supports efforts to recognize counties as co-regulators, providers and partners in extending the benefits of advanced telecommunications and broadband technology — including improvements to county emergency preparedness and response systems — to all Americans. The county supports local decision-making and accountability, and opposes actions that would preempt or limit the zoning and siting authority of local governments.

The county supports legislative efforts that would nullify the Federal Communication Commission’s 2018 wireless infrastructure rule (*83 Fed Reg. 51867*). Among other things, the Commission’s rule preempts local government authority to regulate 5G deployments by restricting the timeframes for the review of small-cell applications and places limitations on the level of compensation that localities can receive from siting the technology.

### **Funding For Broadband Service To Rural Areas**

Humboldt County is served by a north-south fiber optic line from Ukiah to Eureka and will be served by an east-west line running from the Central Valley along the Highway 36 corridor. This infrastructure provides improved telecommunications service to developed areas of the county, but additional investment is necessary to make “last mile” and “middle mile” connections between developed areas and small outlying communities.

The county strongly supports implementation of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law’s Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, which will provide billions of dollars to the State of California for broadband service deployment to unserved and underserved areas.

### **Develop Legislation, Bond Grant Guidelines That Include Brownfield Remediation**

Rural areas of Humboldt County include large unused vacant industrial sites, particularly former mill sites. Clean-up of these apparent toxic Brownfield sites is the single largest hindrance to redevelopment of these areas. These sites can cost tens of thousands into the millions of dollars depending upon the amount of toxins found. The county has received funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the past

to assess the characterization and cleanup of Brownfield sites. The county's goal is to receive additional funding to expand the program and provide greater incentives to property owners to cleanup and redevelop Brownfield properties.

The county strongly supports legislation and developing bond grant guidelines that include Brownfield Remediation funding.

### **Dredging Humboldt Bay and Marina**

The Port of Humboldt Bay and marina are vital to maintaining and promoting diverse industry in our region. Ours is the only deep-water port between San Francisco and Coos Bay, and it provides transportation opportunities for Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity and Mendocino counties. The port is the primary mode of transportation for gasoline and diesel into the area, and has historically been an important transportation route for forest products. Humboldt Bay also serves as a "harbor of refuge" for disabled ships transiting the coast or vessels seeking shelter from storms. The marina is home to more than 100 people, and stores commercial, private and public vessels.

The port has been active with export ships, but the activity level is threatened because the water at the bay entrance is not deep enough for vessels to travel due to storms that deposit sediment throughout the year. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has deepened this channel to 44 feet in the past. However, the authorized depth, established through a cooperative agreement between USACE and the Port, is 48 feet. The channel is more likely to remain open throughout the year at this depth, but it cannot be maintained due to current appropriations levels to the Corps.

The marina remains active with commercial vessels, however, the level of silt continues to increase and severely limits or stops activity altogether, particularly during low tides. Inconsistent regulations, including those related to sensitive species, prevent local governments from dredging the marina more consistently.

The county is in favor of sufficient funding to USACE to maintain the mouth of the bay at the 48-foot depth and federal channels within the bay at 42-foot depth. The county supports consistent regulations, streamlined processes, and increased funding related to marina dredging and maintenance.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **STATE AND FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Childcare**

Childcare is core to economic development. Rising costs of childcare, pre-COVID, have led to reductions in work by parents, putting pressure on the available workforce to meet economic demands. COVID has increased these pressures on a fragile childcare infrastructure. With one-third to one-half of Humboldt childcare programs closing since March 2020, increased investment in childcare is needed to bolster the system that enables families to work. In California, many families no longer qualify for Head Start due to low-income eligibility standards and the rising minimum wage. Childcare workers continue to be among the lowest paying jobs in the country, leading to staffing shortages. Access to state and federal programs must match the conditions Humboldt families are experiencing.

The county supports investment in childcare programs, childcare workforce development and childcare subsidies for essential workers. The county supports measures to expand childcare affordability and access and an expanded eligibility standards for Head Start so that more Humboldt families can access the program. The county also supports efforts to increase pay, benefits and other supports for childcare workers.

#### **Rural Broadband And Net Neutrality**

Access to free and fair high-speed internet has become a cornerstone of our lives and economy. Unfortunately, rural areas like Humboldt County still lack adequate access to the quality of broadband service necessary to compete with the rest of the state. In addition, state and federal agencies and governments must protect access to broadband to ensure it is treated as a public resource and not sold off to the highest bidder.

Humboldt County supports legislation that provides resources to improve rural counties access to high-speed broadband. The county also supports legislation that protects access to broadband service.

#### **Funding For Broadband Service To Rural Areas**

Humboldt County is served by a north-south fiber optic line from Ukiah to Eureka and will be served by an east-west line running from the Central Valley along the Highway 36 corridor. This infrastructure provides improved telecommunications service to developed areas of the county, but additional investment is necessary to make “last mile” and “middle mile” connections between developed areas and small outlying communities.

The county strongly supports legislation to provide funding or business incentives to assist companies in bringing broadband service to unserved and underserved areas.

## **STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Economic Development Practices And Policies**

Communities prosper when ideas, programs, and activities aimed at improving the private sector are encouraged. Programs that support the private sector often lead to increased tax revenues, job growth, and increased community prosperity. However, jurisdictions are often limited in the types of tools and resources which they can employ for encouraging economic development activity in their own regions. Given the recent adverse economic impacts of COVID-19, it is essential to the economic recovery of communities that jurisdictions have access to a variety and diversity of economic policies and programs. Economic resilience must include considerations for renewable energy and preparedness. Counties can benefit by partnering with the state on these efforts.

The county supports:

- Legislation that maintains and strengthens tax increment financing tools for communities.
- Enhancing regional collaboration.
- The development and implementation of a statewide “proactive” California business retention strategy, led by the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). The county supports partnerships with local economic development organizations.
- Planning, administration and supervision of comprehensive local systems of workforce training and employment.
- Additional workforce development programs throughout Humboldt County to expand opportunities to businesses and residents, including collaborations with small business development programs.
- Legislation that supports the private sector and the development of new or expanded businesses in communities.
- Legislation that positively impacts a jurisdiction’s ability to engage in and implement economic development programs and policies.
- Legislation that increases the competitive position of the State of California, its geographical areas, and its jurisdictions.
- Legislation that incorporates renewable energy and preparedness in economic development efforts.

### **Expanding Use For Existing Broadband And Utility Lines**

Many broadband lines and public utility lines are at least in part funded with taxpayer dollars. However, telecommunications companies often limit access to those lines when individuals or other companies look to expand services, particularly in remote areas. There is a massive need, especially in rural communities, for additional broadband coverage and the need has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and additional demand for distance learning. These telecommunication and public utility lines should be available for use, even if it comes with restrictions such as not being able to make a profit for such access.

The county supports legislation that would allow access to already-laid telecommunications and utility lines.

### **Vacation Rentals And Transient Occupancy Tax Collection**

The rapid growth of the online home sharing economy poses many challenges to local communities and municipalities such as stress on housing, impacts to neighborhood in terms of noise, parking and character, and identifying vacation homes that are operating without the required permits and certificates. Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT) generated by these homes can help alleviate some of these stressors. However, due to real concerns for their users' privacy and safety, most online sites do not post actual property addresses or full names and contact information for their users. Requiring online home sharing sites to collect and share information with local governments, as well as to collect Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT) and allow for audits, will significantly improve tax compliance and remove the competitive advantage non-payers enjoy.

The county supports legislation and planning to mitigate the effects of short-term vacation rentals on existing housing stock and housing availability, particularly housing affordable to lower income groups. The county also supports legislation that requires online vacation rental and home sharing sites to collect and share vacation rental information with California municipalities; collect TOT on behalf of California municipalities; and allow for the audit of their users.

## **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

### **STATE AND FEDERAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

#### **Infrastructure To Support Energy, Lower Emissions**

Assets from and investments in rural and Tribal regions are essential to achieving California's carbon neutrality goals outlined in the California Climate Commitment. The North Coast has critical carbon reduction and sequestering assets, and also requires investment in infrastructure to facilitate clean renewable energy and transition to



electric vehicles and transport, as well as wildfire resilience and land use practices that support carbon sinks and reduced emissions.

PG&E currently does not have the transmission or distribution infrastructure available to supply additional power to Southern Humboldt County, which without investment in the infrastructure will preclude conversion to electrical power, installation of charging stations, and development of housing and other facilities. The cost of the needed improvement is likely much higher than the local market will support, meaning improvements likely will need to be subsidized. Without improvements, Southern Humboldt will have no choice but to continue burning carbon to power homes and automobiles. This issue is foundational in Humboldt County's ability to attack climate change.

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## **STATE GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

### **Separating Superior Court Expenses, Court Retirement Systems From Counties**

Two pieces of legislation, the Lockyer-Isenberg Trial Court Funding Act of 1997 and the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002, transferred from counties to the state fiscal responsibility for court operations and trial court facilities. The Superior Court Law Enforcement Act of 2002 further delineated responsibility for court security services by county sheriffs to the courts. Despite these extensive acts and their transfer of responsibilities, Humboldt County continues to bear a significant burden for the costs of services provided to the local Superior Court.

Existing Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) law requires that, in the case of a trial court within a county contracting with PERS for retirement benefits, the trial court and the county must participate under a joint contract with PERS. This results in pooled assets and liabilities, a single employer contribution rate, and a single benefit package. However, trial Courts and counties function independently across the state of California, and for over a decade the County of Humboldt has separated county functions from courts. In the current system courts provide for their own capital needs, develop and fund their own budgets, and maintain their own checking accounts. With capital and budget needs separated from the county, it is illogical for trial courts to be part of county PERS contracts.

The county supports legislation that removes fiscal responsibility from the county for the Grand Jury, security and facility maintenance. The county supports legislation

which would separate the courts PERS contracts for trial courts located within California counties.

### **Mitigation Of Impacts From Tribal Gaming Compacts**

Total grant funding made available to municipalities, government organizations, businesses and non-profits within Humboldt County is only 5 percent of the total funds available in the Tribal Casino Accounts, with the state receiving the remainder of the funds, or 95 percent. Five percent of these funds is insufficient to offset the social and environmental impacts of casinos. Since local communities do not receive any tax revenue from the Tribal Casinos, it is imperative that this grant revenue increase.

The County of Humboldt supports legislation which would increase funding to mitigate impacts from Tribal Gaming Compacts. Additionally, if the state renegotiates contracts with Native American tribes, the county supports legislation which would allow more county and local government involvement to address environmental, social, and planning concerns of the local community.

### **Fulfill The Provisions Of The Payment In Lieu Of Taxes Act Related To Fish & Game Property**

According to State Fish & Game Code Section 1504, the state is committed to making payments in lieu of property taxes to local agencies in areas where state wildlife management areas affect local property tax collections. In Humboldt County, local agencies have not been paid since 2001. Although most of this funding would flow to special districts, a portion of these funds is directed to the county's General Fund, Roads Fund, and Library.

The county supports legislative action that would fund the required payments.

### **Restoration Of Property Tax Administration Program**

In 1992, the State enacted the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF), which shifted property tax revenues from local governments to the state. Although counties assess property values, act as a hearing board for property tax appeals, and collect property tax payments, the state receives more than 65 percent of every property tax dollar collected in Humboldt County. After the state recognized it was in its own best interest to ensure that properties were being assessed to the greatest extent possible, it provided funding through the Property Tax Administration Program to support the Assessor's Office and the rest of the property tax administration system. However, the program hasn't been funded since FY 2004-05 when Humboldt County received \$210,806.

The county supports funding that re-establishes and restores funding for the state's share of property tax administration costs.

### **Funding For Newly Formed Cities**

AB 818 provides a city that incorporated after January 1, 2012, with property tax in lieu of vehicle license fees (VLF). AB 818 provides the same financing mechanism for future city incorporations that was approved by the Legislature in SB 130 (2017) for previously incorporated cities. For the past eight years, despite the state's population increasing by 2 million residents, no new cities have formed in California. A primary factor for this is the passage of SB 89 in 2011, which removed a financing mechanism that communities previously relied on to assist incorporation. To restore options for future city incorporation and the enhanced civic engagement and benefits to local services and quality of life that it can offer to residents, AB 818 applies the same financial fix for future incorporations that was provided in 2017 to four recently incorporated cities harmed by SB 89. AB 818 proposes that the Legislature provide the same financing solution that was provided in SB 130 for future city incorporations

The county supports allowing newly formed cities to receive a share of vehicle license fees.

## **FEDERAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

### **Local Authority To Levy Internet Sales Tax**

In 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the state of South Dakota in a landmark case involving the collection of sales taxes from online vendors. While a previous Supreme Court decision (*Quill Corp. v North Dakota*) held that online retailers were *not* required to collect sales taxes in states where they lack a physical presence, the 2018 decision overturned *Quill*.

In the wake of the Wayfair decision, a number of states – including California – have updated their laws for out-of-state Internet retailers. This has resulted in a patchwork of state laws that could make sales tax compliance more challenging for out-of-state businesses. As more and more states adopt economic nexus policies, Congress could look to consider legislation that would create a national framework for online sales tax collection and remittance.

On the other hand, congressional opponents of the Wayfair decision have sought legislation that would overturn the ruling. Humboldt County is opposed to any legislative or regulatory action that seeks to delay, limit, or even prohibit the collection/remittance of online sales taxes.

### **Limit Corporate And Union Contributions In Elections**

The United States Supreme Court ruled that corporations and unions have the same political speech rights as individuals under the First Amendment. The court found no compelling government interest for prohibiting corporations and unions from using their funds to make election-related expenditures. Thus, it struck down a federal law

banning this practice and also overruled two of its prior decisions. In 2016, California voters approved a proposition to have its elected officials do everything in their power to overturn the ruling in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, which allows corporations to use their funds to make election-related expenditures.

The county supports a Constitutional Amendment to reverse the ruling in *Citizens United*.

### **Funding For Postal Service**

Humboldt County residents rely on the United States Postal Service (USPS) for deliveries of prescription medications and other vital medical supplies, as well as mail-in ballots, the Census, stimulus checks, and other essential items. Many of our communities are a testament to the fact that the USPS truly serves the “last mile,” as FedEx, UPS, Amazon and other private carriers rely exclusively on the Postal Service to handle their respective package deliveries to many of our rural areas.

The USPS has weathered a series of difficult financial challenges in recent years, including significant revenue losses stemming from the coronavirus pandemic. In response to these challenges, President Biden signed into law in April of 2022 legislation that provides key financial and operational changes to the USPS. The law, known as the *Postal Reform Act of 2022*, sets the USPS on a path to financial stability by, among other things, eliminating a retiree health benefit pre-funding mandate. The Act also requires continuation of a six-day delivery schedule.

Humboldt County supports ongoing legislative efforts that would provide the USPS with additional financial support and funding, and opposes efforts that would close postal service locations or limit their services.

### **Immigration Reform, Legal Protections For Immigrant Residents And Unaccompanied Minors**

The county supports legislative and budgetary efforts to enhance legal protections for undocumented immigrants, increase funding for legal services and deportation defense, and address unaccompanied children crossing the border, including increasing funds for immigration-related legal services, shelter and care. In addition, the county supports efforts at the federal level to provide comprehensive immigration reform, as well as establishing a clear path to citizenship, protecting the well-being of undocumented workers, supporting deferred action programs and related efforts to make immigration relief available. Finally, the county supports efforts to protect the health and welfare of children and children whose parents are detained or deported by Immigration and Customs enforcement (ICE) or Border Patrol.

### **Protecting Public Safety Funds**

The State of California passed in 2017 its Sanctuary State bill (SB 54), which legalizes and standardizes statewide non-cooperation policies between state and local law enforcement agencies and federal immigration authorities.

Humboldt County opposes legislation and administrative rules that would require local law enforcement agencies to cooperate with federal immigration authorities. Further, the county supports legislation that protects current and future federal funding from such requirements.

### **State And Local Tax Deduction**

The State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction allows taxpayers to deduct state and local property, income and sales tax to reduce their federal liability. The comprehensive tax reform law of 2017 continues to allow taxpayers to deduct property taxes and income or sales taxes, but only up to a combined cap of \$10,000 (unlike previous law, which allowed federal taxpayers to deduct the entirety of their state and local property taxes, as well as their state income taxes or sales tax).

Humboldt County utilizes the revenues from property, sales and income taxes to help finance infrastructure projects, law enforcement, emergency services, and many other services. Therefore, further restricting or eliminating the SALT deduction could limit local control of our tax systems, as well as constrain the policy options available to address local challenges and increased responsibilities due to the devolution of federal programs.

The county supports legislation that would fully restore the SALT deduction, and opposes any effort to further reduce or eliminate this tax benefit.

### **Protecting Tax Exempt Bonds**

Municipal bonds and private activity bonds (PAB) are critical financing tools used by state and local governments to finance public capital improvements and public infrastructure projects, which are essential for creating jobs, sustaining economic growth and improving the quality of life for Americans in every corner of this country. Because investors are not required to pay federal income tax on interest earned from most bonds issued by state and local governments, localities ultimately receive a lower interest rate on their borrowing than they would if their interest was taxable to investors.

The 2017 tax reform law fully preserves the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds and PABs. However, it eliminated the tax exemption for advance refunding bonds, which counties use to refinance outstanding bonds to take advantage of better terms and rates. Humboldt County supports efforts to protect the municipal bond and PAB tax exemption, as well as legislation that would restore the exemption for advance refunding bonds.

### **Long-Term Funding Solution For Payments In Lieu Of Taxes**

The Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program compensates local jurisdictions for non-taxable Federal lands and payments may be used for any governmental purpose. In 2022, the PILT program provided \$549.4 million to more than 1,900 counties and other local governments nationwide.

The inability to collect local taxes on the extensive acreage of federal lands in Humboldt County poses a significant burden. A fully-funded PILT program helps to offset the loss of these important revenues and fulfills the federal government's obligation to local communities with large amounts of federal land. Humboldt County received over \$1.1 million in fiscal year 2020 for essential local services, including law enforcement operations.

The county strongly supports legislation that would provide long-term funding certainty for the PILT program. In absence of a long-term authorization, the county supports a one-year extension of mandatory PILT funding.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

### **STATE AND FEDERAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

#### **Investment In Public Health Prevention Services**

Local public health departments are mandated to provide a broad array of services to protect and improve the health and safety of communities. On the front lines of improving health equity and mitigating the impacts of climate change, public health works to improve the built environment, access to healthy food and clean water, environmental health, and active transportation options. Investment in local public health prevention programs such as substance use disorder prevention, cannabis and tobacco prevention, oral health promotion, nurse home visiting programs, suicide and violence prevention, and sexually transmitted and communicable disease prevention protect the health of the county and its residents now and into the future.

The county supports increased public health prevention services funding and legislation that protects community health.

#### **Public Health Infrastructure And Prevention Funding**

Local public health departments are mandated to provide a broad array of essential services to protect and improve the health and safety of communities. On the front lines of improving health equity and mitigating the impacts of climate change, public health works to improve the built environment, access to healthy food and clean water, environmental health and active transportation options. Restoring the Public Health

Prevention Fund and directing funding to counties to administer critical prevention activities is an investment that saves lives and future healthcare spending. Reliable funding is also critical to preparedness for a prompt, coordinated, and comprehensive response to new and re-emerging infectious diseases. Counties must have increased federal support in growing and retaining a highly skilled public health workforce.

The county supports increased funding for essential local public health responsibilities including workforce development, facilities, communicable disease prevention and response, and public health prevention and health equity activities.

## **STATE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

### **Funding For CARE Court**

Senate bill 1338 (Umberg) the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Court Program is a newly mandated behavioral health program, set to begin in Humboldt County no later than December 1, 2024. A statutory commitment was included that the CARE Act will become operative only upon consultation with county stakeholders and the development of an allocation to provide state financial assistance to counties to implement the CARE Court process.

The county supports fully funding county costs associated with implementing CARE Court.

### **Protecting Older And Vulnerable Adults**

As the number of older adults increases across California and the nation, renewed focus has been brought to their needs. Counties are on the front lines of protecting vulnerable and older adults, although both the Adult Protective Services and Public Guardian programs have been historically underfunded and are struggling to meet the need. The county Public Guardian office is under-resourced to care for an increasing number of clients requiring conservatorship. Efforts to change or expand conservatorships must be accompanied by corresponding funding to support new client placement options and the county Public Guardian office.

The county supports state investment in services for Older Adults, including county Public Guardian and Adult Protective Services and opposes expanding conservatorships without new dedicated state funding.

### **Adverse Childhood Experiences**

California recently began tracking the number of managed care patients who screened at “high-risk” with four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in their childhood history. Humboldt’s percentage of high-risk ACE scores is 31%, compared to the state average of 6%. ACEs are strongly associated with long term negative health and life outcomes such as substance use disorder, mental illness, cancer, incarceration

and unemployment. While the state has taken unprecedented steps to identify ACES with expanded access to screenings, resources are needed to support integrated local systems to prevent and address the long-term, generational impacts of these experiences.

The county supports increased funding to prevent and address the impacts of ACES, including care coordination, home-visiting programs, behavioral health services, trauma informed practices and health education programs that promote positive childhood experiences.

### **Helping Families Move Out Of Poverty**

The Department of Health and Human Services' mission is to reduce poverty and connect people and communities to opportunities for health and wellness. Poverty negatively impacts families, leading to poor health and social outcomes. Strengthening anti-poverty programs like CalWORKs and subsidized childcare that support families on the path to economic success, will assist more people in becoming self-sufficient.

The county supports legislation that strengthens the CalWORKs program, subsidized childcare and employment opportunities.

### **Housing And Homelessness**

Safe and stable housing is a foremost concern for low-income individuals and families and without it, a primary barrier to health and self-sufficiency. The state has made significant one-time investments in housing and supportive services in recent years. The county supports legislation that helps people obtain and maintain housing and efforts to streamline reporting and administration of funds.

The county supports legislation that addresses and meets the needs of individuals and families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

### **County Workforce And Program Flexibility**

Rural counties struggle to recruit and retain qualified health and human services professionals. This is especially true in the wake of the COVID pandemic. The state has recently made significant one-time investments to bolster health workforce. Legislative efforts to build on this investment by expanding education pathways to health careers, training for trauma-informed agencies that support professionals in addressing secondary stress, and lower administrative and career barriers for health and human services workers would improve local health outcomes and employment opportunities. Flexibility for online engagement, virtual interviews, and telehealth options in the administration of programs and services allow counties to maximize resources and maintain excellent customer service.

The county supports legislative efforts to improve workforce opportunities in county careers and flexibility in the delivery of health and human services.



### **Mental Health Services Act**

California voters approved the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) to provide a dedicated funding stream for counties to expand and develop innovative and integrated mental health services. Humboldt County has a robust local stakeholder process to determine the most effective and equitable use of these local funds. Counties welcome efforts to increase transparency of how MHSA funds are spent that align with, or enhance, existing reporting structures. Proposals to bypass local direction of funds and impose new programs or higher levels of service that assume MHSA as the funding source have recently gained traction. MHSA services must be maintained as intended and not diverted to backfill core programs.

The county supports local direction of Mental Health Services Act funds and opposes legislation that imposes new state mandates or higher levels of services that assume MHSA as the funding source.

## **FEDERAL HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

### **Supporting Children And Families**

The advanced child tax credit approved under the American Rescue Plan of 2021 was credited with temporarily reducing child poverty by roughly 30% or 3.7 million children nationwide. The county supports expanding and making this credit permanent.

Childcare is essential to economic development. The county supports legislation to broaden eligibility and access to high-quality, affordable childcare and early learning programs, and increase childcare workers' compensation and professional development opportunities, is needed.

The county supports legislation to reduce child poverty, expand child tax credits and increase access to affordable, high-quality childcare and early learning programs.

### **Temporary Assistance For Needy Families Reauthorization**

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program was last reauthorized in 2005 and has since been operating on a series of short-term extensions. TANF contains California's block grant for CalWORKs and the CalWORKs work participation rules. Comprehensive program reauthorization should provide effective pathways to family economic success, including access to education, counseling, childcare, job training and individualized services for those with barriers to employment.

The county supports increased federal investment in safety net programs, as well as flexibility for states and counties in meeting the federal work participation rates.

### **Support Food Security**

CalFresh is California's primary nutrition assistance program. It is critical to the health, well-being and financial survival of low-income individuals, students, and families. California subsidized school meals to provide universal access and provided additional support to food banks during the pandemic. Proposals to increase funding, expand eligibility, and continue programmatic flexibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women Infants and Children (WIC) program and school meals would increase access to this vital health benefit, decrease poverty and improve health outcomes.

The county supports efforts to improve food security and augment federal investments in universal access to subsidized school meals, food banks, SNAP and WIC.

### **Support For Investment In Low Income Housing**

Safe and stable housing is a foremost concern for low-income individuals and families and without it, a primary barrier to health and self-sufficiency. Increased investment in building and maintaining subsidized housing and providing supportive services is needed to expand federal housing programs, homeless prevention programs, provide income supports – such as subsidized rent or vouchers – and to generate additional housing units.

The county supports increased, ongoing federal investment in building and maintaining subsidized housing, homeless prevention, housing supportive services and rent.

### **Support For Investment In Aging, Caregiving And Long-Term Care**

As the need for services and supports for Older Americans grows, the resources to protect and provide for their needs has not kept pace. The county supports reauthorization of the Elder Justice Act with significant increases for county adult protective services, investment in aging and older adult services and supports, and workforce development . The county supports legislation that supports families who are caregiving for older and dependent adults, as well as investments in board and care subsidies helps older adults live in the community and reduces nursing home expenditures. Expansion of Medicare eligibility and benefits helps counties meet the health needs of vulnerable older adults.

The county supports reauthorization of the Elder Justice Act, increased ongoing investment in Adult Protective Services, expanded Medicare coverage, and federal investment in services and supports for older adults and caregivers.

### **Support For Mental Health And Substance Use Disorder Resources**

The COVID-19 pandemic and opioid epidemic have had far-reaching consequences on mental health and substance use disorders, highlighting long-standing inequities and insufficient response. Federal resources and flexibility are needed to improve access to treatment in rural communities and address racial inequities. Counties need resources

to expand access to evidence-based suicide awareness and prevention training, school-based behavioral health, maternal mental health, older adult behavioral health, crisis intervention training, and mobile intervention and response teams. Importantly, legislation that helps expand behavioral health workforce is necessary to meet these needs.

The county supports federal investment, including funding from court settlements, in mental health and substance use disorder workforce, training, prevention and treatment.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **STATE NATURAL RESOURCES**

#### **California Water Resilience Portfolio Initiative**

Executive Order N-10-19 (signed April 29, 2019) directed state agencies to form a Water Resilience Portfolio containing a suite of actions to ensure safe and dependable water supplies, flood protection and healthy waterways for the state's communities, economy and environment. Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) is a collaborative effort to identify and implement water management solutions on a regional scale and should be adopted at the state level. Nearly 50 IRWM regional entities have been established across the state, including the North Coast Resource Partnership, of which Humboldt County has been an active member since 2004.

The county supports efforts by the state to adopt IRWM as the principal framework for implementing the Water Resilience Portfolio. The county supports funding for regional, multi-benefit planning and projects. The county supports working with the IRWWM and other stakeholders to address needs.

#### **Long-Term Funding For Natural Resource Affairs**

Humboldt County is home to significant water resources that include the Eel, Klamath, Mad and Trinity Rivers; home to fish populations of salmon, groundfish and crab; and home to dense forests which include coastal Redwoods. These considerable natural resources were once abundant and contributed notably to the local economy.

Decisions and regulatory management of these natural resources often occur at the state and federal levels. These decisions have had cumulative impacts on water resources, fisheries and timber, and therefore on the community as well. State and federal decisions need to adequately account for local priorities, knowledge and needs in order to minimize adverse economic and social impacts, while appropriately managing and restoring these significant natural resources.

The county strongly supports legislation that provides stable funding for long-term engagement, administration and capacity development for natural resource affairs in the County of Humboldt.

**Williamson Act Funding Restitution, Restoration Through Cap And Trade**

The Land Conservation Act is one of the most effective tools in preventing the loss of farmland and open space, while also helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Act provides tax breaks to landowners who contract with a county to keep their land in agriculture or open space for a period of 10 years. To encourage county participation in the program, the State historically reimbursed counties a portion of the property tax revenue losses resulting from the lower assessments. The state discontinued the reimbursement in FY 2010-2011.

The county supports legislative or budget proposals to fund the Land Conservation Act subventions to counties.

**Incentives For Water Storage**

Home and business water storage systems have become critically important as California, especially heavily forested land, is experiencing more natural disasters such as wildfire and drought. It is important to incentivize more construction of these systems on existing construction so that property owners may be better equipped to survive these events. Any such incentives and evaluation must take in to account the effect that additional water storage may have on the environment, including water availability, vector impact, public health and invasive species.

The county supports legislation that incentivizes responsible water storage systems for existing construction.

**FEDERAL NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Potter Valley Project**

The Potter Valley Project (PVP), currently owned by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), was constructed on the main stem of the Eel River upstream of Humboldt County in the early 20th century to generate hydroelectric power. Operation of the PVP serves as an inter-basin transfer of water from the Eel River basin to the Russian River basin, and the benefits of water diversions to the Russian River have come at the expense of substantial downstream impacts to the Eel River and its fisheries.

In 2017, Congressman Jared Huffman convened the Potter Valley Project Ad Hoc Committee to work toward a Two-Basin Solution that protects fisheries and water supply in both the Eel and Russian River basins. Since that time, stakeholders have continued to work toward the development of a plan for the future of the project that meets the needs of all affected communities. In January 2019, PG&E announced that it

would discontinue efforts toward relicensing the PVP and in 2022 released a rough schedule for surrendering that license to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Looking ahead, it is expected to take several years for a Decommissioning Order to be issued.

Humboldt County supports a collaborative approach to solving the regional issues and concerns associated with the PVP and supports the creation a new regional entity that is structured to fairly represent the interests of the affected counties and tribes.

### **Wildfire Preparedness And Response**

While wildfires are a natural part of California's landscape, the fire season is starting earlier and ending later each year. Climate change is considered a key driver of this trend. Warmer spring and summer temperatures, reduced snowpack, and earlier spring snowmelt create longer and more intense dry seasons that increase moisture stress on vegetation and make forests more susceptible to severe wildfire.

Humboldt County supports strategic policy changes that balance fire prevention, habitat protection, and rural economic development. The County also supports legislation that would increase wildfire preparedness and post-fire response, including efforts to provide enhanced federal assistance to communities that have been impacted by wildfires.

### **Long-Term Funding For Natural Resource Affairs**

Humboldt County is located on California's Pacific North Coast and is home to significant water resources that include the Eel, Klamath, Mad and Trinity Rivers; home to fish populations of salmon, groundfish and crab; and, home to dense forests that include coastal Redwoods. These considerable natural resources were once in abundance to the community and contributed significantly to the local economy.

Decisions and regulatory management of these natural resources often occur at the state and federal levels. These decisions have had cumulative impacts on water resources, fisheries and timber, and on the community as well. State and federal decisions need to adequately account for local priorities, knowledge and needs in order to minimize adverse economic and social impacts, while appropriately managing and restoring these considerable natural resources, including ongoing federal management of national parks.

The county strongly supports legislation that provides stable funding for long-term engagement, administration and capacity development for natural resource affairs in the County of Humboldt. In addition, the county supports legislation that adequately funds operations of national parks such as the King Range and Six Rivers National Park, which form an essential component of Humboldt's tourism industry.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **STATE PUBLIC SAFETY**

#### **Funding for abandoned vehicles, and increase to Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Fee**

The number of abandoned vehicles throughout the county have been on the rise. Abandoned vehicles can also be considered not only an eye sore but also an environmental concern due to fluid leakage, and a public health hazard as the vehicles catch fire, impeded safe travel and are an attractive nuisance. Public Works, Environmental Health and the Sheriff's Department have long been tasked with the cleanup or hauling of these wastes and the costs associated with them. Implementing new fines, increasing the cleanup fees and receiving additional state resources may benefit the county by decreasing the waste and offsetting more of the cleanup costs.

Humboldt County supports efforts to increase resources directed towards abandoned vehicles.

#### **Accountability, Transparency And Behavioral Health Services In Law Enforcement**

Trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve is essential to the stability of communities, the integrity of our criminal justice system, and the safe and effective delivery of policing services. In addition, it is vital that mental health and behavioral health resources are included with law enforcement, especially during times of critical incidents involving individuals experiencing mental health crises. Humboldt County will continue to support practices that promote effective crime reduction and will also support legislation that improves service delivery, oversight, transparency and law enforcement accountability.

The county supports legislation and budgetary efforts that increase effective service delivery, oversight, accountability, and transparency in law enforcement. In addition, Humboldt County supports additional funding for programs that reduce systemic racism and unconscious bias.

#### **Stable Funding For Juvenile Justice**

Juvenile Justice funding is imperative to providing supervision and treatment services for high-risk youth in local communities. Treatment and confinement solutions are provided for a community's youth who are at highest risk to re-offend and hardest to place due to their co-occurring mental health disorders, thereby putting community safety in jeopardy.

The county supports legislation for continued and increased resources for juvenile justice programs in order to provide for stable and secure sources of funding.

### **Tribal Officers As Peace Officers**

Public Law 280 establishes that the Sheriff assumes jurisdiction in law enforcement matters over tribal lands. Tribal Councils have expressed the desire to have tribal officers assume this responsibility. Having tribal officers as the legally recognized law enforcement in tribal lands would be effective as it would serve as a form of community policing, which data shows reduces crime.

The county supports legislation that allows tribal officers to serve as peace officers recognized by POST.

### **Funding For Mental Health Diversion Statute**

In 2018, Assembly Bill 1810, also known as California's Mental Health Diversion Statute, was signed into law. The stated purpose of the statute was to divert individuals suffering from certain mental health disorders who have been charged with misdemeanor and felony offenses away from the criminal legal system (Penal Code §1001.35) when appropriate. The Humboldt County Public Defender represents 86% of the individuals charged with a crime in the county – many of whom suffer from mental health conditions and/or drug and alcohol abuse. In order to successfully divert clients from the criminal justice system, adequate resources must be allocated to the Public Defender's office to assist eligible clients in locating and receiving critical services such as mental health and drug/alcohol treatment.

The county supports legislation that provides additional funding for the Public Defender.

### **Funding For Indigent Legal Defense**

The State of California's dereliction of its constitutional obligations to provide effective representation to indigent people has been the subject of a class action lawsuit, recently culminating in a settlement agreement that will impact all counties. In July 2015, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed suit against the State of California and Fresno County, alleging that California "has delegated its constitutional duty to run indigent defense systems to individual counties" and does not provide any oversight to ensure those county systems actually provide constitutionally required representation. In January 2020, the plaintiffs entered into a settlement agreement with the State of California. Without admission of fault or wrongdoing, California agreed to expand the mission of the Office of the State Public Defender (OSPD). Under the settlement agreement, OSPD will provide support for California counties' trial-level, non-capital public defense systems, that may include but not be limited to: training for trial-level attorneys; indigent defense structure technical assistance to counties; and "efforts to identify further steps that could be taken to improve California counties' provision of trial-level indigent criminal defense."

The County supports legislation and budget appropriations sufficient to fulfill the aims of the State of California's settlement agreement in *Phillips v. California*.

### **Funding For Increased Enforcement Of Illegal Water Diversions**

Illegal water diversions for use in cannabis cultivation continues to threaten the health of Humboldt County water bodies. All of the major rivers and creeks (and their tributaries) are fully appropriated all year long, so no water is available for new diversions during that period. While Humboldt County works with other appropriate agencies to ensure that cannabis cultivators go through the correct process when permitting their cannabis operations, there are not enough funds to prevent operators from illegally drawing on these precious natural resources.

The county supports legislation that would provide increased funding to support local enforcement regarding water-related issues.

### **Emergency And Disaster Preparedness Assistance, Funding For Emergency Operations Centers**

The planning and coordination of response, recovery, and mitigation activities related to emergencies and disasters is vital for our community. This includes developing emergency operations plans, conducting trainings, and communicating with the community. Funding is required to provide financial assistance to local governments and private property owners to efficiently prepare for disasters and repair homes, businesses, infrastructure and the natural environment. Humboldt County does not have adequate facilities to conduct emergency operations. More frequently, Humboldt County is dealing with bigger, stronger wildfires that threaten lives and property and it is vital that staff from many agencies can come together in facilities that are suited to their needs in order to properly respond to emergencies. The COVID-19 pandemic has crystallized this point as Humboldt had to lease space from educational institutions during two school years to operate its emergency operations center. Additional one-time funding should be allocated to small, rural counties to help them create these facilities.

The county supports additional funding for emergency planning, preparations, operations and recovery, including addressing the safety of residents and seniors and those with disabilities. The county supports additional funding for emergency response facilities.

### **Community Level Wildfire Preparedness And Protection**

According to the 2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California, “loss of life and structures as a direct or proximate result of wildland fires is at an all-time high,” and “recent trends have shown an increase in the number of ignitions, area burned, and impacts to ecosystems.” The Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan determines that there are periods of high wildfire risk for every Humboldt County community, including coastal areas, when conditions are just right for a single fire ignition to have potentially devastating consequences. Weather and fire patterns, together with



Humboldt County's rugged topography and dense fuel loads, combine to create a generally high wildfire risk during dry parts of the year. Humboldt County depends on local fire and rescue services through volunteer firefighters, CAL FIRE and others to respond to wildfires. More resources and volunteers are needed to ensure the continuation of these services.

The county supports legislation, including and similar to AB 38, the Home Hardening bill. The county encourages the state to invest in efforts to prepare homes and infrastructure to withstand damage from wildfire, meet defensible space standards, design communities to mitigate the impacts of wildfire, prepare communities for successful evacuation, reduce wildfire ignitions, establish roadside shaded fuel breaks, and educate citizens about how to prepare their families, home, and communities for wildfire. The county supports legislation designed to support the survival and sustainability of local fire service organizations and agencies as well as the retention of volunteer firefighters.

#### **Enhancing Existing Firebreaks**

California wildfires are occurring with more frequency and intensity each year. A common strategy to slow wildfire growth is to create firebreaks by clearing a stretch of land of vegetation. In many rural parts of Humboldt County, county roads serve as a natural firebreak. However, some of these roads have potentially flammable vegetation to the side of the road, and local funding struggles to even keep up with regular maintenance to ensure the roads are passable. However, the roads could serve as a more effective firebreak with extended vegetation clearing, helping to prevent the spread of wildfires. Additional funding would be needed as it is costly to purchase the equipment plus include the labor to run it.

The county supports additional funding for fire prevention efforts near roads, trails, transmission lines and other areas that could or do serve as already existing firebreaks.

#### **Additional Funding For Court Security**

Humboldt County is mandated by the state to provide security for the county courthouse, including security services for courtrooms. The county receives an annual allocation from the state to provide these services, however, the allocation does not take in to account local court decisions to provide additional services such as additional courtrooms or extended hours. Humboldt County frequently needs to allow deputies to work overtime and incur additional costs beyond the annual allocation in order to meet its state mandate.

Humboldt County supports additional funding to counties for courthouse and trial court security.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

### **STATE PUBLIC WORKS**

#### **Continue Safety Practices For Expressway Between Arcata And Eureka Until Improvements Are Made**

In 1995, Senate Bill 414 (Thompson) introduced 14 double fine zones across the state. The bill was set to expire on January 1, 2004, but several bills, including AB 1384 (Chesbro), have extended the double fine zone along the Highway 101 corridor between Eureka and Arcata through 2010. In 2013, the California Coastal Commission conditionally approved a project submitted by the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), which would improve the State Highway 101 corridor and eliminate the need for a double fine zone. This project, while beneficial to Humboldt County citizens, may be years away from completion.

Due to current safety concerns, the County of Humboldt seeks to maintain increased safety enforcement through the segment of State Highway Route 101 between the Eureka Slough Bridge and the Gannon Slough Bridge.

#### **Surveyor Monument Preservation**

Government Code sections 27584 and 27585 authorize the Board of Supervisors to establish a survey monument preservation fund for retracement or re-monumentation surveys of major historical land division lines upon which later surveys are based. Pursuant to this code, and Humboldt County Ordinance No. 1835, a fund was established and user fees are collected by the County Recorder at the time of the recording of any grant deed *except those which convey lots created by a recorded tract map*, or lots conveyed to or from a government entity. Several County Surveyors have found that the exemption of subdivision lots from the collection of this fee has been confusing, and therefore the fee is not always properly collected.

The county supports legislation that would remove the exemption from the survey monument fee in Government Code Section 27585.

#### **Humboldt Bay Transportation Infrastructure**

In order to minimize the environmental and economic impacts associated with port congestion, California must begin planning to maximize multi-modal cargo handling capabilities. The transportation improvements included in the state funded Samoa Industrial Waterfront Transportation Access Plan would significantly increase multi-modal transportation infrastructure for Humboldt Bay. These improvements would improve Port of Humboldt Bay dock access and linkages to interstate routes for cargo handling. Funding for these infrastructure improvements are included in the Humboldt County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and programmed in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

Ports throughout the world are becoming congested; California ports are exceptionally impacted by the growth of international trade and are losing business to other regions. California's agricultural producers are experiencing significant increases in transportation costs as their products are increasingly delayed. In order to minimize the environmental and economic impacts associated with port congestion, California must begin planning to maximize multi-modal cargo handling capabilities. Humboldt Bay is underutilized and the only deep-water harbor in California without rail service to the national rail system.

The county supports state legislation to facilitate increased multi-modal freight and cargo handling capacity at the Port of Humboldt Bay, including Samoa Industrial Waterfront Transportation Access Plan funding by the State of California and expedited environmental review by Humboldt County and the Coastal Commission.

#### **Local Rehabilitation Project Eligibility For Stip Funding**

Existing law generally provides for allocation of transportation funds pursuant to the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) process. The law also provides for 75 percent of funds available for transportation capital improvement projects to be made available for regional projects, and 25 percent for interregional projects. The law describes the types of projects that may be funded with the regional share of funds and includes local road projects as a category of eligible projects. Legislation that specifically states that local road rehabilitation projects are eligible for STIP funds is necessary to protect the ability of local agencies to prioritize the regional project share to the needs of the local agency.

The county supports legislation that would state that local road rehabilitation projects are eligible for State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds.

#### **Redwood Creek Levee Rehabilitation And Estuary Restoration**

Construction of the Redwood Creek levee system by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from 1966 to 1968 caused major impacts to the Redwood Creek estuary. These impacts are a limiting factor for recovery of salmon and other estuary-dependent fish species in the Redwood Creek watershed and adversely affect Redwood National Park. In addition, the levee system does not meet its intended flood protection level for the economically disadvantaged community of Orick because the project design did not account for sedimentation.

A large-scale, multi-objective water resources project is needed to achieve a sustainable solution for flood protection, ecosystem restoration, and endangered species recovery in lower Redwood Creek. The project is complicated by the needs for understanding dynamic ecosystem processes, accounting for climate change and sea level rise, respecting private property rights, modifying a federal flood control project, and providing an acceptable level of flood protection for the community.

In particular, restoration of the Redwood Creek estuary would significantly advance salmon recovery and provide sustainable flood protection that alleviates backwater flooding of agricultural lands and County roads. Local private landowners, Redwood National Park, agencies, and other stakeholders agree that we need a process-based conceptual design that will improve agricultural function and advance listed salmon recovery through estuary restoration.

Estuary restoration would be competitive for federal, state and other funding due to the high potential for endangered species recovery. Upstream flood protection and ongoing maintenance could be addressed separately or comprehensively with estuary restoration, depending on the type of federal authority used to modify the Redwood Creek federal flood control project.

The county supports legislation or administrative action to release Proposition 84 (Flood Control, Natural Resources and Parks Bond Act) or other state funding to be used for rehabilitation, repairs, and maintenance to the Redwood Creek levee system near Orick.

### **Complete Streets**

The rate of bicyclist and pedestrian deaths is unacceptably high, both in Humboldt County and across the nation. The safety of non-vehicular road users is a particular challenge in rural areas, where many roads lack even the most basic facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians, and many state and federal highways serve as primary local thoroughfares and main streets.

The county supports legislation which provides additional funding for active transportation and transit facilities, and legislation which prioritizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities as part of road maintenance, repair and improvement projects funded by state and federal dollars. The county also supports updates to applicable state and federal guidelines, rules and regulations to provide more emphasis on non-vehicular facilities.

### **Account For Rural Considerations In Food Waste Collection Requirements**

In rural areas, the cost of setting up a food waste collection/processing facility can exceed the cost of disposing the materials with no significant benefit due to the low amount of materials and the high cost of collection and facility construction. One of the goals of these processing facilities is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but there may not be any substantial benefit in rural areas with low amounts of materials due to the travel required in collection.

The county supports legislation on food waste collection requirements that are appropriate for rural areas.

### **California Redemption Value Recycling**

Humboldt County is unable to economically export recycling materials out of the county. As a result, the recycling programs with which county residents enjoy are subsidized by fees on solid waste. Due to a lack of facilities, residents cannot redeem the California Recycling Value (CRV) on goods and recyclers cannot dispose of materials. Residents are being charged for CRV with a promise they could redeem its value, and that is no longer possible. Statewide over 50% of CRV redemption centers have closed in the past 5 years due to increased cost of business (minimum wage & regulatory compliance), insufficient State Processing & Handling Fee payments, regulatory inflexibility, one-size fits all with no geographic allowances and low commodity market values which impact financial viability.

The county supports legislation that enables comprehensive reform of the CRV Redemption Program. Such reform should: include beverage manufactures as Extended Producer Responsibility; set standard deposit fee regardless of container size, and; incorporates provisions for communities that have curbside recycling programs to ensure equitable payments to recycling centers and material recovery facility sort lines. The county supports legislation that enables the development of North American markets for all recyclable materials.

### **Funding For Preventative Road Maintenance**

Local cities and the county do not have the necessary level of funding needed for preventative road maintenance. It is significantly more cost effective and energy efficient to preventatively maintain roadways versus entirely reconstructing a deteriorated roadway.

The county supports a set-aside in the Cap and Trade funding for preventative maintenance of road systems for all local governments.

### **Access To Self-Help Funding**

Senate Bill 1 has provisions for additional funding to self-help counties, or counties that have passed local transportation taxes. The State Controller maintains a list of counties that have Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements for existing funding that could be used elsewhere but have gone instead to repair local roads. There are 34 counties with MOE requirements under SB 1. Counties on this list are in dire need of funding for roads.

The county supports legislation that allows all counties on the State Controller's MOE list to be eligible for the self-help component of SB 1.

## **FEDERAL PUBLIC WORKS**

### **Klamath Basin**

In November of 2022, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) gave final approval for a long-sought after plan to remove four dams on the Klamath River in California and Oregon. FERC's final Order paves the way for the Amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement to be fully implemented.

In 2023, the states of California and Oregon, along with the Klamath River Renewal Corporation, are expected to take a number of pre-construction steps to lay the groundwork for removal of the dams. Humboldt County continues to support dam removal and supports future legislative and regulatory efforts that would benefit Klamath River fisheries, provide economic stability for affected agricultural interests, and improve the overall ecosystem health of the Klamath River basin.

### **Water Resources**

Water resources within Humboldt County are often oversubscribed and severely stressed due to, among other things, the ongoing impacts of climate change, drought, and the consistently high demand for water exports. Given the longstanding water supply challenges facing Humboldt County and the state of California, we support federal initiatives designed to help communities develop more resilient water infrastructure, expand the use of modern water management tools and technologies, and assist disadvantaged areas in meeting their water needs. Federal efforts should focus on helping regions better achieve water self-sufficiency through recycling, storage, desalination, and water-use efficiency measures.

Furthermore, in Humboldt County, commercial, recreational, and tribal fisheries are dependent on anadromous fish produced on the Klamath-Trinity River system. These fisheries are an integral component of our local economy and are closely associated with the quality of life in California's North Coast communities. Due to low water conditions in recent years, Reclamation – in consultation with its state, local, and tribal partners – has released supplemental flows into the lower Klamath River to prevent large-scale fish die-offs. It should be noted that Humboldt County has a legal right to not less than 50,000 acre feet of water annually from the Trinity Reservoir for the beneficial use of Humboldt County and downstream users pursuant to a 1959 water contract between the county and the Bureau of Reclamation. Humboldt County continues to work in cooperation with Reclamation to determine the most beneficial use of the aforementioned water, whether it be to protect fish and wildlife or for consumptive use purposes.

Humboldt County opposes any congressional – or legal – effort designed to block access to water that legally belongs to the county and/or local Tribes. Likewise, the county opposes any water diversions from the Trinity River Division associated with operational changes to the Central Valley Project or State Water Project.

### **Federal Transportation Funding**

A new long-term surface transportation reauthorization measure was enacted in 2021 as part of the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (IIJA). Humboldt County will continue to monitor state-level implementation of the infrastructure law and will continue to look for opportunities to compete for new federal discretionary grant program funding authorized under the IIJA.

### **Redwood Creek Multi-Benefit Estuary Restoration And Flood Control Project**

As described in detail in the State Proposals section of the Legislative Platform, a large-scale, multi-objective water resources project is needed to achieve a sustainable solution for flood protection, ecosystem restoration, and endangered species recovery in lower Redwood Creek. In addition to state-level support for this project, Humboldt County supports the allocation of federal funds for planning, design, and construction for flood protection, ecosystem restoration and endangered species recovery in the Redwood Creek levee system.

### **Reauthorization Of Secure Rural Schools**

Humboldt County supports a long-term funding solution for the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program, including alternate models that provide stable funding for counties. However, in the absence of a long-term agreement, the county supports a short-term program extension. As part of a long-term reauthorization bill, the county supports re-establishing active management of the nation's forests, promoting responsible timber production on Forest Service commercial timber land, and revising Title III of the Act to allow fire protection funds to be spent as flexibly as possible, as funds are currently limited to fire protection activities on federal lands, severely restricting fire departments from containing fires adjacent to federal land.

### **Funding For Rural Water Supply And Wastewater Projects**

Humboldt County's small rural communities are in need of financial assistance to maintain or upgrade water supply and wastewater systems. Many systems are approaching the end of their useful life and require levels of capital investment that exceed rate-payers' ability to pay. In the worst cases, failing systems pose serious health risks, degrade water quality, prevent economic development and trigger regulatory violations and financial penalties.

The 2021 IIJA includes \$50 billion over five years for water and wastewater infrastructure, most of which will be distributed through the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Fund programs. Under the Act, \$5 billion is allocated to the Small and Disadvantaged Communities grant program to address emerging contaminants. While the IIJA has allocated funding, it remains a hurdle for smaller communities and agencies to apply for and manage grant funding.

Humboldt County will support small community grant applications designed to fund and support key water and wastewater projects. The county also supports technical and other assistance for rural communities to administer this funding.

**Funding For Nuclear Storage**

Over the course of the past several decades, the federal government has been found by various courts to be in partial breach of the contractual obligation created by the 1982 *Nuclear Waste Policy Act* to safely remove spent nuclear fuel (SNF). In fact, the U.S. Court of Claims has consistently ruled in favor of companies for expenditures they have incurred in the continuing storage of these hazardous materials. The Department of Energy (DOE) previously estimated that the resulting impact on taxpayers could reach or exceed \$30.8 billion – though this estimate was based on the assumption that it would be in a position to begin meeting its obligation through the use of a pilot consolidated storage facility in 2021. However, DOE has yet to move forward with a consolidated storage plan and further delays are only increasing the Department’s liabilities. These funds are paid out of a permanent appropriations account known as the Judgment Fund and they add to the federal deficit without benefit of budget or appropriations considerations.

Humboldt County supports increased funding for dealing with nuclear waste from shutdown reactors.