



**COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**  
2008 State Legislative Platform

General Legislative Policy Guidelines

The top legislative priority for all Humboldt County departments is to make every effort to maintain or increase funding for the continued provision of local services to the residents of Humboldt County. Additional general policy guidelines include:

- Local Control and Flexibility:** Advocate for maximum local control and flexibility in the allocation of resources and the administration of county programs.
- Oppose Reductions in Funding:** Oppose any reductions to the current level of state funding for county programs.
- Oppose Cost-Shifting to Counties:** Aggressively oppose attempts by the Legislature to shift costs from the state to the counties for mandated and/or non-mandated programs.
- Oppose Proposals to Amend the State Constitution Pertaining to Vehicle License Fees, Proposition 1A, and State Mandates:** The protections provided by Proposition 1A are the counties' financial lifelines. Vigorously oppose any attempts to dilute these provisions.
- Oppose Elimination or Restriction of Revenue Sources:** Oppose attempts by the Legislature and/or the Executive Branch to take away or restrict revenue sources or impose costly changes without adequate funding.

- ☑ **Support Favorable State Organizational Structures:**  
Advocate for state organizational structures to maximize leadership and support for Humboldt County and North Coast services and programs.
  
- ☑ **Oppose County Sanctions for State Failures:** Oppose state and federal fiscal sanctions against counties for failure to comply with state and/or federal laws when the errors are beyond the counties' control.
  
- ☑ **Support Flexibility in Addressing Climate Change:**  
Humboldt County supports the goals of the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32, Chapter 488), but supports a flexible approach to addressing climate change, recognizing that a “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate for California’s large number of diverse communities – particularly Humboldt County’s unique northern redwood coastal environment.

## Public Safety - State Legislative Projects



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT – SHERIFF, PROBATION, PUBLIC DEFENDER

Contacts:

Gary Philp, Sheriff, e-mail [gphilp@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:gphilp@co.humboldt.ca.us); Ph (707) 268-3663

Doug Rasines, Chief Probation Officer, e-mail [drasines@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:drasines@co.humboldt.ca.us); Ph (707) 268-3308

Kevin Robinson, Public Defender, e-mail [krobinson@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:krobinson@co.humboldt.ca.us); Ph (707) 445-7634

1. **Title: Protection of Dedicated Public Safety Funding (Rural County Law Enforcement, Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act, Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act, Juvenile Probation and Camps Funding, Standards and Training for Corrections, Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction Grant, Cal-MMET “War on Methamphetamine” Funding)**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that continues or increases funding for dedicated local public safety funding, and oppose legislation that would reduce or eliminate this funding.

**Issue and Background:** The County receives more than \$2.6 million annually from a variety of State funds to enhance local law enforcement, juvenile justice crime prevention, substance abuse treatment, reduce the use and sale of methamphetamine, treat the mentally ill in our jails and juvenile detention facilities, support the operations of our juvenile hall and regional juvenile facility, and provide training to Correctional Officers and Juvenile Correctional Officers. Several of these sources of funding – most notably the Rural County Law Enforcement Grant, Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act, and Standards and Training for Corrections funding – have been slated several times for reduction or elimination in previous fiscal years as the State struggles with its budget problems.

Rural counties such as Humboldt rely heavily on grant funding to provide critically-needed Public Safety programs. Some of the most important programs to Humboldt County are described below:

- Rural County Law Enforcement Grant** – provides \$500,000 annually to assist front-line law enforcement in 16 small rural counties, including Humboldt. The funding supports, for example, a Patrol Sergeant in the unincorporated community of McKinleyville, a Deputy Sheriff and clerical support in the Office of Emergency Services, and augments funding available for boating safety and beach patrol programs.
- Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (MIOCR) Grant** – Humboldt County will receive almost \$1.4 million over an 18-month period for the newly re-established MIOCR program to reduce recidivism and keep mentally ill offenders out of the justice system (more detail provided under #7, below). Unfortunately, there have been no assurances of continued funding beyond the initial 18-month period which ends June 30, 2008

- ☑ Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act – For FY 2007-08, this program provides Humboldt County with \$423,279, which funds the Northern California Regional Facility’s New Horizons program and critical probation diversion programs.
- ☑ Juvenile Probation and Camps Funding – The Humboldt County Probation Department currently receives approximately \$289,000 annually. These funds are used to support case management and transition/community re-entry services for youth residing in the Juvenile Hall and Northern California Regional Facility. Juvenile Probation and Camps Funding has remained at the same level since FY 2000-01, while the costs of providing services have continued to increase, thereby impacting the County’s ability to maintain a stable level of service to youth and families.
- ☑ Cal-MMET “War on Methamphetamine” Funding – Methamphetamine has been widely identified as a major threat to public health and public safety, but most agencies have insufficient funding to mount an effective effort against the manufacture, sale, and use of the drug. Recognizing the need, the State expanded the Cal-MMET program from a few Central Valley counties to statewide for FY 2006-07. Humboldt County received approximately \$257,000 this year, but program funding has not been assured for future years.
- ☑ Substance Abuse Crime Prevention Act – Authorized by Proposition 36 in 2000, this program provides approximately \$200,000 for drug treatment and monitoring within the community to non-violent offenders, in lieu of incarceration, saving jail and prison costs through successful treatment. Continued funding needs to be re-authorized (see #2, below).
- ☑ Standards and Training for Corrections (STC) – Adult and juvenile correctional officers must meet certain state-mandated standards of initial training and ongoing professional education. The County can be held legally liable for “failure to train” if an incident occurs in the Jail or in Juvenile Hall or the Regional Facility. Humboldt County expects to receive approximately \$127,000 in STC training reimbursement funds in FY 2007-08.

**2. Title: Continuation Funding for local Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act (SACPA, Proposition 36) Programming**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would express the Legislature’s intent to fund SACPA drug treatment and supervision each year in the annual State Budget Act

**Issue and Background:** Voters approved Proposition 36, the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act of 2000, which refers drug offenders to treatment rather than incarceration with the hope of stopping the cycle of continuous drug use and re-arrest. The Act required that the State continuously appropriate \$120 million in funding to implement the Act beginning in FY 2001-02 through FY 2005-06. As part of the FY 2006-07 and FY 2007-08 State Budgets, the Legislature appropriated “one time” continuation funding to support mandated SACPA activities.

Humboldt County’s Probation Department currently supervises approximately 100 drug-involved adult offenders. SACPA funding supports two full-time Probation Officers and a Legal Office Assistant. If SACPA funding is not continued, the statutory requirements of

SACPA would become an unfunded service mandate for county probation departments and health and human services drug-prevention/treatment programs.

### 3. **Title: Funding for Beach Patrol**

**Legislative Platform:** Advocate for increased and ongoing funding from Off-Highway Vehicle registration fees and/or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to completely fund two Deputy Sheriffs for beach patrol.

**Issue and Background:** Since FY 2000-01, the Sheriff's Office has received funding through the State's Off-Highway Vehicle Commission grants to fund a Deputy Sheriff to perform beach patrol duties. This Deputy Sheriff's primary responsibility is to patrol local coastal beaches to ensure that members of the public who utilize the beaches for recreational purposes are doing so in a safe and proper manner. In addition, the Beach Patrol Deputy assists the Humboldt County Parks and Recreation Department and the federal Fish and Wildlife Service with the protection of endangered Snowy Plover habitat during their nesting season, and assists the federal Bureau of Land Management and the federal Fish and Wildlife Service with the management of the South Spit peninsula. Over the last two years, State funding has been reduced to the point where it covers only 50% of the actual program cost. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided \$20,000 in one-time funding for FY 2005-06.

Due to the important nature of this type of enforcement/resource management effort the County of Humboldt has funded the deficit of the first position and funded a second beach patrol deputy sheriff in FY 2007-08 using its limited general fund dollars.

This position is a critical component of any beach management plan for local coastal beaches within Humboldt County. Without sufficient funding to cover the program's actual costs, the Sheriff's Office will not be able to maintain these positions on a permanent year-round basis. This proposal for \$200,000 would provide the Sheriff's Office with sufficient funding for two full-time Deputy Sheriffs, enabling the Sheriff and the County to provide more consistent beach patrol coverage on all of Humboldt County's local beaches and provides back-up coverage on the original Deputy's days off, vacation time, etc.

### 4. **Title: Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Funding**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that allows a jurisdiction to place an item on the local ballot to increase the DMV fee by one dollar to remove and dispose of abandoned and junked vehicles.

**Issue and Background:** The Humboldt County Abandoned Vehicle Authority, consisting of the County and the cities of Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna, Blue Lake, and Rio Dell, spends over \$225,000 to dispose of an approximately 3,400 abandoned vehicles. The current level of revenue, approximately \$129,000, is insufficient to handle the volume of abandoned vehicles and illegal dumping. Abandoned vehicles have become a safety

hazard as well as an eyesore – an abandoned trailer resulted in the death of two teens in December 2004.

The Legislature passed Senate Bill 1225 in 2006 and Assembly Bill 878 in 2007 to authorize local jurisdictions to increase the fee from \$1 to \$2 per vehicle registration. However, the Governor vetoed both bills, stating his belief that fees like these should be approved by the voters. Counties do not currently have the authority to place an item like this on the ballot.

##### 5. **Title: Adult Probation Services Funding**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would provide direct State funding for adult probation supervision and investigation services, including electronic/GPS monitoring. The program could be structured in a manner similar to the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act of 2000.

**Issue and Background:** California is one of only two states where primary funding for adult probation services comes exclusively from county funds and offender fees. The only State funding that has been made available for adult probation services in California is the portion of Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act funding that local coordinating committees allocate to probation departments to supervise the probationers receiving treatment under the act.

More than 75 % of the offenders on probation in Humboldt County are adults. Supervision for the adult probation caseloads, 94% of which are convicted felons, presents significant community safety concerns. Probation services can be the most beneficial for clients and cost-effective when sufficient resources are available to allow for meaningful intervention. Absent meaningful supervision, offender behavioral change is unlikely to occur and recidivism is almost inevitable. This leads to increased public safety concerns, time and cost to the County and criminal justice system, and ultimately, to higher rates of commitment to our already overcrowded state prisons.

Humboldt County, like other probation departments, has had to concentrate the available adult resources to serve serious felony caseloads, leaving probationers convicted of misdemeanors and less serious felonies assigned to “bank” caseloads. “Bank” caseloads are only intermittently monitored for compliance with conditions of probation. Included in these banked caseloads are many offenders who are not receiving the level of probation supervision commensurate with their risk assessment. Caseload sizes of 60-70 are not atypical for “serious felony” probationers. Caseloads of this size restrict the ability of the Probation Department to provide routine levels of supervision – let alone the intensive supervision that such serious felonies should receive.

The Governor’s proposed budget for FY 2007-08 included an initiative called the California Adult Probation Accountability and Rehabilitation Act (CAPARA) in which the Governor proposed to set aside \$50 million for FY 2007-08 and \$100 million annually thereafter to fund probation services for offenders between ages 18 and 25. This initiative was designed to enhance the ability of probation departments provide meaningful

supervision, to protect public safety and to reduce prison populations by preventing inmates from “reaching the front door” of state corrections. The final State Budget Act for FY 2007-08, however, only included \$10 million to fund two pilot county programs. It is imperative that the State increase its investment in probation, which would in turn cut crime and prison costs.

## 6. **Title: Local Detention Facilities Construction Funding**

### **Legislative Platform:**

- Support legislation that will provide State funds to allow for the expansion and/or new construction of adult jails and juvenile halls.
- Support legislation that will revise the State funding formula for allocation of Jail Construction monies:
- Increase the size of the \$50 million funding pool for small counties.
- Increase the per-project cap from an unrealistic \$12.5 million to a more-realistic \$35 or \$40 million
- Provide additional weight in the funding formula for counties that are operating under a court-ordered population cap.
- Authorize the transfer of unused funds from the “large” or “medium” county pool to be used in the “small county” funding pool.

**Issues and Background:** Local detention facilities – adult jails and juvenile halls and camps – are the crucial front end of California's correctional system. They are a vital part of every community's effort to protect itself. Without them, law enforcement, probation and parole lose a key consequence to impose for illegal behavior. In California's local adult system, jail facilities are bursting at the seams. Dangerous crowding is a daily fact of life in many of the state's 460 jails. California does not have enough local detention capacity or adequate program space to meet its current and future public safety demands. Detention facilities are required to separate the many classifications comprising their populations, including gang members from members of rival gangs, and violent offenders from those they might prey upon. Additionally, those who are physically or mentally ill must be provided appropriate housing. Detention facilities are supposed to maintain a "vacancy factor" to allow for these classification separations.

On any given day, California's 125 juvenile halls and camps house between 10,000 and 11,000 youth. While the state juvenile facility capacity is in better shape than it had been, it is still true that, especially in juvenile halls, juvenile capacity is *merely* adequate. The Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) predict a need for approximately 6,800 additional local juvenile detention and commitment beds by 2015. An upward trend in the juvenile crime rate could greatly expand that number. In addition, juvenile and adult correctional reforms implemented under SB 81 (Chapter 75, Laws of 2007) and the Public Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Services Act of 2007 (AB 900, Chapter 7, Laws of 2007) have created significant new demands on local capacity.

SB 81 and AB 900 included some funding for juvenile and adult facility construction statewide; however, the funding formula is simply inadequate for small counties. The entire funding pool authorized for small counties is \$50 million; however, one project alone is likely to average \$35 million. There is a \$12.5 million cap per project, presumably intended to allow four projects to be funded. With an average cost of \$35 million per project, the \$12.5 million cap would require counties to provide far more than a 25% local match to ensure that any actual construction gets done. It is recommended that the cap be raised to a more realistic figure of \$35 or \$40 million. There should also be an additional weight in the funding formula for those counties that are operating under a court-ordered population cap to assist in measuring a county's need for a new or expanded facility. In addition, should large or medium counties fail to use their funds, the law should authorize the transfer of unused funds to the small-county pool.

There are a number of small counties that need to replace old, outmoded facilities and others that will continue to face chronic crowding problems in their juvenile and adult facilities. Humboldt County is one such county.

**7. Title: Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction (MIOCR) Grant Funding**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation to provide continuation funding for the MIOCR grant program.

**Issue and Background:** In the State Budget Act for FY 2007-08, the legislature appropriated \$33 million for the MIOCR grant program to support creative solutions for both juvenile and adult mentally ill offenders and reduce their unacceptably high rates of recidivism. This is a proven program which will save local and state dollars that focus on identifying, treating, and keeping mentally ill offenders out of the criminal justice system. Grant funding is currently scheduled to end June 30, 2008. Given the fiscal uncertainties at the state level, sustainability of the MIOCR grant program beyond June 2008 is in question. Without continuation funding, the program will cease to exist before it has had an opportunity to demonstrate its effectiveness upon targeted offender populations.

**8. Title: Medi-Cal Coverage for Incarcerated Youth**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that will enhance Medi-Cal coverage/eligibility for youth in custody.

**Issue and Background:** Existing law requiring youth to apply for Medi-Cal upon leaving an institution leaves many youth without necessary prescriptions, mental health services, and medical treatment. Requiring eligible youth to reapply also creates additional work for probation, public health, and other youth serving professionals.

Assembly Bill 2004, approved by the Legislature in June 2006, would have provided a practical solution by (1) suspending coverage rather than terminating Medi-Cal eligibility for juveniles who are inmates of a public institution, (2) providing for timely processing of Medi-Cal applications for youth not already on Medi-Cal, and (3) referring youth who are not eligible for Medi-Cal to the Healthy Families program. By preserving and facilitating

Medi-Cal eligibility, AB 2004 would have helped to fulfill the goal of increasing health care coverage for all eligible children. However, the bill was vetoed by the Governor.

#### **9. Title: Medi-Cal Drug Treatment Services**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation to expand the scope of Medi-Cal drug treatment services to youthful offenders 12 to 20 years of age.

**Issues and Background:** In California and within Humboldt County, very few resources exist for youth drug treatment, specifically residential or inpatient care. Even the state's Drug Medi-Cal program neglects many of the drug treatment needs of youths. In addition, youths suffering from substance abuse disorders are restricted from access to SACPA-Proposition 36 funds. The increasing trend of both youth substance abuse disorders and juvenile drug arrests is compounded by the lack of drug treatment in the juvenile institutional setting. There is clearly a huge youth treatment gap that needs to be addressed.

The Drug Medi-Cal program for which the state receives federal matching funds does not cover residential drug treatment services unless the youth is pregnant or parenting. Neither does it cover outpatient one-on-one care among other necessary drug and alcohol treatment services. The limited benefits under the Drug Medi-Cal program for youth under 21 does not allow providers to offer the level of care required by the state's own youth treatment standards.

Senate Bill 1288, approved by the Legislature in June 2006, would have increased the scope of benefits contained in Drug Medi-Cal for youth 21 and under. Youth suffering from substance abuse disorders would have had access to a continuum of care, including outreach, screening, individual counseling, family counseling, day rehabilitative care, ancillary services, residential, and aftercare. This bill would have provided an incentive for providers to establish more youth-driven treatment facilities within the community. The bill, however, was also vetoed by the Governor.

#### **10. Title: Additional Support for Minors Transitioning to Adult Living**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that provides funding to support those minors who are transitioning from juvenile delinquency (600) or dependency (300) status to adulthood.

**Issues and Background:** When a minor has been placed out of the home and turns 18, there are few, if any, local resources to help him/her transition to independent adult living. A cost-effective solution would be the local development of programs like Remi Vista, a multiple assistance center or co-housing center for young adults that provide a somewhat structured setting or assistance in living for 18-25-year-olds who are former dependent or delinquent youth.

## **11. Title: Booking Fee Revenue**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that fully funds the Local Detention Facility Revenue Account (i.e., half of counties' actual booking fee costs).

**Issues and Background:** During the budget cuts of the early 1990's, the State authorized counties to charge cities for their actual costs in booking inmates arrested by the various local police departments. From a policy perspective, this was successful: cities became more judicious about which suspects they arrested, and counties rebounded somewhat from state budget cuts.

Over the years, the booking fees remained fairly controversial in some cities. Cities complained about the cost; the State began reimbursing cities for half of their expenses. This preserved the policy incentive of reserving arrests for the more serious offenders, but eased the financial burdens on cities.

As the State's "structural deficit" remained intractable, the State slowly withdrew its support for booking fee reimbursements. Legislation was passed in the early 2000's that prohibited a county from charging more than one-half of its actual costs of booking inmates.

In 2006, the State passed AB 1805 (Chapter 78, Laws of 2006). Effective July 1, 2007, the State budget appropriated \$35.0 million to fund the Local Detention Facility Revenue Account (LDFRA). Counties will no longer levy a booking fee on arresting jurisdictions, but will seek reimbursement from the LDFRA. Unfortunately, the LDFRA was underfunded even in its first year of operation. Humboldt County's full cost for booking fees is \$889,000; one half of that amount would be \$444,500. The State will be funding only \$384,311.

## **12. Title: Safe Neighborhoods Act**

**Legislative Platform:** Support the local law enforcement funding and anti-gang provisions of the proposed Safe Neighborhoods Act.

**Issues and Background:** The Safe Neighborhoods Act, an initiative proposed for the November 2008 ballot, would target street gangs and set aside nearly \$1.0 billion for local law enforcement to fight them. Key provisions of the initiative would add a 10-year prison term on some convicted felons who carry guns in public. It would make accomplices to gun crimes eligible for enhanced penalties under the already-existing "10-20-Life" law. It would also elevate methamphetamine sentences and force gang members to register with the police.

The measure would protect current law enforcement funding in the State budget in a manner similar to the Proposition 98 (School Funding for Instructional Improvement and Accountability Act of 1988) minimum funding requirements for K-12 education. Base funding levels would be tied to the adopted State FY 2007-08 budget. The Act would provide stable funding for existing critical programs (as outlined in Public Safety Plank

#1), and provide enhanced funding for law enforcement. Among other things, the Act would increase both the Citizens Option for Public Safety (COPS) and the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act programs from \$119 million to \$125 million annually; add \$25 million for Sheriffs' jail operations, add \$100,000 (with annual cost-of-living adjustments) to each county Sheriff's Office to address gang issues, and provide \$50 million to county Probation Departments for supervision of juvenile offenders and facility improvements. The Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office, and the Probation Department all rely on a large number of vulnerable state grant programs, any of which can be reduced or eliminated at the whim of the State Legislature. Funding stabilization is critical to county public safety departments.

**13. Title: Operational Costs for Offenders Transferred from State Corrections System**

**Legislative Platform**: Support legislation that provides state funding for housing any adult or juvenile offenders at the local level who would normally have been housed in the State Department of Corrections System.



## Community Development - State Legislative Projects

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Contact: Kirk Girard, Community Development Director, e-mail [kgirard@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:kgirard@co.humboldt.ca.us);  
Ph (707) 268-3735

### 1. **Title: Funding for Public Infrastructure Projects**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that maintains or increases state funding for public infrastructure (sewer, water, drainage) projects. These can include revolving loan funds.

**Issue and Background:** Public infrastructure in Humboldt County is in dire need of upgrades to bring existing systems up to public works and regulatory standards, and need to be expanded to meet current and anticipated population needs. There are numerous sewer, water, and drainage systems in the County that currently pose serious health risks to the public, hamper development, and degrade the community due to their inadequacy. Infrastructure is critical to maintaining the local economy. These projects require state and federal financial assistance due to their high costs.

A total of \$180 million is needed just to bring sewer and water systems within Humboldt County into compliance with public works and regulatory standards. Examples of projects include the Arcata Water Storage Reservoir (also serving the cities and communities of Eureka, McKinleyville, Fieldbrook, Blue Lake, Manila, and the Humboldt Community Services District, \$3.8 million); the Orick Wastewater System; Ferndale Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements, \$6.1 million; and the Ramney Collectors Domestic Drinking Water Rehabilitation/Upgrade (serving Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Fieldbrook, Humboldt, Manila, and McKinleyville, \$4.2 million).

There is also a strong need to expand existing systems due to population growth. For example, the Martin Slough Interceptor Project alone is projected to cost \$30 million; and the sewer systems in the communities of Willow Creek, Glendale, and McKinleyville are all in need of expansion.

### 2. **Title: Funding for Redundant Broadband Link**

**Legislative Platform:**

- Support funding for a fiber optic link to Redding or a microwave link to Oregon to provide broadband redundancy.
- Support funding or business incentives to assist companies in bringing broadband service to unserved and underserved areas of the country.

**Issue and Background:** Humboldt County has one fiber optic cable line that runs along U.S. Highway 101 from Ukiah to Eureka. A portion of the line passes through Eel River Canyon, an area known for its geological instability and vulnerability to landslides caused by earthquakes and heavy North Coast rains. Hurricane Katrina severed the main fiber

optic cables going into New Orleans, crippling communications and hindering communications efforts. Humboldt County has had four fiber optic outages in the last year. Severe weather toppled trees in one case, a construction project severing the line caused the outage in another. As a result of these outages, internet service was cut off, many businesses were unable to process debit cards and retail gift cards, ATM machines were down, and some cellular phone service was interrupted. These outages affected Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties.

Broadband service is no longer considered a mere luxury, but a necessity. It affects public safety, health, education, and economic development. Only about 50% of Humboldt County residents currently have access to broadband service, primarily those in the populated region along U.S. Highway 101. Most of the rest of the county can be characterized as rural, remote, and/or socio-economically disadvantaged. These rural areas cannot rely on the free market system alone to provide broadband service. Unless there is some other incentive, businesses will continue to bypass remote communities that are economically unprofitable to serve.

Technology studies have identified a fiber optic cable link with Redding as one of the most desired alternatives, which would assist Trinity County and rural Humboldt communities such as Willow Creek and the Hoopa Tribe in achieving broadband service and provide redundant capability to those communities that are already served. A second option would be a microwave link to southern Oregon, which would be less costly and less prone to service interruptions, but would also add fewer new customers. The microwave link to Oregon would primarily benefit the Humboldt community of Orick as a new community, as well as providing redundant capability to the cities surrounding Humboldt Bay.

The California Public Utilities Commission has added a 0.25% surcharge to telephone bills to supply funding to encourage businesses to install broadband infrastructure, but the funding is not likely to generate results before 2010. With so many unserved and underserved communities in the nation, the need is likely to outstrip the revenue being generated.

### 3. **Title: Funding to Encourage Development of Affordable Housing**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that provides incentives, such as tax credits or grants to public jurisdictions, to encourage the development of affordable housing.

**Issue and Background:** Humboldt County is obligated to provide a certain amount of affordable housing each year. Due to high land and building costs in California, the private sector alone cannot meet these goals.

Many housing programs that are available through the federal government, such as the farmworker housing program, require a 20-40% local cash match to access federal funds. For a \$2 million project and a 20% match requirement, the County would need to provide \$400,000 for its local cash match. Humboldt County is too cash-strapped to provide this

level of matching funds. Therefore, elimination of local match requirements on existing housing programs would be highly desirable.

Although a federal tax credits program offers credits to corporations that invest in affordable housing and the State offers tax credits and issues bonds for housing, there is simply more demand for affordable housing than funding available to meet the needs. Additional tax credits or grant programs for government agencies to provide subsidized housing are needed.

#### **4. Title: Grant Funding for Housing Opportunity Plan Pilot Project**

##### **Legislative Platform:**

- Support legislation that would provide grant funding from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for a Housing Opportunity Plan pilot project.
- Support legislation that provides incentives to jurisdictions that adopt the Housing Opportunity Plan approach in the process of adopting a redevelopment agency.

**Issue and Background:** Humboldt County is working with HCD and the California State Association of Counties on a pilot project to demonstrate an alternative approach to the preparation of General Plan Housing Elements. The pilot project would involve the cooperative preparation of a Housing Opportunity Plan in conjunction with the California Department of Housing and Community Development; Humboldt County cities and community service districts; community organizations such as the Farm Bureau, the Housing Coalition, Humboldt State University; and the general public.

The pilot project would create a 20-year land supply for housing and zone for 10-year housing production, with a five-year action plan and a five-year supply of “by right” housing. It would also, among other things, accommodate an adequate housing supply for families of all income levels with an efficient land use pattern; establish minimum density levels and housing product mix; and reduce regulatory barriers and time delays for production.

#### **5. Title: Brownfield Remediation and Liability**

##### **Legislative Platform:**

- Support legislation that maintains or increases funding for remediation of toxic brownfield sites, particularly those in rural areas.
- Support legislation that encourages the reuse of formerly developed properties and limits liability for developers of these sites, particularly in rural areas that have large unused vacant industrial sites.

**Issue and Background:** 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. The County has received funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the past to

assess the number of brownfield sites in redevelopment areas. The County's goal is to expand this work to other unincorporated areas of the County.

Liability has been an obstacle to redevelopment of these areas. Last year, the State enacted the California Land Resuse and Revitalization Act of 2004 that limits the liability of developers. This act made it easier for developers to redevelop brownfield sites. Humboldt County would oppose any legislation that reverses the gains made in this act. An ideal source of funding would be grants from the state government to develop revolving loan funds for brownfield clean-up, with provisions for forgivable loans to public entities.

## 6. **Title: Smart-Growth Land Use Policies and Climate Change**

### **Legislative Platform:**

- Support land use planning and growth policies that assist in achieving vehicle emissions reduction targets.
- Support legislation that protects critical lands (such as natural resources, wildlife habitat, open space, and agricultural lands) when it comes to development.
- Support legislation that promotes regional planning, cooperation between cities and counties, and which provides new fiscal incentives for the development of countywide plans addressing growth.
- Support incentive-based green building programs.

## 7. **Title: Eminent Domain**

### **Legislative Platform:**

- Support the Homeowners Protection Act or similar legislation that would prohibit the taking of a home to transfer the land to a private party.
- Oppose the California Property Owners and Farmland Protection Act or similar legislation that would use the issue of eminent domain to introduce unrelated and far-reaching provisions such as rent control, diminishing local land-use authority, and stopping acquisitions of property for water infrastructure and other legitimate public works projects.

**Issue and Background:** The use of eminent domain power by local government has become a subject of much controversy in recent years. The County supports legitimate efforts to protect landowners from abuses of local governments' eminent domain powers, such as the Homeowners Protection Act. Although the County has rarely used its power of eminent domain over the decades, it must preserve its authority to shape local land use decisions. Therefore, the County must oppose legislation or ballot initiatives that would reduce local land-use authority or prohibit the use of eminent domain for legitimate public purposes.



## Education - State Legislative Projects

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT – Public Library

Contact: Victor Zazueta, Library Director, e-mail [vzazueta@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:vzazueta@co.humboldt.ca.us); Ph (707) 269-1929

### 1. **Title: Restoration of Public Library Fund and Transaction Based Reimbursement Program funding**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation which would restore and increase funding for the Public Library Fund. In addition, support efforts and legislation to restore funding for the Transaction Based Reimbursements (TBR) Program.

**Issues and Background:** The State Library Fund, which has in the past provided a reliable source of funding to public libraries throughout the state, has been cut by 75% since 2000. For Humboldt County, this meant a reduction from \$211,000 in 2000 to \$51,575 in 2007. As a result, acquisitions of new library materials for public use were drastically reduced and virtually eliminated. Although funding for PLF was briefly restored in May 2006 and augmented with an additional \$1 million by the Budget Conference Committee this year, the Fund was reduced by \$8 million in August when the Governor cut funding for both PLF and TBR from the budget before signing it on August 24. Support from PLF this year is anticipated to be what it was in 2005: approximately \$51,000.

The Humboldt County Library is an important cultural and educational resource providing library service to all County residents through its main library in Eureka, ten branch libraries, and a bookmobile. The Humboldt County Library System provides resources and opportunities to support lifelong learning, promote local heritage, and provide for the cultural, recreational, and information needs of Humboldt County communities. Healthy libraries thrive when they are able update and replenish their collections with new materials. Funding for both TBR and PLF is critical to insuring that the Humboldt County Library is able to provide current library materials and resources to those that it serves.

### 2. **Title: California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2008**

**Legislative Platform:** Support library construction projects by:

- Supporting SB 156 or similar legislation that would place a state bond act for library construction projects on the November 2008 ballot.
- Supporting legislation that lowers the minimum voter threshold to approve library bond measures from a two-thirds majority to 55%.

**Issues and Background:** California voters passed the California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2000 in the November 2000 election. This measure provided \$350 million for construction and

renovation of public library facilities. Humboldt County did not receive any funding from the 2000 Bond Act. The State was forced to deny 75% of the grant requests received under the 2000 Bond Act due to inadequate funding.

However, Humboldt County library facilities still need improvements. The City of Fortuna and the City of Trinidad are both seeking to expand their crowded spaces. Trinidad's library occupies a small classroom at Trinidad Elementary School. The City of Trinidad wishes to build a dedicated library facility on a site separate from the school. Fortuna's library is a heavily-used branch adjacent to a city park. The City of Fortuna proposes to expand its library onto the adjacent city property. Although citizens of both cities have enthusiastically engaged in private fund-raising efforts, the amounts raised are not sufficient to build the proposed projects.

Humboldt County library facilities in McKinleyville, Willow Creek, the Hoopa Reservation, Rio Dell, and Garberville are also inadequate. SB 156, introduced in 2007, would place a \$4.0 billion bond act, entitled the California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2008, on the November 2008 ballot.

Local bond act measures are typically popular with voters, but have difficulty reaching the two-thirds majority threshold required by Proposition 218 (Voter Approval for Local Government Taxes, November 1996). Lowering the voter approval threshold from two-thirds to 55% would still preserve the intent of requiring approval from more than a simple majority of the electorate, but would make it easier for local jurisdictions to get library-related bond initiatives or property tax assessments implemented. A similar reduction in voter approval thresholds for school bond measures was approved by the voters in 2000 (Proposition 26, School Facilities Bonds, Local Majority Vote).



## General Government - State Legislative Projects

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT – COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
Contact: Phillip Smith-Hanes, Assistant County Administrative Officer,  
e-mail [psmith-hanes@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:psmith-hanes@co.humboldt.ca.us); Ph (707) 445-7266

### 1. **Title: Property Tax Administration Program**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that re-establishes and restores funding for the Property Tax Administration Program.

**Issue and Background:** In 1992, the State enacted the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF), which shifted property tax revenues from the counties 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% of every property tax dollar collected in Humboldt County. The State recognized that it was in its own best interests to ensure that properties were being assessed to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, in 1994, the State established the Property Tax Administration Program (PTAP). PTAP provided funds to each county to support the work of the Assessor's Office. Humboldt County received \$210,806 in PTAP funding in FY 2004-05.

However, due to the state budget deficit, the State eliminated the PTAP program after FY 2005-06. Statutory authorization for the existence of the program sunset on June 30, 2007. Humboldt County has three appraisal positions and one assessment technician positions that are vacant due to the elimination of funding. A study conducted by the California State Auditor in 2000 concluded that \$11 of property tax revenues are generated by every \$1 invested in the PTAP program. Therefore, the PTAP program is extremely beneficial to the State, the county, and to all local jurisdictions that receive property tax funding.

The Legislature introduced Assembly Bill 83 during the 2007 session in an effort to establish a similar program, the State-County Property Assessment and Revenue for Education funding program (PARE). The bill (if passed) will re-establish the program through FY 2013-14, but an appropriation will also need to be included in the State Budget Act.

### 2. **Title: California Public Records Act**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would allow local governments to charge requesting parties for reimbursement for staff time involved in fulfilling Public Records Act requests.

**Issue and Background:** Humboldt County, like many local jurisdictions, receives numerous requests for documents under the Public Records Act. The requests often ask for voluminous information that takes a great deal of staff time to compile. Requests may involve documents spanning several decades in time and/or numerous departments. At least once, County staff spent 20-40 hours compiling the requested information, and then

the requester never showed to pick it up. Other times, the requester has insisted on receiving paper copies of information that's already available on the internet. The staff time involved in complying with these requests is considerable, especially in a small county like Humboldt.

The federal Freedom of Information Act can require requesting parties to provide reimbursement of staff time, but California's Public Records Act only allows for the collection of photocopy fees and postage charges for documents selected from search results. Local governments cannot afford to add staff solely to comply with Public Records Act requests.

### 3. **Title: State of Emergency Declarations**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that allows State of Emergency Declarations to last more than 14 days.

**Issue and Background:** Humboldt County recently declared a State of Emergency due to the structural instability of the Martins Ferry Bridge. The bridge is on Bald Hills Road, which serves as the primary access to the Yurok Indian Reservation, as well as numerous rural residences and businesses. The Yurok Reservation has effectively been cut in half, impacting school attendance, tribal services, and critical needs such as water and propane deliveries. Using other roads now requires a trip of 100 miles from one side of the bridge to another. Repair or replacement of the bridge is estimated to cost \$12 million to \$19 million; a "quick fix" will not materialize in a short timeframe.

Current state law requires a state of emergency declaration to be renewed every 14 days to make the local jurisdiction eligible for emergency funding and assistance. For a long-term need such as this, renewing the state of emergency declaration every 14 days is impractical. In addition, there are times (such as over the Christmas break) when the Board of Supervisors traditionally has a three-week period between Board meetings. Winter storm emergencies often occur during this same time period, requiring special meetings in order to maintain the state of emergency declaration. Earthquakes and floods require more than 14 days for public agencies to respond to the most urgent needs. Extending the time period for a state of emergency declaration from 14 to 30 days would ease the administrative burden on local governments without causing any significant consequences at the state level.

### 4. **Title: Elections Transparency Measure**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would allow the Registrar of Voters to unseal ballots for the purpose of creating an electronic image of each ballot and making that image available for re-count purposes.

**Issue and Background:** Many citizens are distrustful of electronic election systems. One way to rebuild the trust of voters in elections would be to scan the images of each ballot onto electronic media, and then provide compact discs or internet access to the ballot images. This would allow interested groups to determine for themselves that the ballot

count was accurate. However, current law requires the ballots to be sealed except for recounts and destruction. A statutory amendment would be needed to allow the ballots to remain unsealed.

## 5. **Title: Big Lagoon Tribal Compact**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that allows the Big Lagoon tribe to join the Los Coyotes tribe to build a casino in Barstow.

**Issue and Background:** The Big Lagoon tribe of Humboldt County proposed in 2005 to join the Los Coyotes tribe for the purpose of building a casino in Barstow next to Interstate 15, the main route from Los Angeles to Las Vegas. The proposal would allow the Big Lagoon tribe to improve its finances through the operation of a casino, but preserve the pristine beauty of the environmentally-sensitive Big Lagoon area. The Los Coyotes Tribe and the City of Barstow approve of the proposal. Both tribes have agreed to give California a bigger share of casino revenues if a casino is built. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced the compacts with the two tribes in September 2005. However, final approval of the compacts has been languishing in the State Legislature. Assembly Member Pat Wiggins introduced SB 157 in the 2007 legislative session to ratify the compacts. This bill was amended in September to address a completely unrelated subject. Therefore, there is no bill currently pending to ratify the compacts. The primary opposition seems to come from larger tribes that oppose the precedent-setting concessions contained in the compacts. However, if the compacts are not approved, the Big Lagoon tribe has stated its intent to build a casino on its own tribal lands in Big Lagoon, thus disrupting the scenic beauty of the area.

## 6. **Title: Pension Reform**

### **Legislative Platform:**

- Oppose legislation that proposes to replace CalPERS' defined-benefit retirement plan with a defined-contribution plan.
- Support legislation that proposes to cure abuses of the current CalPERS retirement system.

**Issues and Background:** Because of stock market volatility and investment losses earlier this decade, retirement system costs skyrocketed from 2.1% of salary in FY 1999-00 to 13.9% in FY 2005-06 for general members and from 3.0% to 24.6% for public safety members over the same time period. The State and many local jurisdictions provided enhanced retirement system benefits (such as the 3% @ 50 Public Safety formula), which also increased costs.

These cost increases, along with a series of Sacramento Bee articles regarding pension system abuses, caused an outcry against defined contribution pension systems such as CalPERS. Rather than fix the abuses or adjust the actuarial accounting methods that are the underlying causes of the cost run-ups, however, the Governor and some legislators have proposed the elimination of all defined benefit pension plans. Many local

governments believe that it is exactly these defined benefit pension plans that allow them to recruit and retain many of the best and brightest candidates in government careers.

## 7. **Title: Streamlined Sales Tax Agreement**

**Legislative Platform:** Encourage the State of California to participate in the national Streamlined Sales Tax Agreement to receive sales taxes from internet sales.

**Issue and Background:** Internet sales have largely been tax-free to encourage the development of the internet commerce medium, and because of differing tax laws in each of several thousand different taxing jurisdictions. Sales taxes generate 33% of all state revenue and 12% of all revenue to local governments. However, this revenue is rapidly eroding as an increasing number of consumers make purchases on-line. Sales taxes are not collected on almost two-thirds of business-to-consumer transactions over the internet. States can only require retailers located within their borders to collect sales tax on their behalf. The U.S. Supreme Court, in the *Quill* decision, has ruled that it is a violation of the Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution for a state to require a retailer that is not physically located within a state to comply with a state's tax laws.

Proposed federal legislation (HR 3396) would overturn the *Quill* decision and require out-of-state retailers to collect sales taxes – but only for states that become members in the Streamlined Sales Tax Agreement. California is not yet a member of the Agreement.



## Health & Human Services - State Legislative Projects

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Contact: Phillip R. Crandall, Health & Human Services Director, e-mail [pcrandall@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:pcrandall@co.humboldt.ca.us);  
Ph (707) 441-5400  
Karolyn Stein, DHHS – Mental Health Branch Director, e-mail [kstein@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:kstein@co.humboldt.ca.us);  
Ph (707) 268-2990  
Alexandra Wineland, DHHS – Public Health Branch Director, e-mail [awineland@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:awineland@co.humboldt.ca.us);  
Ph (707) 268-2121  
Beverly Morgan Lewis, DHHS – Social Services Branch Director, e-mail [bmlewis@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:bmlewis@co.humboldt.ca.us);  
Ph (707) 476-4700

### 1. **Title:** Health Care Reform Act Provisions

#### **Legislative Platform:**

- Oppose county share of cost provisions that dilute county protections under Proposition 1A (2004), that divert vehicle license fee and sales tax revenues, or that reduce or eliminate state mandate reimbursements.
- Support county share of cost proposals that balance county share of cost requirements with the counties' remaining obligations to serve indigent adults, that provide protections for counties in the event of future changes to state programs, or that allow a county to renegotiate its county share of cost if the proposal does not allow it to continue to meet its local health care obligations.
- Oppose Health Care Reform provisions that identify In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) public authorities as the employer for the purpose of providing health care coverage unless the State fully finances the costs.

**Issues and Background:** The Governor and the Legislature spent most of 2007 hammering out provisions for a proposed Health Care Reform Act, intended to provide universal health care coverage to California's citizens. As the health care providers for the very poor, counties have attempted to participate in the crafting of a measure that expands health care coverage while still preserving the fiscal integrity of the existing county service delivery system. The most recent plan is embodied in ABX1 1, with the intention of placing the final version of the proposal on the November 2008 ballot. Counties still have a number of concerns that have not been adequately addressed.

Some discussions regarding county share of cost have floated proposals to change the state constitution protections for counties pertaining to vehicle license fee revenue, Proposition 1A protections for property tax and sales tax revenue, and full reimbursement of state mandates. Counties would necessarily vigorously oppose any provisions that weaken their hard-won protection of local discretionary revenue streams.

Counties can anticipate some cost savings through the expansion of health care services to low-income Californians. However, counties will remain responsible for indigent adults who do not get coverage through the expansion; for services to undocumented persons; for

residual services such as dental care that are not included in the expansion plan; and for the ultimate provision of public health, mental health, and social services. Any county share of cost proposal must balance the anticipated savings to counties with the costs of the counties' remaining health care services obligations. Counties cannot afford to shoulder additional health care costs.

The employer package may include a provision that IHSS public authorities are considered the employer of IHSS service providers for purposes of providing health insurance coverage under the Act. While counties can support the concept of providing health coverage to IHSS providers, counties cannot do so unless the State fully funds the costs of doing so. The potential cost of providing health coverage to IHSS workers is considerable; a small and financially-strapped county such as Humboldt cannot afford to do so.

Finally, counties need protections in case the actual costs of implementing the Health Care Reform Act far exceed the projected fiscal impacts. Should a county become worse off because of the Health Care Reform Act, there should be a mechanism in place that allows the County to work with the State to re-negotiate its county share of cost.

2. **Title: AB 315 (Berg) Integrated Health and Human Services Programs: extend its scope to waive statute regarding service delivery and reporting and accounting methods.**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that extends AB 315's scope to waive statute under Section 118986.86(k) of the Welfare & Institutions Code.

**Issue and Background:** Currently, Humboldt County, Mendocino County, Alameda County, and any additional county or counties, as determined by the Secretary of California Health and Human Services, with the assistance and participation of the appropriate state departments, within the existing resources of those departments, may implement a program, upon approval of the county board of supervisors for the funding and delivery of services and benefits through an integrated and comprehensive county health and human services system. This approach is newly authorized by AB 315 (Chapter 264, Laws of 2007).

The intent of this legislative request is to amend the following section of existing Welfare and Institution Codes:

**Section 18986.86 (k):** Add authority of participating counties to waive statutes in addition to regulations as proposed in the amended language below:

(k): The appropriate state departments, as designated by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, that are assisting, participating, and cooperating in the implementation of the program authorized by this chapter shall have the authority to waive regulations *and statutes* regarding the method of providing services and the method of reporting and accountability, as may be required to meet the goals set forth in subdivision (b).

3. **Title: Restructure Cost of Doing Business**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislative efforts to fund increases in the Cost of Doing Business for Human Services Programs.

**Issue and Background:** While counties are legislatively mandated to administer numerous human services programs, funding for these services is frozen at 2001 cost levels. As inflationary increases occur, this puts counties in the untenable position of backfilling the gap with their own limited resources or cutting the services that the state expects counties to deliver. Legislation needs to restore the process of budgeting human services programs based on reasonable current costs.

4. **Title: Mental Health Branch – Mentally Ill Offenders Crime Reduction Grant**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that continues \$55 million of MIOCR Grant funding to provide intensive, community based mental health treatment and case management services for seriously and persistently mentally ill criminal offenders.

**Issue and Background:** The state government may not continue funding at the time the existing MIOCR grant is up for renewal in June 2008. This funding provides a means to reduce recidivism, increase treatment implementation and recovery for the severely mentally ill, increase community education and support and reduces hardship in an overwhelmed law enforcement, court and forensic mental health system.

5. **Title: Continued Funding for Proposition 36 Substance Abuse Crime Prevention Act Services and Treatment Diversion**

**Legislative Platform:**

- Support legislation to secure ongoing funding for Proposition 36 funding, including a continuum of treatment services for criminal justice clients with addiction problems.
- Support the consolidation of the State's three drug treatment diversion programs: DEJ, Proposition 36, and Drug Courts.

**Issues and Background:** Proposition 36, the Substance Abuse Crime prevention Act (SACPA) of 2001, provided funding for 5 years. Since its passage, there have been no cost of living increases and, as of 2006, no guaranteed funding, resulting in a yearly debate in the State Legislature regarding the appropriate funding level. UCLA studies of Proposition 36 clearly demonstrate positive cost analyses and justify the cost-effectiveness of *increased* rather than decreased funding. The UCLA cost-effectiveness studies were mandated in the original ballot initiative. SACPA Unmet Needs Surveys, combined with the UCLA studies, place the current need at \$210 million. This year, SACPA and Offender Treatment Program funding combined totalled only \$120 million – or 57% of the demonstrated need for an effective program.

One solution under discussion and being brought forward by the Drug Policy Alliance is a unification of the state's three drug treatment diversion options (DEJ, Proposition 36 and drug courts), boosting funding for the three combined to \$300 million.

**6. Title: SB 2030 Workload Study for Child Welfare Services (CWS)**

**Legislative Platform:**

- Support legislative efforts to respond to the State's report that funding is sufficient to meet the minimum standards.
- Support legislation that provides additional funding for Child Welfare Services.

**Issues and Background:** SB 2030 (Chapter 785, Laws of 1998) required the California Department of Social Services to contract with a qualified entity to conduct an evaluation of the adequacy of the then-current child welfare services budgeting methodology, and also required CDSS to report its findings to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by January 30, 2000.

AB 1808 (Chapter 75, Laws of 2006) requires CDSS to develop a process for estimating the county cost for administering human services programs and requires this information to be reported during the May Revision.

Currently, the State of California maintains that the total resources available for Child Welfare Services are more than sufficient to meet minimum standards. The fact that outcome measurements are improving, according to the State, is further evidence that sufficient resources are available to exceed the minimum standards. The California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) is seeking clarification from the State on its calculation that shows sufficient state funding to meet minimum standards, as their calculations show a continued gap between current funding and the minimums. The CWDA believes that the state report is not responsive to the charge set forth in AB 1808, which required the development of a proposed budgeting methodology for CWS, nor does it reflect the caseload standards set forth in SB 2030 or those recommended by the Child Welfare League of America and the Council of Accreditation.

**7. Title: Increase Adult Protective Services Funding.**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation for increased funding for the Adult Protective Services (APS) program.

**Issue and Background:** The Governor removed a proposal in the State FY 2007-08 Adult Protective Services budget to allocate an additional \$12 million to counties. Adult Protective Services continues to experience caseload growth while diligent efforts are made to meet legislative mandates with inadequate staffing. Expenditures have increased while program funding has remained stagnant. By the end of 2007, the number of cases investigated will have increased by 212% over the workload in 2000. Adult Protective Service referrals are increasing and becoming more complex, necessitating specialized services and case management. Increased funding would support additional staff training

and development. The majority of any increase in funding would go to direct service delivery.

**8. Title: Mental Health Branch-CMS Medicaid Rehabilitation Services Option**

**Legislative Platform:** Support vetoing or amending the proposed CMS Medicaid Rehabilitation option or promote legislation that will provide alternative funding for existing covered services that will be disallowed in the proposed revisions at both the State and Federal Levels.

**Issue and Background:** The federal government is considering tightening up the covered services currently allowed under the Medicaid Rehabilitation regulations; the federal government believes that both states and counties are stretching the rules and this measure would provide federal fiscal savings. It would create a dilemma for both County governments and the State in terms of funding proven evidence based practices of these needed mental health services to both child and adult clients.

**9. Title: Diversion of Mental Health Services Act Funding**

**Legislative Platform:** Oppose legislation that proposes to divert Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds to be used for other programs such as returned offender populations.

**Issues and Background:** California voters approved the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) in November 2004. The MHSA added a 1% tax on individuals whose taxable personal income exceeds \$1.0 million per year. Among other things, the MHSA was intended to expand local programs and services for mentally ill individuals. The State enacted strict guidelines regarding implementation of the MHSA; Humboldt County, in 2006, was one of the first counties to get its MHSA program plan approved by the State. Thus, the programs have only been in operation for approximately 18 months.

Recent prison reform proposals at the State level have included discussions of returning and/or maintaining adult and juvenile offenders at the County level, placing the costs of providing mental health services to these populations squarely on the backs of the counties. In addition, State discussions have included proposals to divert MHSA funding from the purposes clearly authorized by the voters – expanded mental health services to individuals – and use the funding to treat mentally ill returned offenders instead. Proposals like this are in violation of the original intent of the MHSA and undermine the new and carefully-thought-out programs that have been enacted by the counties to expand local mental health care services. It erodes funding to other currently underserved populations requiring Mental Health services.

**10. Title: Increased Mental Health Funding for Returned Juvenile and Adult Offenders**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that provides funding to provide Mental Health services to returned juvenile and adult offenders.

**Issue and Background:** In 2007, the Legislature passed the Public Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Services Act of 2007 (AB 900, Chapter 7, Laws of 2007), which returned and/or maintained a number of adult and juvenile offenders at the County rather than the State level. Approximately 31% of Humboldt's inmate population typically requires Mental Health services. The provisions of AB 900 enact an unfunded state mandate on counties.

**11. Title: Mental Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Funding.**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that provides funding for direct mental health preparedness and response planning, training, and exercises that will strengthen the County's response to and recovery from any large all-hazard event.

**Issues and Background:** Since September 11, 2001, preparedness and response funds have flowed from the federal and state governments for Homeland Security and Public Health preparedness and response activities. Given the point of these preparedness and response funds, the mental health response and recovery has largely been ignored, although it will have to deal with the largest number of victims in a catastrophic event. Funds should be appropriated for direct mental health preparedness and response planning, training and exercises that will strengthen the infrastructure to prepare for response and recovery to any large all-hazard event.

All hazard disaster planning has historically been under funded, especially in the mental health arena. Since September 11, more funding has been made available but only for the homeland security and public health arenas at the federal, state, regional and local levels; ignoring the huge role mental health would have to play in response and recovery of the "walking wounded". In fact, planning and response efforts especially at the regional, state and federal levels have excluded the mental health agencies or departments. The Homeland Security and Public Health agencies and departments have "stove piped" funding and partnering, excluding mental health at all levels. Yet, if there is some catastrophic event, these same agencies and departments at all levels will desperately need the service of mental health. Appropriating funding directly to mental health for preparedness and response would lessen the current imbalance and levels of preparedness and response capabilities, allowing mental health to be a prepared partner with a strengthened infrastructure for planning, response and recovery.

**12. Title: Continuation of Mentally Ill Homeless AB 2034 Funding**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation at the State level to continue and renew AB 2034 (Chapter 518, Laws of 2000) funding to provide services and housing to the Homeless Population.

**Issue and Background:** The Governor did not support continued funding for AB 2034, although part of the original funding was restored. This is an essential program to help counties through evidenced based practices, provide case management and other services that help and prepare people to re-enter the job market, obtain housing and get the service their families and them need. It is very positive and helps the counties deal with this ever

increasing problem that was partially created when the federal government closed the federal mental health institutions many years ago.

In Humboldt County, this revenue funds the Street Outreach Services Program. The program serves individuals who are homeless and/or incarcerated, and focuses on those who are veterans, dually diagnosed, and/or of transition age. Street Outreach Services' intent is to find and maintain permanent housing and employment for this population. Since the program began in April 2001, Humboldt County staff has provided services to over 1,800 individuals. Between 70-80% of those served have gone from homeless to housing as the result of this successful program. It should not be discontinued.

**13. Title: Diversion of California Children and Families Act (Proposition 10) Funding**

**Legislative Platform:** Oppose SBX 15 and similar legislation that proposes to divert Proposition 10 funding to other purposes.

**Issue and Background:** California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998 to foster early childhood development programs through a 50¢-per-pack tax on cigarettes. The California Children and Families Act envisioned a broad range of services in three primary strategic areas: Improved Family Functioning/Strong Families; Improved Child Development/ Children Learning and Ready for School; and Improved Child Health/Healthy Children. Humboldt County's First Five Commission funds programs in all three areas aimed at a wide range of health and development services, quality child care and early education preschool, support for at-risk families, child abuse treatment and prevention, injury prevention, home visitation, screening and early intervention for children with special needs, parenting education, family literacy, and nutrition and anti-obesity efforts. SBX 15 would divert First Five revenues to the State General Fund to be used for healthcare services. Loss of this funding would devastate prevention programs throughout Humboldt County that are making a real difference in the lives of young children.

**14. Title: Mental Health Branch- Increase reimbursement rates and expand coverage for outpatient mental health services under MediCal and County Medical Services Program (CMSP).**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that expands benefits under MediCal and CMSP to cover more mental health services.

**Issues and Background:** In recent years reimbursement rates from these programs have been reduced and or services have been discontinued and in many cases are the safety net for large segment of the population. Historically, many mental health related services have not been covered by either program, despite an increasing demand for these services. Benefits should be expanded to cover more mental health related services.

Historically, mental health related services have not been covered or recognized as being equally important as medical related services. This has left a large segment of the population unable to obtain the mental health services they require for a healthy,

productive life. This has created a burden on counties, further weakening an already overburdened infrastructure that delivers mental health services. This is a growing problem in an already under funded, under staffed arena with an increasing demand for services on an overwhelmed infrastructure.

**15. Title: Drug and Alcohol Treatment for Adolescents**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation for increased funding for adolescent services, including overhaul of Drug Medi-Cal to accommodate evidence based practice.

**Issues and Background:** A lack of tailored treatment means that less than 10% of adolescents who need addiction treatment get help. Continuing care is non-existent, so that 80% of teens who receive treatment relapse within one year. Current Drug Medi-Cal law prevents billing for best practices for adolescent treatment by excluding individual and family sessions (both called for in the State's Alcohol and Drug Programs' Youth treatment Guidelines).

**16. Title: Overhaul of Current Drug Medi-Cal (DMC) System**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislative efforts to re-write the current DMC laws to reflect evidence based practice in treatment.

**Issues and Background:** Current DMC requirements make utilization of most evidenced based practice in drug and alcohol treatment impossible. Presently, DMC does not cover individual or family sessions, nor residential treatment for adults or youth. There is no possibility for billing case management or mental health services for co-occurring problems.

**17. Title: Hepatitis C Prevention Funding**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that provides funding for hepatitis C prevention and/or care and treatment programs.

**Issue and Background:** There are currently few federal or state funds earmarked for hepatitis C prevention and/or care and treatment programs. The North Coast AIDS Project wants to be in a position to encourage the California Department of Public Health to make funds available, and to advocate for either federal or state legislation that would make funds available.

**18. Title: Obesity and Chronic Illness Prevention**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would establish and fund an Obesity and Chronic Illness Prevention and Management Program.

**Issues and Background:** The State should fund a project to provide education and technical assistance to local jurisdictions and health care organizations on obesity and chronic illness prevention; conduct public education campaigns; provide surveillance for

obesity and chronic illness risk factors; and recommend inclusion of chronic illness prevention and management services in benefit packages. Local Public Health departments should be funded to develop community based coalitions to recommend local strategies to address chronic illness risks, including nutrition; physical activity; alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. Public Health Departments should be enabled to conduct analyses of health impacts of local and regional land use, transportation, housing, education policy and economic development decisions.

**19. Title: Public Health Access to Health Records**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would specifically authorize local public health departments to have electronic access to health records.

**Issues and Background:** Currently, state and federal medical record privacy regulations permit public health departments electronic access to health records, yet such access is generally not granted to local health departments in California. Fax and telephone communication from hospitals can be awkward and fraught with time delays and impede public health effectiveness. Electronic access would be particularly helpful after hours or during an outbreak of epidemic proportions, when hospital staff might be unable to manually transmit information to Public Health in a timely fashion. Not only have Public Health authorities consistently demonstrated maintenance of the highest possible levels of confidentiality and security, federal and state law permits such access.

Although there is not specific legislation under consideration that would address this topic, it is of highest importance to the California Conference of Local Health Officers to gain electronic access to health information in a responsible manner. Legislation may be appropriate if current efforts to work outside of legislative channels are not effective.

**20. Title: Access to Healthy Foods in Low-Income Communities**

**Legislative Platform:** Support policies and/or funding that provide incentives to grocery businesses to open and operate stores in low-income communities.

**Issues and Background:** Low-income communities in both urban and rural settings suffer from a lack of access to healthy food sources, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables. Some grocery store chains stay out of low-income communities because they perceive these areas as being unprofitable. Since many low-income individuals must rely on public transportation (if it is even available), it is difficult for low-income families to travel out of their communities to incorporate healthy foods into their diets if they are not readily available and reasonably priced. Access could be increased if state funds were allocated in the form of tax incentives for grocery stores to locate in low-income communities.

**21. Title: Public Health – Pandemic Preparedness**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation for non-categorical funding to address individual County issues and mandates related to pandemics (e.g., pandemic flu, emerging diseases, smallpox pre-event vaccination plans, etc.).

**Issues and Background:** Infrastructure is required for emergency preparedness. Humboldt County needs financial resources to enhance its infrastructure, for active surveillance, for pre-event mandates from the state and federal governments, and for any major catastrophic event.

**22. Title: Healthy Lifestyles**

**Legislative Platform:** Support Healthy Community Initiatives, including workplace wellness programs, built communities that support physical activity, and access to healthy food.

**Issues and Background:** There is a marked lack of support in the built community and the workplace for healthy life styles, including physical activity and healthy food choices.

Good nutrition and physical activity can be increased by a Public Health approach to the built community and by employee wellness programs. Additional funding opportunities through State legislation for Healthy Community Initiatives would markedly increase community health and reducing the incidence of obesity and chronic disease in our population.

**23. Title: Regulation of Safe and Sober Houses**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would require state licensing and/or certification and monitoring of six-bed-or-less “safe and sober houses.”

**Issues and Background:** In 2007, the Teen Challenge International program proposed to develop a 50-bed recovery facility for adult males (not necessarily Humboldt residents) in west Eureka. The outcry generated by this proposal highlighted the issue that small “safe and sober houses” operating six beds or less may operate without any State licensing, certification, or monitoring. Concerns have been expressed about the unknown quality of care offered in these facilities, potential lack of adequate oversight of clients, proliferation of these types of facilities in certain neighborhoods, and even possible drug and alcohol use at these sites. They are essentially unregulated. Given the populations residing there, this lack of regulatory oversight is a cause for concern.



## Natural Resources - State Legislative Projects

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT – AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER  
Contact: Phillip Smith-Hanes, Assistant County Administrative Officer,  
e-mail [psmith-hanes@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:psmith-hanes@co.humboldt.ca.us); Ph (707) 445-7266

### 1. **Title: Williamson Act Funding and Enforcement**

#### **Legislative Platform:**

- Support the continuation of the Williamson Act and subventions to counties for its implementation, and oppose any weakening of the Act and/or elimination or reduction of the subventions.
- Support legislation and administrative action that would improve the ability of both the State and the County to enforce Williamson Act agreements through uniform control measures.

**Issues and Background:** The Williamson Act (California Land Conservation Act) is important for the preservation of agricultural land in California. When land is enrolled in a Williamson Act agreement, the landowner is taxed at a rate based on the actual use of the land for agricultural purposes, as opposed to its Proposition 13 or unrestricted market value. The program is estimated to save agricultural landowners from 20 to 99% in property tax liability each year. In return, the landowner commits to restricting the use of his/her land to agricultural and open space for at least ten years. The contracts are automatically renewed each year.

### 2. **Title: Motor Vehicle Fuel Account (Unclaimed Gas Tax)**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation for the transfer of specific Motor Vehicle Fuel Accounts (MVFA) Funds from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDEFA) to the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR).

**Issue and Background:** Currently, the California Food and Agriculture Code §224 provides for the allocation of \$1.5 million of the Motor Vehicle Fuel Account to the CDFA annually. Of that amount, \$1.0 million is allocated as urgency funds for statewide pest eradication, and \$500,000 for CDFA administrative costs. Funds received above the first \$1.5 million are distributed to the counties for local support of mandated agricultural programs. Humboldt County receives approximately \$109,000 from these “unclaimed gas taxes” annually.

DPR does not receive any funds at this time from the MVFA. A change in existing law is necessary to appropriate \$12.0 million to DPR with the following provisions for distribution of funds:

- 5% but not less than \$1.65 million would be allocated to the CDFA for administrative overhead;
- 9% but not less than \$300,000 would go to the urgency fund;

- ☑ \$3.0 million would be allocated to counties for pest detection activities, with an additional 7% of the appropriation to the counties for carrying out other state-mandated agricultural programs; and
- ☑ The remaining portion of the funds would be distributed to counties to offset authorized agricultural/pesticide use enforcement programs, as specified.

This change in law is necessary to provide fiscal relief to counties, CDFA, and DPR. It would substantially increase funding for Agricultural Commissioners statewide. Its intent has support from the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association. Similar legislation (AB 1059) was introduced last year.

### 3. **Title: High-Risk Pest Exclusion Programs**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would restore funding for state-mandated High-Risk Pest Exclusion Programs.

**Issue and Background:** Humboldt County conducts high-risk pest exclusion inspections at distribution points for packages containing plant material. These inspections are extremely important for ensuring that the County and the State are kept free from the introduction of foreign pests on commercial plant shipments, which could seriously impact our environment and agricultural industries. Because these inspections are important on a statewide level, the California Department of Agriculture (CDFA) used to provide contract program funding from federal monies. These reimbursements were eliminated completely in FY 2005-06. Because the program is so important to the County, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office has absorbed the unreimbursed costs, but has had to limit and prioritize the inspections that it conducts.

The estimated cost of providing these inspections in FY 2005-06 was approximately \$59,000.

### 4. **Title: Funding for State-Mandated Pesticide Use Enforcement Program**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would provide an increase in or full cost reimbursement for the Pesticide Use Enforcement Program.

**Issue and Background:** The Humboldt County Agricultural Commissioner's Office provides various types of pesticide use monitoring inspections, as well as reviewing and issuing permits to ensure that hazards are mitigated. This state-mandated program is expected to grow due to ever-increasing statutory restrictions, requirements, and changes in the laws and regulations. The program is critical to protect public health, property, pesticide handler and fieldworker safety, and the environment in Humboldt County. In FY 2006-07, Humboldt County expects to receive approximately \$61,000 in state funding, approximately 60% of the estimated total annual cost of \$102,000.

5. **Title: Sudden Oak Death Management and Mitigation Resources**

**Legislative Platform:** Seek legislation that would support funding for efforts to 1) continue to slow the spread of Sudden Oak Death and 2) provide resources to remove the large number of hazardous dead trees.

**Issues and Background:** The presence of Sudden Oak Death in the north coast of California represents an emergency situation with very limited time for coordinated action. The infestation in the southern part of Humboldt County is isolated and small from the other 13 California counties currently impacted by the disease. It also represents a rare opportunity to try and manage the wildland disease, that no other County is in a position to address. Several factors make the spread of Sudden Oak Death (SOD) a particular concern in the north coast region. It is now clear that left un-managed, the pathogen will continue to spread in north coast wildlands; one small infestation detected in 2002 in Southern Humboldt has grown to encompass patches scattered over several dozens of square miles and threatens much of the north coast. Many speculate that if the infestation in Humboldt County is left unmanaged it will vector the pathogen to Del Norte County and to Oregon. Ecologists expect Sudden Oak Death's impacts to area forest ecosystems (tribal, wildlife, fire hazard, and aesthetic, to name a few) to be significant.

There is a limited time window for early response and pathogen control following the point of detection of a new wildland infested area. The County is grateful for the past funding from the Forest Service, matched (50/50) by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, University of California and a few others; however, early response is limited by lengthy contracting processes that do not support emergency action. The County is in need of more institutional and financial resources to manage this growing problem. The Humboldt County office of UC Cooperative Extension is expecting to receive \$185,000 from the USDA Forest Service for FY 2006-07 to continue an early detection and very limited strategic management response problem, but a realistic cost for control is \$1.0 million.

Resources are also needed to address the impacts of the disease. As Sudden Oak Death spreads, it leaves behind significant numbers of dead trees that present both fire and safety hazards. The County has no funds available to remove dead trees along County roads, or to assist local communities in managing the increasing dead tree problem. The estimated costs for dead tree management ranges from \$50,000- \$100,000 annually.

6. **Title: Full Funding of Fish & Game In-Lieu Fees**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would provide full funding for the State Department of Fish & Game's In-Lieu Fees program.

**Issue and Background:** California Fish & Game Code §1504 states that when income is derived directly from real property acquired and operated by the State as wildlife management areas, the Department shall pay annually to the county in which the property is located an amount equal to the county taxes levied upon the property at the time title to the property was transferred to the State.

The in-lieu fees program was established with the intention of mitigating the effects of State land acquisition on county revenue sources. However, it has been at least five years since adequate funding has been provided for this purpose, leaving the burden on counties to provide mandated services to subject lands. Currently, the Department of Fish & Game owes approximately \$6.4 million to affected counties, including more than \$135,000 to Humboldt County.

## 7. **Title: Funding for Wildlife Services Program**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would provide a state contribution to the cost of the Wildlife Services Program.

**Issue and Background:** The Humboldt County Agricultural Commissioner's Office and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) currently share costs to maintain the Humboldt County's Wildlife Services Program. In prior years, this program was funded one-third by the USDA, one-third by the California Department of Food & Agriculture, and one-third by the County. However, state funding was eliminated some years ago. The program responds to public needs in handling conflicts with wildlife, to reduce losses to livestock producers by predatory animals, and to protect urban areas and respond to nuisance complaints. Due to the proximity of urban areas to wildlife areas in Humboldt County, it is inevitable that conflicts arise between humans and wild animals. In these cases, it is crucial to have trained Wildlife Service professionals available to respond to complaints and/or concerns.

Humboldt County's portion of the cost is \$58,181, or 59% of the total cost of approximately \$98,600 annually. The County's cost for FY 2006-07 has increased approximately 34% over FY 2005-06.

## 8. **Title: Implementation of Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006**

**Legislative Platform:**

- Support legislation that provides flexibility to local communities in their implementation of the goals of the Global Warming Solutions Act.
- Support legislation that provides grants, loans, incentives, and revenue raising authority to assist local governments with the implementation of climate change response activities and greenhouse gas reduction strategies.
- Support new emissions reduction programs that are technically feasible for counties to implement and which produce savings that will help offset the long-term costs of implementing greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

**Issues and Background:** Concerned about the effects of climate change and the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere led the State Legislature to pass AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Chapter 488, Laws of 2006).

9. **Title: Funding and Monitoring Activities for the Klamath River**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation to reflect provisions proposed in the Klamath Restoration Agreement that would provide funding and develop a coordinated monitoring system for water quality and biological criteria along the Klamath River.

**Issues and Background:** The Klamath River runs across the northern portion of Humboldt County, providing critical water resources, natural habitat, fisheries, and recreation for the County's citizens. The Klamath River needs funding to protect its water quality, and needs coordinated monitoring activities by its stakeholders, such as local government entities; the Yurok, Karuk, and Hoopa Tribes, fisheries; the California Regional Water Quality Control Board; the U.S. Geological Survey; the California Department of Fish & Game; and the U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife.

10. **Title: Salmon and Steelhead Trout Restoration Funding**

**Legislative Platform:** Support SB 562 or similar legislation that appropriates funding for restoration of salmon and steelhead trout fisheries.

**Issue and Background:** In November 2006, voters approved Proposition 84, which included \$45.0 million for coastal salmon and steelhead fishery restoration. Legislators initially appropriated \$10.5 million from Proposition 84 for the California Department of Fish & Game's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP), but the funding was eliminated in final budget negotiations for FY 2007-08.

SB 562 seeks to appropriate \$5.293 million from Proposition 84 funding for the FRGP, a collaborative effort that focuses on restoring anadromous fish habitat with the goal of ensuring the survival and protection of salmon and steelhead trout in coastal areas of California. The program includes coastal salmonid monitoring.

11. **Title: Timely Funding and Local Flexibility**

**Legislative Platform:** Support timely receipt of State funding and local flexibility to enhance the Agricultural Commissioner's ability to immediately respond to pest emergencies.

12. **Title: Regulation of Pesticide Use**

**Legislative Platform:** Support the legal, responsible, and judicious use of pesticides by farmers and others in the production of a wholesome and safe food supply, and suppression of serious pests and diseases of agricultural and horticultural interests.

13. **Title: Sustainable Agricultural Practices and Integrated Pest Management**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that supports sustainable agricultural practices and integrated pest management, but not to the exclusion of all other legal and responsible systems for the production of crops and protection of public health.

**14. Title: Agricultural Biotechnology**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that preserves the rights of farmers and others to utilize scientifically developed and approved biotechnology for the production of food, fiber, and health aides.



## Public Works - State Legislative Projects

COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT – PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Contact: Tom Mattson, Public Works Director, e-mail [tmattson@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:tmattson@co.humboldt.ca.us); Ph (707) 445-7491

### 1. **Title: Buckhorn Grade Improvement Project**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that provides funding for further development of the Buckhorn Grade Improvement Project on State Route 299.

**Issue and Background:** The Buckhorn Grade Improvement Project is of critical importance to the economic stability and development of Humboldt County and adjoining counties. Humboldt is one of only two counties in California that is entirely inaccessible to the size of truck that carries most goods in the state. The Buckhorn Grade on State Route 299 between Eureka (U.S. Highway 101) and Redding (Interstate 5) is a 7.2-mile stretch of highway consisting of narrow roads, hairpin curves and steep inclines, making it inaccessible to the majority of long-haul trucks. Although \$8 million in federal funds have been appropriated for the revised project description (for a less-costly on-alignment alternative) and environmental impact report, up to \$150 million is estimated to be needed for construction of the complete project.

### 2. **Title: Storm Water Waste Discharge in Areas of Special Biological Significance**

**Legislative Platform:**

- Support legislation and/or state regulations that postpone implementation of the State Water Resources Control Board's Ocean Plan prohibitions related to stormwater waste discharge in Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS).
- Support legislation that provides funding for implementation of these requirements.
- Support legislation that requires future regulations to be based on best management practices as established by scientific panels.

**Issues and Background:** The California State Water Resources Control Board revised the Ocean Plan, which included various prohibitions against stormwater waste discharge in Areas of Special Biological Significance. The State has not provided any funding to implement its mandate.

Current regulations essentially require local areas to cease all drainage. State-designated ASBS's in Humboldt County include the Shelter Cover area in southern Humboldt County, Redwood National Park, Trinidad, Westhaven, and the King Range. The topography of these areas make it economically infeasible and environmentally destructive to relocate drainage from these areas of the county. Legislation and regulations need to be more realistic, streamlining requirements to focus on what is absolutely necessary to protect habitat. Future regulations should be based on best management practices as established by scientific panels.

Humboldt County is seeking an exemption from the stormwater discharge requirement. However, the application costs for the exception alone are estimated to cost the county approximately \$100,000. Carrying out the provisions of the mandate would cost far more. The County is requesting postponement of the regulations until such time as funding to carry out this mandate is provided by the State.

3. **Title: Reduction in Vote Threshold Required to Pass Local Transportation Sales and Gasoline Tax Initiatives**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would reduce the vote threshold required to pass local transportation initiatives from a two-thirds majority to 55%.

**Issue and Background:** Over the last several years, a number of jurisdictions have seen special tax initiatives receive a “yes” vote from the majority of the electorate, but fall short of the two-thirds vote requirement. Because roads are used by virtually every citizen on a daily basis, and a majority has shown that they are willing to tax themselves to support transportation projects, the current two-thirds vote requirement is unfair in a political system based on the concept of majority rule.

4. **Title: Funding and Regulatory Relief for Maintenance of Redwood Creek Levee System**

**Legislative Platform:** Support legislation that would:

- Allow Proposition 84 (Flood Control, Natural Resources, and Parks Bond Act) or other State funding to be used for levee system repairs and maintenance Redwood Creek near Orick.
- Allow for expedited permitting from State agencies for levee system repairs

**Issues and Background:** The Natural Resources Division of the Humboldt County Public Works Department maintains the flood control system at Redwood Creek. Due to limited funding and extensive permit requirements, maintenance usually consists of gravel and minor vegetation removal. However, more intensive vegetation and gravel removal is needed to properly maintain the system to its design capacity. The work needed to reclaim the design capacity of this flood control system would require a variety of permits and/or regulatory relief from state and federal agencies. Rural flood control systems would benefit from expedited permitting when local agencies need to maintain or repair levees.

With the recent signing of several flood control bills by the governor, new building behind levees that do not protect against a 200 year flood may be severely restricted or lead to increased local government liability.

