



2024 Federal Legislative Platform

Purpose

The City of Santa Rosa's Federal Legislative Platform communicates the City Council's position on federal issues that may impact the City directly or indirectly and aligns with the Council's adopted priority areas:

- **Deliver Housing for All**
- **Reduce Homelessness and its Impacts**
- **Ensure a Healthy and Safe Community for All**
- **Promote Economic and Community Vibrancy**
- **Build and Maintain Sustainable Infrastructure**
- **Achieve Organizational Excellence**
- **Address Climate Change**

City staff will monitor federal legislation and administrative or regulatory proposals, and take appropriate action when required in alignment with the adopted legislative platform to advance and protect City interests. Also, staff will collaborate, when appropriate, with our local and regional partners, including but not limited to: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Sonoma County Transportation Authority/Regional Climate Protection Authority, Sonoma Water, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit, and Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Legislative Overview

In 2023, the City worked closely with our Congressional Delegation (Senators Dianne Feinstein, Alex Padilla, Senator Laphonza Butler and Congressmen Mike Thompson and Jared Huffman) on priority funding areas and legislation in Washington, D.C. We also participated in national associations on advocacy matters, such as the National League of Cities, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. We anticipate further activity with these associations in 2024. Regarding legislation and regulatory matters, the City worked with MMO Partners to voice our position on pressing matters such as emergency management and public safety, affordable housing, water conservation and drought relief.

The City will be able to make critical transportation and environmental investments in our community with the passage of multiple historic bills, including the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, *Inflation Reduction Act*, and *American Rescue Plan*.

Santa Rosa has been a national leader in reforming FEMA and broader emergency management and communication policies to assist other communities when disasters occur. We will continue to monitor the implementation of the FIRE Act and other wildfire-related reform measures. The following policy statements seek to advance the City's federal interests by leveraging local funding, protecting critical federal programs, oppose unfunded mandates and support policies

that grant administrative control of programs, projects, and use of tax revenues to local governments. The City supports the passage of legislation that provides local governments with additional flexibility to meet community disasters, including any public health emergency, response and recovery needs, and opposes policies and mandates that have adverse impacts on revenues and services.

Legislative Strategy and Actions

The Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Office proactively coordinated with City executives, management and staff, the Mayor and City Council to develop the list of items and subsequent actions listed below to ensure the City's interests are protected.

Wildfire Prevention, Hazard Mitigation, Resiliency and Recovery

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To provide sufficient federal funding and federal agency resources to support natural disaster mitigation, rebuilding and recovery efforts, including:
 - Funding for the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program.
 - Funding for the Community Wildfire Defense Grants (CWDG), which was authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. CWDG can be used to implement projects and initiatives on the City's Community Wildfire Protection and WUI 2.0 Plans.
 - Construction of a permanent Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
 - City and regional vegetation management initiatives, including at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino, and other initiatives that will bolster the City's response to the effects of climate change and extreme weather.
- To permanently authorize the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program and allow the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to provide direct allocations to local governments.
- To advocate for continued funding and improvement of the Integrated Public Alert Warning System.
- To establish and fund improved U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's mechanism for emergency response and resiliency to disasters on Corps property.
- To support regulations and legislation that forgive any outstanding liabilities or tax implications that impact fire survivors. Additionally, to ensure nonprofits and businesses impacted by wildfires or other natural disasters can recover more efficiently without burdensome regulations or liabilities placed upon them.
- To support federal policy changes that allow federal funds to be used to make critical infrastructure improvements at public facilities, like parks, so that they can provide sheltering needs during extreme weather events.

Monitor and Evaluate:

- The implementation of the FIRE Act that updates the Stafford Act to ensure FEMA's recovery and mitigation programs address the unique nature of wildfires and their impacts on urban areas, such as pre-deployment of assets during times of highest risk, red flag warnings, improving relocation assistance for public infrastructure

affected by fires, increasing federal cost share for repetitive disasters and examining ways to expedite FEMA's assistance process.

Surface Transportation

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To ensure Congress funds highway and transit formula and discretionary programs authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that promote equitable access to transportation, address the adverse impact of climate change, and invest in resiliency projects such as evacuation routes and vegetative management along roadways; supports bicycle and pedestrian facilities; supports Vision Zero programs and project implementation; addresses the significant backlog of deferred pavement rehabilitation, and invests in public transit programs such as fleet electrification, Buses and Bus Facilities, Low-No Emissions, Zero-Emission Vehicles, and passenger rail service.
- To promote active transportation, complete street implementation, healthy foods, youth programming and maximizing the usage of green space in urban/suburban and rural settings for personal enjoyment.
- To advocate for policies that enable technological innovations to improve mobility, including connected and automated vehicles (CV/AV) and shared bicycle systems.
- To advocate for funding for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program.
- To advocate for legislation and federal funding for programs like Safe Routes to School that encourage students to walk and bike to school safely.

Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To advocate against the U.S. Department of Labor's proposal to restrict funding to California based on the enactment of the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act.

Water and Energy Resiliency

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To invest in water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure programs such as the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and the Water Resources Development Act; recycled water projects, water conservation projects, water supply planning and resiliency, stormwater, groundwater, watershed protection and improvement, local and regional flood protection, and Sonoma Water projects. Advocate expanding funding eligibility to include projects in disadvantaged (equity priority communities) and/or low-income subsections of communities.
- To provide funding and resources for drought relief, response, planning, support, and community outreach and education, including, but not limited to, programs and grant opportunities provided by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Environmental Protection Agency.
- To enact mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit the effects of climate change and enhance local and regional planning for climate resilience, including wildfire mitigation and water conservation.
- To support the thoughtful and practical approach to assessing and mitigating the associated risks to public health and the environment relating to unregulated

contaminants such as Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFAS).

- To revise EPA's process for evaluating and regulating new drinking water contaminants under the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- To advocate for federal programs, such as the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), that provide funding to assist low-income households with water and wastewater bills and those experiencing financial hardship.
- To advocate for legislation to exempt utility rebates provided to homeowners and other property owners who conserve water or improve stormwater or wastewater management from federal taxation.
- To advocate for funding and support to continue the operation of the diversion facilities at the Potter Valley Project to protect water supply resiliency and fisheries.
- That provides increased funding for infrastructure, such as within the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, to protect power and communication grids.

Monitor and Evaluate:

- The development of legislation that regulates contaminants such as, but not limited to, Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFAS).

Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- That would impose new fees on water and/or wastewater agencies, such as taxes or a public good charge, that would not benefit all ratepayers.
- That would prohibit the unfunded disconnection of service for non-payment.

Climate Change and Sustainability

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To support the City of Santa Rosa's long-standing commitment to implementing environmental programs and proactive work to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- To fund sources for climate change mitigation and adaptation, including, but not limited to, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program and programs established in the Inflation Reduction Act that assist with renewable energy generation, improved energy efficiency, recycling and composting, and reduction in energy and water use, as well as greenhouse gas emissions.
- To advocate for funding to convert the City's municipal vehicle fleet to a zero-emission fleet, including charging infrastructure and implement the conversion.

Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- That threatens or attempts to preempt the City's environmental and climate change policies, goals and regulations.

Housing, Homelessness and Economic Development

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To increase funding and federal incentives to address affordable housing and homelessness, including support for Continuum of Care, Emergency Food and Shelter, CDBG, HOME, HOPWA, Housing Choice Vouchers, permanent supportive housing, down payment assistance and other federal programs and legislation that

invest in helping our most vulnerable residents, such as the Housing for All Act of 2023 (S. 2701).

- To extend and expand federal Housing Credits for affordable housing developments, such as the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2023 (H.R. 3238, S. 1557).
- To preserve the tax exemption on municipal bonds for infrastructure and development, including Private Activity Bonds (PABs), eliminate the \$10,000 cap on the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction, restore the tax exemption for advance refunding bonds, extend the alternative fuels tax credit, and extend business development tax credits like Opportunity Zones.
- To reauthorize and continue overall appropriations funding for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) within the Commerce Department. To support efforts to bolster economic development activities for small businesses and overall economic development of the City. To advocate for the ability of the EDA to assist communities recovering from a disaster, including the dedication of a fund with annual appropriations for immediate responses to economic crises associated with declared disasters or states of emergency, including support for the Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience Act. In cases where a major disaster or emergency has been declared under the Stafford Act, EDA should be required to increase the federal share to 100 percent of the project cost, waiving all match requirements for any funding appropriated for disaster or emergency response.
- To request that EDA consider current and future impacts of climate change when selecting Public Works projects, creating a separate fund within the Public Works program dedicated to projects mitigating the impacts of climate change.
- To increase funding for the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program, which supports investments in parks and other outdoor recreation services for underserved areas within the City's urban core.
- To help working families secure quality and affordable childcare, including funding for new childcare facilities and increasing funding for childcare workers.
- To advocate for policies and legislation that reduce child poverty, including the extension of child tax credit, which was expanded under the American Rescue Plan Act.
- To increase funding to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service programs and Community Food Systems to promote the use of local foods in the National Lunch programs for children.

Monitor and Evaluate:

- Implementation of the CHIPS and Science Act, including working with local businesses and stakeholders to ensure the Act is fully funded and implemented in a timely manner.

Public Safety

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To fund and support public safety and emergency response operations, including increasing funding for firefighter and police equipment and training, community engagement and education, firefighter and police hiring, and police and fire station construction.
- To recommend funding for public safety to include diversity in police and fire hiring, recruiting and education practices.

- To fund community violence prevention and gun violence prevention programs and initiatives, including policies related to ghost guns, investments in mentorship and violence interrupters.
- To fund public safety infrastructure, including a regional community safety training center, regional communications infrastructure such as new radio tower sites, regional NIBIN testing lab, support for 9-11 call centers and required technology and equipment, including gunshot detection software, use of body-worn cameras and ALPR infrastructure
- To help fund local governments with improving community policing and rebuilding community trust through creating a co-responder team that includes the hiring of mental health officers, police officers for crises involving mental illness homelessness, and addiction; support for mental health programs for staff, and support programs like the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program.
- To fund programs like the Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Act, which supports and assists county, local, territorial, and tribal jurisdictions in improving efforts to reduce violent crime in and around schools.

Public Health and Education

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To receive flexible funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic or a national health emergency, including funding for public transportation systems, affordable housing, homelessness prevention, rental, and utility (including water and wastewater) assistance programs. Advocate for assistance to communities to help with emergency response operations, vaccine distribution and testing.
- To protect the City's funding allocations under the American Rescue Plan Act. Oppose efforts to diminish local control and flexibility related to the American Rescue Plan Act.
- To fund local business assistance programs in response to a national health emergency, such as the Paycheck Protection Program and Restaurant Revitalization Fund.
- To support access to early childhood education and childcare, workforce development programs for youth and funding for teachers and educators.

Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To decrease or eliminate access to early childhood education and childcare; decrease or eliminate workforce development programs for youth; or eliminate teaching and other staff positions from local schools.