

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Policy # **4320**

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Type of Policy: BOARD DISTRICT FIRE PARKS

POLICY

4320.1 Cosumnes Community Services District (“District”) Board of Directors (“Board”) and General Manager, or designee, shall proactively monitor and advocate for legislation that has or potentially could have an affect upon the District. This process may involve the interaction with local, county, state, and federal government entities both in regard to specific items of legislation and to promote positive intergovernmental relationships. Accordingly, involvement and participation in regional, state, and national organizations is encouraged and supported by the Board.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

4320.2 The Board recognizes the necessity and desirability to have local, county, state, or federal legislation that is in the best interest of the District. The purpose of this policy is to guide the Board and District staff in considering legislative or regulatory proposals that are likely to have an impact on the District, and to allow for a timely response to important legislative issues. This policy shall provide clear direction to the Board and District staff with regard to monitoring and acting upon bills during state and federal legislative sessions.

Adherence to this policy will ensure that legislative inquiries and responses will be administered consistently with “one voice” as to the identified Advocacy Priorities adopted within this policy. This policy and its procedures will provide the Board and General Manager, or designee, discretion to advocate in the District’s best interests. This policy is intended to be manageable, consistent, and tailored to the specific needs and culture of the District.

4320.3 This policy applies to all District elected officials, executives, and employees.

APPLICATION

4320.4 Definitions:

a. None

4320.5 This policy provides the General Manager, or designee, the flexibility to adopt positions on legislation in a timely manner, while allowing the Board to set Advocacy Priorities to provide policy guidance. The Board shall establish various Advocacy Priorities and, so

long as the position fits within the Advocacy Priorities, staff is authorized to take a position without Board approval on individual matters.

- a. Whenever an applicable Advocacy Priority does not exist pertaining to legislation affecting the District, the matter shall be brought before the Board at a regularly scheduled Board meeting for formal direction from the Board, in the form of a staff report.
- b. The District will not address matters that are not pertinent to the District's services, such as social issues or international relations issues.

4320.6 The Board will promote the District's active participation with other local governments and associations on legislative and regularity issues that are important to the District and the region.

4320.7 It should be recognized that membership in organizations by the District or District staff, does not mean the District is in agreement with the position the organization has taken on any particular issue, and which the organization has requested its members to show support or opposition of. Most organizations have a diverse membership so it is expected the overall membership may seek certain legislative action that may not fully align with the District's Advocacy Priorities. The General Manager shall use their best judgment to discern those situations, and when in doubt should contact the Board President to clarify and discuss the matter.

4320.8 Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit District staff from expressing their opinion or position as a private individual citizen.

4320.9 Nothing in this policy shall prevent an individual Director from expressing their opinion or position as an individual elected official. If a Director does communicate a position or opinion, they shall clearly identify that position as an individual stance and not that of the Board as a whole.

4320.10 The Board shall adopt the following Advocacy Priorities:

- a. Revenue, Finances, and Taxation
 1. Ensure adequate funding for special districts' safe and reliable core local service delivery.
 2. Protect special districts' resources from the shift or diversion of revenues without the consent of the affected districts.
 3. Promote the financial independence of special districts and afford them access to revenue opportunities equal to that of other types of local agencies.
 4. Protect and preserve special districts' property tax allocations and local flexibility with revenue and diversify local revenue sources.

5. Support opportunities that allow the district to compete for its fair share of regional, state, and federal funding, and that maintain existing funding streams. Opportunities may include competitive grant and funding programs. Opportunities may also include dedicated funding streams at the regional, state, or federal levels that allow the district to maximize local revenues, offset and leverage capital expenditures, and maintain district goals and standards.

b. Governance and Accountability

1. Enhance special districts' ability to govern as independent, local government bodies in an open and accessible manner.
2. Encourage best practices that avoid burdensome, costly, redundant or one-size-fits all approaches.
3. Protect meaningful public participation in local agency formations, dissolutions, and reorganizations, and ensure local services meet the unique needs, priorities, and preferences of each community.
4. Oppose additional public meeting and records requirements that unnecessarily increase the burden on public resources without effectively fostering public engagement and enhancing accountability of government agencies.
5. Promote local-level solutions, decision-making, and management concerning service delivery and governance structures while upholding voter control and maintaining LAFCO authority over local government jurisdictional reorganizations and/or consolidations.

c. Human Resources and Personnel

1. Promote policies related to hiring, management, benefits, and retirement that afford flexibility, contain costs, and enhance the ability to recruit and retain highly-qualified, career-minded employees.
2. As public agency employers, support policies that foster productive relationships between management and employees.
3. Maintain special districts' ability to exercise local flexibility by minimizing state-mandated contract requirements.
4. Oppose any measure that would hinder the ability of special districts to maximize local resources and efficiencies through the use of contracted services.

d. Infrastructure, Innovation, and Investment

1. Encourage prudent planning for investment in, and maintenance of, innovative long-term infrastructure.
2. Support the contract flexibility and fiscal tools and incentives needed to help special districts meet California's changing demands.
3. Promote the efficient, effective, and sustainable delivery of core local services. Support legislation and funding to improve the safety, security, and quality of life for the community.
4. Prevent restrictive one-size-fits-all public works requirements that increase costs to taxpayers and reduce local flexibility.
5. Support funding for emerging technologies.

e. Public Safety

1. Support legislation and funding to improve fire suppression and prevention, hazardous materials mitigation, rescue emergency medical services, and disaster and emergency preparedness.
2. Support legislation and funding for direct services for public safety departments and individuals to promote first responder psychological wellness.
3. Support legislation and funding to increase public safety staffs' ability to communicate with the community during disasters and significant public safety events.

f. Environmental and Recreation

1. Support legislation and funding to provide services and support efforts for protecting open space, connecting community to nature, and engaging communities in conservation practices.
2. Support sustainable programming and policies that aid programs which encourage health and wellness and equal access to the benefits of local parks and recreation services.

PROCEDURE

4320.11 Monitoring legislation is a shared function of the Board and General Manager or designated staff. The General Manager, or designee, will act on legislation utilizing the following procedures:

- a. The General Manager, or designee, shall review requests that the District take a

position on legislative issues to determine if the legislation aligns with the District's current approved Advocacy Priorities.

- b. The General Manager, or designee, will conduct a review of positions and analysis completed by local government associations when formulating positions.
- c. If the matter aligns with the approved Advocacy Priorities, the District's response shall be supplied in the form of a letter to the legislative body reviewing the bill or measure. Advocacy methods utilized on behalf of the District, including but not limited to letters, phone calls, emails, and prepared forms, will be communicated through the General Manager or designee.
- d. All draft legislative position letters initiated by the General Manager or designee shall state whether the district is requesting "support", "support if amended", "oppose", or "oppose unless amended" action on the issue, and shall include adequate justification for the recommended action. If possible, the letter should include examples of how a bill would specifically affect the district, e.g. "the funding the District will lose as a result of this bill could pay for X capital improvements."
 1. Support – legislation in this area advances the District's goals and priorities.
 2. Support if amended - legislation in this area advances the District's goals and priorities, so long as specific amendments are taken to the bill and/or proposition.
 3. Oppose – legislation in this area could potentially harm, negatively impact or undo positive momentum for the District, or does not advance the District's goals and priorities.
 4. Oppose unless amended - A position given to bills and/or propositions that would potentially harm, negatively impact or undo positive momentum for the District, unless specific amendments are taken to the bill.
- e. The General Manager may also provide a letter of concern or interest regarding a legislative issue without taking a formal position on a piece of legislation. Letters of concern or interest are to be administered through the General Manager or designee.
- f. When a letter is sent to a state or federal legislative body, the appropriate federal or state legislators representing the District shall be included as a copy or "cc" on the letter, in addition to the Board and Legal Counsel. In addition, the appropriate contacts at local government associations, if applicable, shall be included as a cc on legislative letters.
- g. All letters shall be made available on the District's website, showing transparency in the District's legislative advocacy correspondence.

- h. A position may be adopted by the General Manager or designee if any of the following criteria is met:
 1. The position is consistent with the adopted Advocacy Priorities;
 2. The position is consistent with that of organizations to which the District is a member; or
 3. The position is approved by the Board.
- i. All legislative positions adopted via a process outside of a regularly scheduled Board Meeting shall be communicated to the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting. When appropriate, the General Manager or other designee will submit a report (either written or verbal) summarizing activity on legislative measures to the Board of Directors.

REFERENCES

4320.12 Although the expenditure of public funds for the purpose of supporting or opposing a ballot measure or candidate is prohibited¹, the expenditure of public funds is allowed to advocate for or against proposed legislation or regulatory actions which will affect the public agency expending the funds².

¹ California Government Code 54964.

² California Government Code 53060.5; Stanson v. Mott (1976) 17 Cal. 3d 206.