

Cities Association of Santa Clara County

Legislative Guiding Principles

Approved April 11, 2019

Introduction

The Cities Association takes positions on federal, state, and regional legislative issues that may impact its member cities, so as to advocate for the interests of the member cities. In most cases, positions are taken by the Board of Directors after receiving a recommendation from the Legislative Action Committee (LAC). However, legislative issues occasionally arise in a fashion that prevents timely deliberation and response from the Board of Directors. To address such occasions, the Board of Directors establishes this list of standing legislative advocacy positions. When time does not permit consideration by the Board of Directors, the President of the Cities Association is empowered to advocate for or against issues according to these standing legislative advocacy positions, subject to subsequent ratification by the Board of Directors.

General Administration

The Cities Association respects the importance of local control over areas of municipal responsibility, and it opposes legislation and initiatives that weaken or eliminate existing local control.

Municipal Revenue

The Cities Association recognizes the ongoing difficulty for cities to maintain and enhance revenue, due to the legislative framework that governs municipal revenue sources. As a general rule, the Cities Association opposes legislation or initiatives that threaten municipal revenue sources.

Opposition to Unfunded Mandates

Recognizing the frequency with which federal, state, and regional initiatives attempt to impose unfunded mandates on cities, the Cities Association opposes unfunded mandates.

Protecting Tax Exempt Municipal Bonds

The Cities Association recognizes that tax exempt municipal bonds are an essential revenue tool for cities to fund infrastructure projects and other critical initiatives. The Cities Association supports the existence of tax exempt municipal bonds and opposes efforts to weaken or eliminate such bonds.

Improved Access to Grants and Reimbursement

The Cities Association recognizes that cities depend on grant funding and reimbursements from state, federal, and regional agencies. It also recognizes that unnecessary bureaucracy and other barriers can impede or reduce the availability and effectiveness of grant revenue. Accordingly, the Cities Association supports efforts to streamline grant and reimbursement processes. It specifically opposes unnecessary regulations, requirements, or bureaucratic processes to new or existing grants and reimbursement opportunities.

CalPERS Stability

The Cities Association recognizes the threat posed to cities by CalPERS unfunded liabilities. As such, the Cities Association supports efforts to provide long-term stability of CalPERS funding.

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Land Use

CEQA Reform

The Cities Association supports the environmental protections provided by the California Environmental Quality Act. At the same time, it recognizes the burdensome nature of some CEQA provisions. As such, the Cities Association supports efforts to streamline the CEQA process and prevent CEQA abuse, provided those efforts do not materially weaken the environmental protections provided by CEQA.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

The Cities Association supports expanding the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, and it opposes efforts to reduce CDBG funding.

Public Works

Infrastructure Funding

The Cities Association supports increased state and federal funding to meet cities' infrastructure needs.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program

The Cities Association supports restoration of the federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program and the budgeting of adequate federal funds for the EECBG Program.

Protecting Cities' Water Supply

The Cities Association supports legislation and funding that supports water efficiency, conservation, increased use of recycled water, drought relief and policies, and local agencies' ability to manage and protect groundwater supplies. The Cities Association opposes legislation and initiatives that threaten the availability of water provided to cities by regional water agencies. The Cities Association further recognizes that the affordability of water is a critical issue for the residents of its member cities, and it opposes legislation and initiatives that would create undue fiscal impacts on water ratepayers.

Transportation

The Cities Association recognizes that transportation planning must be done on a regional level in order to be effective and supports efforts for adequate funding of transportation.

Environment

Climate Change

The Cities Association recognizes the danger posed by climate change, and the unique and substantial responsibility and opportunities that cities have to combat climate change through land use and municipal regulation. It therefore supports efforts and initiatives to mitigate climate change. It specifically supports the provision of funds, incentives, and/or revenue-raising authority to assist cities in funding climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Community Choice Energy (CCE) Programs

The Cities Association supports the availability of Community Choice Energy, and it opposes legislation and initiatives that threaten CCE programs or their economic competitiveness.

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Zero Waste

The Cities Association advocates for the achievement of zero waste goals. In particular, the Cities Association supports Extended Producer Responsibility programs, which shift the fiscal burden of hazardous waste disposal to the entities that produce the hazardous products.

Parks

The Cities Association recognizes the importance of open space for recreation and exercise. It supports funding for acquisition, operation and maintenance of parks.

Economic Development

As a general rule, the Cities Association supports new and existing financing tools for local governments to maximize resources for economic development.

Workforce Development

The Cities Association supports local workforce development agencies, which are entirely funded through state and federal grants. As such, the Cities Association opposes cuts to workforce development funding.

Library Services

The Cities Association supports [the American Library Association Bill of Rights](#).

Library Bonds

The Cities Association supports a State Constitutional Amendment to lower the voting threshold for library-related municipal bonds from 2/3rds to 55%.

Education

The Cities Association recognizes that the State of California separates municipal government from school governance. However, adequate funding of schools is essential to the well-being of communities, and a failure to properly fund schools can impact crime, traffic, economic development, property values, and other areas of interest to schools. As a general rule, the Cities Association supports efforts to ensure proper school funding.

School Impact Fees

The Cities Association recognizes that state limits on school development impact fees generate insufficient revenue for school capital projects in Santa Clara County, due to the high cost of development in Santa Clara County as compared to the rest of the State of California. Accordingly, the Cities Association supports efforts to raise state limits on school development impact fees to levels reflecting the actual cost to schools imposed by new housing development.

Human Rights

The Cities Association respects the right of every individual to the services provided by municipal government, and to enjoy the benefits of living within its communities. The Cities Association opposes legislation or initiatives that threaten the rights of specific groups, or changes to policies or law enforcement processes that target specific groups.