

COUNTY OF DEL NORTE
2008 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Part I General Principles

The primary goal of the County's elected representatives and employees is to serve and support the social, economic, health, safety and well being of its citizens. In this pursuit, the Board of Supervisors has ten adopted goals to further a commitment to the principles of a prosperous, safe and healthy community. These goals, guide the efforts of all County government:

- Empower our community by affirming safe and healthy children, families and individuals.
- Create/improve a healthy workforce and effectively communicate County's goals and objectives to staff.
- Identify, develop, and prioritize a long range and short range plan for meeting future buildings, roads, equipment and recreational facilities.
- Proactively manage our financial resources.
- Deliver quality customer-focused services.
- Provide information/automation resources required to effectively meet private and public needs.
- Actively support economic development in Del Norte County.
- Build and improve partnerships with all public and private entities.
- Do everything within our authority to ensure that the public is provided with adequate and efficient infrastructure (i.e. transportation, sewer, roads, cable, and water).

Part II

General Legislative Plan

- Support legislation and regulations that require Federal and State agencies to formally confer with all affected local governments in setting priorities, acquisitions and scoping projects to be carried out in the local area.
- Support legislation to assure Del Norte County's self-governance and oppose legislation that would restrict it.
- Encourage voluntary regional solutions to regional problems, including funding and support.
- Support structural and fiscal reform that ensures revenues for the delivery of services and adequate funding or suspension of state mandates.
- Support legislation that benefits economic development and increases the opportunity for an increase in discretionary revenues and financial flexibility, consistent with the County's long range economic plans.
- Support legislation that recognizes disproportionate demand on discretionary revenues that falls to less populated counties to provide basic government services.

Specific Legislative Plan Part III

Infrastructure:

Proposal: Replacement and upgrades of U.S. Hwy 101 at Last Chance Grade to maintain a physical connection to the rest of the State of California. Safety and mobility upgrades on State Hwy 197 and U.S. Hwy 199 to allow for STAA designation.

Problem: Improvements along the state and federal highways both north/south and east/west are long awaited required projects that will allow and maintain a vital trade and commerce link for Del Norte County.

Proposal: Support Funding for the Dredging of Crescent City Harbor at a Minimum Every Five Years.

Problem: Insufficient funds currently exist at the state and federal levels for dredging of the Crescent City Harbor and the disposal of dredge soils. Maintaining our harbor is necessary for boating safety, economic prosperity, and future economic growth. The Harbor generates an estimated 10 to 25 million dollar of revenue from fishing and related activities. We are one of the largest Dungeness crab producing ports. An inability to navigate within the harbor seriously jeopardizes safety and economic viability. The Federal channel has not been dredged since 2000.

Proposal: Support Funding for Airport Runway Expansion to Accommodate Regional Aircraft. Major renovations and expansion of runways are required at the regional commercial airport to accommodate regional aircraft.

Problem: The current runways at the Del Norte County Airport are insufficient to meet the needs of regional aircraft.

Land Use

Proposal: Eliminate Duplication of Regulatory Agencies at the State Level

Eliminating the duplication of regulatory review by more than one state agency would reduce staffing levels and reduce the number of applications and associated time and costs spent in processing permits. This would be both a stabilizing force locally and at the State level providing efficiencies to meet the project needs of both private and public sector.

Problem: Currently local governments require wetland examinations and impose conditions relative to the protection and/or enhancement of any affected wetlands as part of a specific project proposal. These projects are also subject to review by the California Department of Fish and Game, the Coastal Commission and now Water Quality Control Board, requiring multiple permit review for the same wetlands with additional costs.

This results in significant delays and added costs which jeopardize the project. These are in addition to the federal review process which is also more than one agency.

Proposal: Donation or Acquisition of Land by Public Entities

Seek legislation restricting the donation or acquisition of land by public entities without county participation in the process and provide for the necessary operational funding. Appropriate sufficient funds for those State properties required to pay in-lieu property tax.

Problem: More than 75% of the County is in public ownership, which severely impacts property tax receipts. This is aggravated when the State fails to appropriate funds owed to the County for payment of in-lieu property tax, specifically Department of Fish and Game in-lieu taxes.

Proposal: Amend the Timber Yield Tax Law

Amending the Timber Yield Tax Law will empower Boards of Supervisors to rezone land presently zoned as a Timber Production Zone (TPZ) but used for other than the harvesting and growing of timber.

Problem: The current system allows landowners zoned TPZ, to use artificially low values established legislatively for timber growing lands under the ad valorem system, to be converted to other uses and remain in the TPZ without penalty. Amending the law supports equity in land usage. The County of Del Norte loses hundreds of thousands of dollars for unpaid taxes on land that is zoned for the growing and harvesting of timber.

Proposal: Housing

Authorize rural counties to have the option of combining with any incorporated City within the County for the purpose of calculating compliance with Regional Housing Needs Allocations as calculated by HCD.

Problem: Del Norte County has a problem complying with low income housing needs allocations set by HCD due to the fact that housing projects as a rule require sewer and water systems and therefore usually are located within the city limits. Similarly, the City has a problem meeting other income levels of housing needs allocation, however together we could meet the standards.

Waste Management and Recycling

Proposal: Support statewide planning for the identification and recovery of Universal Waste Ban materials and products. Support legislation that establishes programs to cover the costs for disposal, recycling, special handling prior to the adoption of additional disposal bans.

Problem: State-mandated bans are enforced at the local government level without sufficient resources. This is another unfunded mandate. These are disconnected systems, one of design and manufacturing and the other of disposal. The taxpayers are now financially responsible for managing the disposal of private goods that are toxic and disposable by design.

Proposal: Support legislation that requires producer responsibility for the financing, collection and recycling of their products at the end of their useful life.

Problem: Local government does not have the financial means nor should they have the financial burden of recycling materials that are not allowed in county landfills. Put the ownership of the financial burden on the responsible party through product stewardship. The designer and producer of the project takes responsibility for minimizing its environmental impact.

Health and Human Services

Proposal: Oppose any legislation or proposed ballot language that restricts or affects local autonomy of first 5 Commissions to allocate their funds in accordance with local needs as is currently in statute and oppose any legislation or proposed ballot language that increases tobacco taxes but does not contain “backfill” language for local services currently funded by tobacco taxes (Prop.10, Prop 99).

Problem: First 5 Del Norte is a strong community partner, working with the county and schools to build strong families and to provide much-needed programs and support to children 0-5 and their families. In addition, first 5 recently undertook a significant economic development project that benefits the community and its partners (purchasing and renovating the Family Resource Center) and has made a long-term commitment to support this investment. It would be a blow to the county and to the community at large if these funds were appropriated by the State and added to the State’s General Fund.

Proposal: Increase the availability and access to health care for all children.

Provide all children an opportunity to access primary health care by supporting legislation that funds health insurance premiums for all uninsured children not currently eligible for public insurance. These include Healthy Families, California Kids and Healthy Kids.

Problem: Children with health issues fail to do well in school.

Proposal: Protection of Current County allocations.

Work against any proposed cuts to county human services operations and services to clients.

Problem: County health and human service allocations are insufficient in meeting current mandates.

Proposal: Cost of Doing Business (CODB) Increase.

CSAC, CWDA and the Urban Counties Caucus are working to resolve the long-standing freeze to county cost allocations associated with the increase in the cost of doing business.

Problem: County human service allocations have essentially been frozen at 2001 levels but the cost of doing business has increased significantly. Since services provided are mandated services, cost of doing business increases should be provided.

Proposal: Decrease Child Welfare Worker Caseloads.

Secure statutory changes to reduce child welfare caseload. A Legislature study recommended significant increases in Child Welfare Services staffing in order to meet mandates and improve outcomes.

Problem: Caseloads are still not within the parameters set in the report.

Proposal: Provide Full Funding for Transitional Housing Program Plus.

Advocate for full funding for counties with approved plans.

Problem: The demand exceeds the current capacity of only 10 slots.

Proposal: Extend Dependency to Age 21 as an option for Emancipating Foster Youth

Allow 17 year-old foster youth to petition the court to extend their dependency up to age 21 provided they are involved in a post-high school educational or vocational program.

Problem: At the age of 18, foster children who have not received a permanent placement are dismissed from the child welfare system and are considered emancipated. Few children are independent at the age of 18 especially if attending post-high school educational or vocational programs.

Agriculture/Pest Control

Proposal: Support funding for the staffing and operations of State Agricultural Stations at the borders of California and Oregon.

Problem: Del Norte County remains clean and free from Sudden Oak Death (SOD) disease despite SOD infestations to the south in Humboldt and Mendocino counties and the increasing infestation to the north in Curry County, Oregon. The County of Del Norte is aggressive in its SOD detection efforts and continues to work with the state and federal governments with surveys, host species sampling and spore collection. Despite these intensive efforts, our local producers remain at great risk of shipment rejections by other states and countries. 99% of the Easter Lily bulbs sold in the U.S. are grown in Del Norte and Curry counties and an infestation and/or quarantine would have the potential of creating a major economic loss totaling in the tens of millions of dollars.

Proposal: Support existing revenue sources affecting Agriculture and Weights and Measures programs.

Support legislation that protects State funding for agricultural programs including High Risk Pest Exclusion and allow local funding flexibility to enhance the County's ability to immediately respond to pest emergencies. Support the expansion of federal funding participation in weed management efforts for the control of noxious weeds. Support funding for the detection and elimination of exotic pests and diseases such as Sudden Oak Death, Asian Long Horn Borer and exotic fruit flies.

Problem: With the opening of global trade markets, exotic agricultural pests from foreign lands are increasingly being introduced into the United States. Exclusion of, early detection and eradication of these pests is imperative to protect our ability to

produce plentiful and wholesome crops to feed our nation and keep our economy strong. State and local resources have been and continue to be insufficient to fund these detection and eradication efforts. Therefore, federal resources are needed to fund these vital programs and legislation towards that goal should be encouraged and supported. Furthermore, state funding for local programs has been cut or reduced for detection, exclusion and eradication programs in order to balance the state budget to the expense of viable local programs. Therefore, legislation to restore, enhance, or maintain existing state or federal funding for local programs should be supported.

Criminal Justice

Proposal: Support Funding of Juvenile Detention Facilities

Provide stable and increased State and Federal funding for local juvenile detention facilities through support of legislation that funds essential programming needs and upgrades to current facilities.

Problem: Local juvenile detention facilities, Del Norte County Juvenile Hall and Bar-O-Boys Ranch, must now house more criminally sophisticated wards that previously would have committed to the California Youth Authority. The housing of these youths locally requires additional programming and security.

Proposal: Support Funding for Adult and Juvenile Probation

Provide stable and increased State and Federal funding for direct client services by supporting legislation that fund adult and juvenile human service needs.

Problem: Human service allocations for adult clients, in particular, are insufficient to meet the criminally sophisticated client needs coupled with increasing caseloads. Funding for juvenile clients has become less and more restrictive while the demand and mandates to improve outcomes has increased.

Proposal: Support Funding for Anti-Gang Programs

Support legislation that provides funding for anti-gang activities that is inclusive of small counties.

Problem: Gang activity within the juvenile population in Del Norte County is on the rise.

Proposal: Fund the Implementation of SARATSO

Support legislation that provides funding to implement the SARATSO requirements to assess sex offenders at a higher level and monitor with GPS systems.

Problem: The registered sex offender population is on the rise in Del Norte County which requires the Probation Department to implement new state and federal requirements without the necessary resources.