RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:
Discussion and approval of the County's 2008 Legislative Platform. The Legislative Platform's primary purpose is to provide a basis for quick response by the County Administrative Office and the County's legislative consultants as issues arise. The Platform also identifies the County's legislative priorities to help guide this office and county departments in recommending legislative positions. While support of no specific legislation is included, the Platform emphasizes that legislation enabling rapid repairs to State Highway 140 are of primary concern to this Board.

The County's legislative consultant Advocat, Inc., has requested that all legislative requests be forwarded to them prior to the end of January 2008.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
The Board adopted Resolution Number 07-21 approving the County's 2007 Legislative Platform.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
Do not adopt a 2008 Legislative Platform. Staff and county departments will need to seek Board direction on certain legislative positions as they arise.
COUNTY OF MARIPosa
2008 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

General Principles

The County of Mariposa supports legislation that provides governmental decision making at the level closest to the people whenever it is likely to produce the most effective and efficient results. We support further reforms in the State-local fiscal relationship that will improve the County's ability to finance and efficiently administer both mandated and discretionary services while opposing legislation that creates mandates without State or federal funding sources to carry them out.

It is also our general legislative aim to preserve and build the County's job base and to improve the regulatory climate for private enterprise. We support State investment in local infrastructure; State/local initiatives to provide venture capital; tax and financial incentives that will encourage the growth of new and existing businesses in the County; and development and funding of a local education and workforce training investment plan that matches the requirements of growing and emerging industries.

Local Control

Land Use: We support legislation that promotes local land use authority and that authorizes, but does not mandate, the formation of regional alliances.

We support the continuation and full funding of the Williamson Act.

Programs: The County supports reforms that will promote accountability in program performance at the State and local level. We require local control over program scope and implementation, including the ability to privatize services when it is more effective and cost-efficient to do so. Legislation and administrative changes are also needed that simplify, consolidate, standardize, reduce or eliminate data-gathering, reporting and licensing requirements imposed on counties. Administrative burdens should be reduced for local government and those whom we are mandated to regulate.

Labor Relations and Employee Benefits: State legislation should not intrude into the local collective bargaining process nor interfere with the County's ability to manage and compensate its employees as it sees fit. We support reforms in Civil Service laws to allow counties to rely solely upon the collective bargaining process to establish terms and conditions of employment. We support reforms in disability retirement statutes to remove incentives for abuse of this system. We support Workers’ Compensation reforms that will lower costs to employers while delivering equitable benefits to employees.

County Finances

Revenue, Fees and Taxation: The County supports reforms that build upon the enactment of Proposition 1A to provide greater authority to generate local revenues for discretionary services and to protect local revenue streams against State budgetary incursions. Responsible government at all levels – State, federal and local – dictates that any proposed new or increased fees must represent the actual cost of service delivery.

State and Federal Mandated Programs; State Interest Programs: All mandated programs must be fully and equitably funded by the mandating authority as intended by voter enactment of Proposition 1A. Mandated programs that are not fully funded should be made optional at the local level, and counties should have broad management authority of all mandated programs.
Other Post Employment Benefits: We support efforts by the Governor and the Legislature to explore statewide efforts to assist counties in dealing with newly recognized unfunded liabilities as a result of changes in accounting methodologies. We support legislation allowing counties flexibility in dealing with other post-employment benefits.

County Services

Criminal Justice and Public Protection: Public protection is the most important obligation of counties, which administer the local portion of California’s criminal justice system. We support State and federal expenditures to help prepare and equip local law enforcement agencies to fulfill their role in preventing and responding to terrorist attacks.

We support full State funding for County trial courts as envisioned by the trial court realignment plan, together with the appropriate number of State funded judicial positions and State financing for any State-mandated upgrades of court facilities. The County supports continued State funding for juvenile probation services.

Health and Social Services: The County recognizes and supports the continued reform of State and federal health and welfare entitlement programs. Counties must have sufficient program flexibility to coordinate and consolidate the delivery of services to children, adults, senior citizens, and veterans as cost-effectively as possible. We support full federal funding of the federally mandated child support enforcement program.

We support legislation to provide health care to the indigent which provides full funding to counties in recognition of their vital role in delivering these services.

In the event that state funding sources, such as realignment funds, are reduced as part of the state's comprehensive health care reform package, we support legislation which would relieve counties of their mandate to provide health services to the indigent.

Transportation: We support legislation that provides equitable State and federal funding for roads, highways, and public transit and that promotes the timely development of local transportation projects at counties' discretion. We support continued State funding and assistance formulas for grade separation projects, Proposition 42 payments to counties for road maintenance, and Proposition 42 financing for State Traffic Congestion Relief projects. We support legislation providing equitable gasoline tax distribution to counties without incorporated cities and legislation recognizing local general fund participation in road funding, regardless of source, as self-help.

We support legislation to provide state and federal funding to fully repair and maintain the vital corridors providing access to Yosemite National Park.

Quality of Life Services: We support legislation to provide State funding assistance for local libraries, parks and museums.

Environmental Quality: In carrying out State and federal mandates for environmental protection and waste disposal, the County must retain the ability to manage programs efficiently, cost-effectively and without excessive permitting requirements. Toward that aim, we support streamlining of environmental regulations and consolidation of permitting in order to reduce costs and unnecessary delays. We also support the sovereignty of land use ordinances to protect the people and the environment of Mariposa County against encroachment by agencies acting outside their boundaries.
We support the state’s continued, full funding of local Weed Management Areas

**Priority Legislation**

The County’s primary concern during the upcoming legislative session is to support and encourage legislation and State and Federal intervention to enable rapid repairs to State Highway 140 in order to allow full access to all vehicles in and out of Yosemite National Park.