RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2018-7

MEETING: January 9, 2018

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Dallin Kimble, County Administrative Officer

RE: Legislative Platform 2018

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:
Approve the County’s 2018 Legislative Platform. The Legislative Platform is the County Board of Supervisor’s declaration of issues and items that are of importance to the citizens of the County. By identifying priorities, the Platform helps guide this office and County departments in recommending legislative positions.

The Platform also provides the County Administrative Officer with direction as to the County’s position in those instances when a timely response is necessary. This year’s Platform addresses sixteen broad topics with an added emphasis on housing and new topics including disaster funding and economic development.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
The Board annually develops and approves a legislative platform.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
The Board may wish to alter the proposed platform. Without an adopted platform the direction will be lacking to departments regarding the County’s position on important legislative actions.

ATTACHMENTS:
Legislative Platform 2018       [DOCX]

RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor
SECONDER: Merlin Jones, District II Supervisor
AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Menetrey
Mariposa County

2018 Legislative Platform
Board of Supervisors

District I: Rosemarie Smallcombe
District II: Merlin Jones
District III: Marshall Long
District IV: Kevin Cann
District V: Miles Menetrey
General Principles

Maintain the County’s ability to self-govern

Promote making decisions at the closest level to the people likely to yield effective and efficient results

Improve the County’s ability to finance and efficiently administer both mandated and discretionary services

Protect the County’s ability to collect tax revenues and oppose legislation that would add exemptions or unfunded mandates

Recognize the unique circumstances of small counties with higher per capita costs for realigned and other services

Seek resources to combat tree mortality, reduce threats due to fire and falling tree-related risks, and rebuild affected areas

Authorize voluntary regional alliances and solutions

Preserve and build the County’s job base and improve the regulatory climate for housing and private enterprise

Invest in local infrastructure

Support legislation that protects the County’s quality of life, rural character and diverse natural resources
# Table of Contents

Agriculture .................................................................................................................. 14  
Broadband .................................................................................................................... 7  
Disaster Funding .......................................................................................................... 10  
Economic Development ............................................................................................... 5  
Environmental Quality ............................................................................................... 16  
Fairgrounds, Parks, Libraries & Museums .................................................................... 13  
Forest Management ..................................................................................................... 9  
Funding Equity ............................................................................................................. 2  
General Government ..................................................................................................... 1  
Health and Human Services ......................................................................................... 12  
Housing ......................................................................................................................... 4  
Mandated Services ......................................................................................................... 3  
Public Protection ........................................................................................................... 11  
Transportation ............................................................................................................... 8  
Travel and Tourism ........................................................................................................ 6  
Water and Stormwater .................................................................................................. 15
General Government

Mariposa County is fortunate to have the leadership of five elected supervisors and excellent professional staff that are working each day for the good of our county. We support legislation that allows our county to self-govern and pursue the opportunities that these leaders and the people of our county believe to be in our best interest. We require local control over program scope and implementation, including the ability to privatize services when it is more effective and/or cost-efficient to do so.

We support legislation that promotes local land use authority and that authorizes, but does not mandate, the formation of regional alliances. We support reforms that will promote accountability in program performance at the State and local level.

Legislation and administrative changes are also needed to 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. Counties must have maximum flexibility to manage realigned programs and the State must remain responsible for the maintenance of federal effort requirements.

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 the California Public Employees’ Retirement System to establish what is to be classified as pensionable compensation and Workers’ Compensation statutes to remove incentives for abuse of this system.
Funding Equity

Mariposa County is a rural county located in Central California. Our population of less than 18,000 residents is spread out over 1,463 square miles. Including Yosemite National Park, more than 50 percent of Mariposa County lands are owned by the federal government.

Lower housing density and large quantities of State and federal lands allows for a little elbow room and pristine views, but also results in higher costs per capita to deliver services and a reduced ability to use land to generate revenue. We support efforts to secure a multi-year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools Act and Community Self-Determination Act for our schools, roads and fire prevention efforts.

The County also supports State and federal payments to counties in lieu of property taxes (PILT) for State and federal lands and facilities. PILT has a direct impact on local general funds and the County’s ability to provide mandated services.
Mandated Services

The California Constitution requires the State to pay local agencies for the cost of mandated programs and services. This requirement was reasserted by Proposition 1A, passed by voters in 2004, which required the State to pay all outstanding mandate costs each year or suspend the mandate's requirements. Today, the State owes its local governments more than $1 billion for mandates performed after 2004.

Mariposa County holds that all mandated programs must be fully and equitably funded in a timely manner by the mandating authority as intended by the 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.

We support legislation requiring the State to pay interest to counties on all delayed payments for State-mandated programs. We support legislation to provide State constitutional protection exempting counties from incurring any costs to carry out unfunded mandates, in particular new public safety responsibilities imposed on counties by the enactment of AB 109.

The County joins the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) in welcoming discussions about alternatives to the process for mandate determination and reimbursement to increase fairness and avoid future backlogs.
Housing

Most basic human needs revolve around the home. Our homes provide security, warmth, stability and a place where we can be with those we love. Yet, Census data from 2014 indicate that California is ranked 49th of the 50 states for home ownership and dead last for affordability. California Building Standards Code has become increasingly burdensome and has often made new construction or remodeling of existing homes in rural counties prohibitively expensive.

Mariposa County supports tailoring regulations and requirements to local conditions, as well as the ability of a local jurisdiction to delay implementation of costly new code requirements in rural areas in order for the requisite infrastructure to become cost effective and readily available. We support rural county access to infrastructure funds for local improvements.

We support the establishment of federal and State tax incentives for the provision of affordable housing for all income levels. Tax codes and financial industry regulations should be revised to provide stimulus for producing homes that are affordable for median and low-income households in particular.

Mariposa County supports State programs to finance and ensure housing projects are completed and made available in rural communities. We support federal laws that broaden the opportunities for local housing finance authorities, non-profit housing entities, and instrumentalities of government to increase homeownership.
Economic Development

Quality of life starts with good jobs and access to amenities such as medical care, grocery stores and places for wholesome recreation. The County’s ability to retain current employers and grow into the future is inseparable from its need for housing at all income levels.

Mariposa County supports all efforts to make housing construction and rehabilitation affordable for all income levels, so long as those efforts respect the need for local control to maintain community character. Infrastructure investments, including broadband, are needed to grow residential, commercial and industrial building in our community.

We support State and federal incentives as a stimulus to job growth and economic improvement within our communities as long as they are balanced with the importance of ensuring county revenue from sales and property taxes, and preserving the County’s right to plan and site new growth and development within its jurisdiction.
Travel and Tourism

Every year, millions of travelers come from around the world to enjoy the pristine beauty of Yosemite National Park and Mariposa County. In a rural county with less than 18,000 residents, many of the services we provide, including roads, emergency services, utility infrastructure, etc., are used as much or more by transients than residents.

Transient occupancy taxes allow the County to offset the huge demand for services generated by visitors with a matching revenue stream. More than half of Mariposa County general fund revenues are associated with transient occupancy taxes or tourism-related activities.

The County opposes any and all efforts to exempt or excuse any group of transients from paying their fair share for the services they use. We oppose State control and/or collection of transient occupancy taxes, particularly with regard to online reservation platforms, which would result in a reduction of the County’s share of those taxes.

We support the continuing State effort to attract visitors to California and the Tourism Business Improvement Districts (TBIDs) that partner with the State to encourage travel to our region. Tourism is important in California and critical in Mariposa County, and we urge the Legislature to support those efforts that would allow it to continue to be an asset for our State and local economies.
Broadband

High speed internet is an increasingly vital utility for meeting essential needs. Emergency notifications are increasingly internet-based, schools rely more and more on internet research, utilities and banking services have decreased their physical presence due to the increase in online transactions, and many other basic services are “moving to the cloud.” This is an incredible convenience where broadband is readily available, or an incredible obstacle for those who, due to income, geography or disability, do not have internet services readily available.

For counties, broadband also represents an opportunity for economic growth, job creation, more efficient service delivery, and improved health, education and public safety outcomes for residents. To yield positive results for the County and its residents, broadband service must be fast, reliable, and accessible at a reasonable price.

Despite the need for, and potential benefits from, connectivity, more than 20 percent of California households do not have access to broadband. In a rural forested county like Mariposa, infrastructure investments are needed to provide the requisite speeds, reliability and accessibility.

Mariposa County supports the expansion of broadband to all parts of California, including rural areas with limited or no access today, to drive economic development and job opportunities, enhance service delivery, and provide residents of all socioeconomic circumstances with the resources to meet their basic needs. We are especially supportive of the expansion of broadband to county fairgrounds, which serve as points of congregation during times of disaster, and ask that our input be solicited in the design, development and implementation of broadband infrastructure to ensure such programs will function effectively in mountainous regions such as ours.
Transportation

Transportation infrastructure is critical to the safety and welfare of our citizens. It is also the most important infrastructure for our local economy. Mariposa County remains supportive of transportation funding proposals and other financial opportunities that would improve our local roads.

We oppose legislation that withholds local transportation funds pending compliance with State-mandated regional land use plans. We support full implementation of the federal FAST Act, to provide multi-year funding for locally-owned infrastructure and increase local decision making authority that will expedite project delivery.

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 oppose legislation that shifts taxation from fuel sales taxes, which are constitutionally guaranteed for local transportation, to excise taxes, which are not similarly protected.

We support legislation that would provide a means by which all vehicles, including electric vehicles (EV), would share equally in the appropriate road use taxes. We support the continued funding by the State to fully repair and maintain the vital corridors providing access to Yosemite National Park. In particular, the County supports the current State project to allow full access to all vehicles in and out of Yosemite National Park on State Highway 140.
Forest Management

The United States Forest Service has estimated that more than 100 million trees have died in California as a result of drought and bark beetle infestation. Tree mortality and density have contributed to catastrophic wildfires and remain a direct threat to the people in our community, their homes and businesses, critical infrastructure, the environment, and the tourism that is the basis of our local economy.

The County urges the State of California to continue to petition the federal government in the strongest terms to allocate funding to the U.S. Forest Service to remove trees on forest lands adjacent to communities and expedite federal approvals of projects necessary to address the tree mortality disaster.

We also support allocating additional State funds for forest health and prevention of tree mortality-related disasters, deployment of more technical and financial assistance to help private land owners with dead and dying trees on their properties and a reduction of the California Disaster Assistance Act match requirement.

Funding for forest health and prevention of future disasters should include a plan for reforestation. Healthy forests are vital to our quality of life and the natural ecosystems in our area. They prevent or reduce soil erosion, water and air pollution, greenhouse gases, landslides and losses from flood events. We support reforestation of the areas affected by tree mortality and appropriate forest management moving forward.
Disaster Funding

A 2015 report to the United Nations confirmed that "weather-related disasters such as floods and heatwaves have occurred almost daily in the past decade, almost twice as often as two decades ago... Predictions of more extreme weather in the future almost certainly mean that we will witness a continued upward trend in weather-related disasters in the decades ahead" (Miles, Tom. Weather disasters occur almost daily, becoming more frequent: UN. November 23, 2015.)

In 2017, Mariposa County experienced drought, floods, wildfires, a public health disaster and various other local emergencies. The Detwiler Fire, while not the largest in the state, was the largest in our county’s history at 81,826 acres.

While the County recognizes the increase in disasters worldwide, every effort should be made to deliver promised funds for recovery in a timely manner. We support full funding of disaster relief for all eligible counties and oppose any changes, delays or limitations to the receipt of disaster reimbursements. The County further supports a return to State assistance for the local portion of costs of State- or federally-declared disasters.
Public Protection

Public protection, including the local portion of California's criminal justice system, is the most important obligation of counties. Every other service we provide is built upon a foundation of health and safety—or undermined by our failure to appropriately support these services.

Mariposa County is a community that believes in accountability and consequences. We support legislation and funding that protects our public safety personnel and provides the tools for them to protect our community. We support efforts to provide funding to construct or rehabilitate local jails and full funding for County trial courts and juvenile probation services.

Our County supports legislation and funding for supervision strategies and Evidence Based Practices (EBP) that consider the treatment and service needs of offenders under probation and/or sheriff supervision with mental illness and substance use disorders in order to improve outcomes for these populations and incentivize successful completion of programs for all offenders under probation supervision.
Health and Human 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.

Local Child Support Enforcement Agencies continue to provide quality services under the pressure of stagnant or declining revenues and increasing costs. We support legislation that will increase State budget allocations to a level that will allow federal matching revenues to fully fund the agencies.

We support Congregate Care Reform that will improve and enhance services to foster youth. It is important that we retain the flexibility to ensure the best placement option for each child in the foster care system.

We support legislation that will assist local communities to work collaboratively together toward the goals of poverty and homeless reduction with capacity building for individuals, families, and communities.

We support the renewal of California’s Federal Medicaid section 1115 waiver and legislative efforts that will enhance funding for Veterans’ Services in the community.

First 5 California, created by voters in 1998, has been a critical source of funding. The program has invested in the needs of children ages 0 to 5, centered on health and nutrition, early literacy, and child care. We support continued funding of the First 5 programs.
Fairgrounds, Libraries, Parks and Museums

Mariposa County residents enjoy a relatively undeveloped environment dominated by the natural beauty of majestic mountains and rolling foothill grasslands. The affordable rural lifestyle in Mariposa is ideal for those who would rather watch the sunset than wait at stoplights (we have none) and families, retirees, artists, equestrians and more come here to live “above the fog and below the snow.”

Since 1939, a central part of the Mariposa community experience has been the Mariposa County Fair. We’ve had more than 75 years of gathering together at the fairgrounds to celebrate this tradition that has become a valuable part of the fabric of our community.

Our experience is not unique. We believe that county fairs are basic to life in California and the United States. Yet, reduced State funding and burdensome State regulations have contributed to depleted fairground reserves and provided an obstacle to innovation that could yield more efficient outcomes.

We encourage our Legislature to restore funding to our fairgrounds. We support alternatives that would reduce State regulation and allow for greater county control of fairground operations. Likewise, we support legislation to continue State funding assistance for local libraries, parks, museums and recreational opportunities. These are the centerpieces of any community and allow our residents of all ages to thrive and visitors to engage with our heritage.
Agriculture

Mariposa County is proud of its agricultural heritage and continues to support incentives that encourage counties to preserve farmland and open space. The County supports full restoration of Williamson Act subventions to encourage farmland preservation.

In addition, we support the State's continued, full funding of local Weed Management Areas and encourage restoration of full funding for pest prevention and pesticide enforcement programs. We support legislation that enhances and provides resources for an effective direct marketing regulatory program, effective wildlife management tools, and/or the preservation and enhancement of weights and measures programs. We support restoration of full funding for Weights and Measures programs, in particular the Quality Control program that protects consumers.

The County opposes legislation that would reduce or eliminate the State Organic Program or its registration requirements, that creates a local mandate without full funding and clearly define roles for Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers, or that would diminish or remove protections now afforded to consumers for transactions measured by weighing or measuring devices.

In the face of diminishing available talent, the County is interested in legislation to increase the number of certified agricultural commissioners throughout the state and/or allow small counties to employ a lower level of certification as the county agricultural commissioner.
Water and Stormwater

Many counties throughout California have been suffering the negative effects of ongoing drought. Some of those issues include tree mortality as well as the agricultural, transportation and environmental quality issues already mentioned in this platform that are intimately tied to the supply of water and effective management of stormwater.

The County supports legislation that provides drought relief and sustainable management of groundwater, tap water and stormwater. We support the streamlining of Proposition 1 Water Bond implementation, as well as other voter-approved funding measures.

We support legislation that supports the State’s Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (I-Bank) and other revolving fund programs that would provide a funding mechanism to allow counties to finance compliance with Clean Water Act permit requirements, stormwater capture and flood protection services without diverting general and other funds needed for other critical services.
Environmental Quality

One of the greatest resources we have in Mariposa County is the beauty of the nature that surrounds us. Each year, millions of people travel from every continent to see the natural wonders of Yosemite and Mariposa County. We are keenly aware of our responsibility to be stewards of the environment around us and to preserve these wonders for future generations.

In carrying out State and federal mandates for environmental protection, waste disposal, ground and stormwater management, the County must retain the ability to manage programs efficiently, cost-effectively, and without excessive permitting requirements.

We support implementation of the Federal and State Endangered Species Acts that balances social and economic benefits with species protection and ensures that policies are based on scientific evidence.