

Attachment A: 2026 Legislative & Regulatory Platform Draft



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# Legislative & Regulatory Platform

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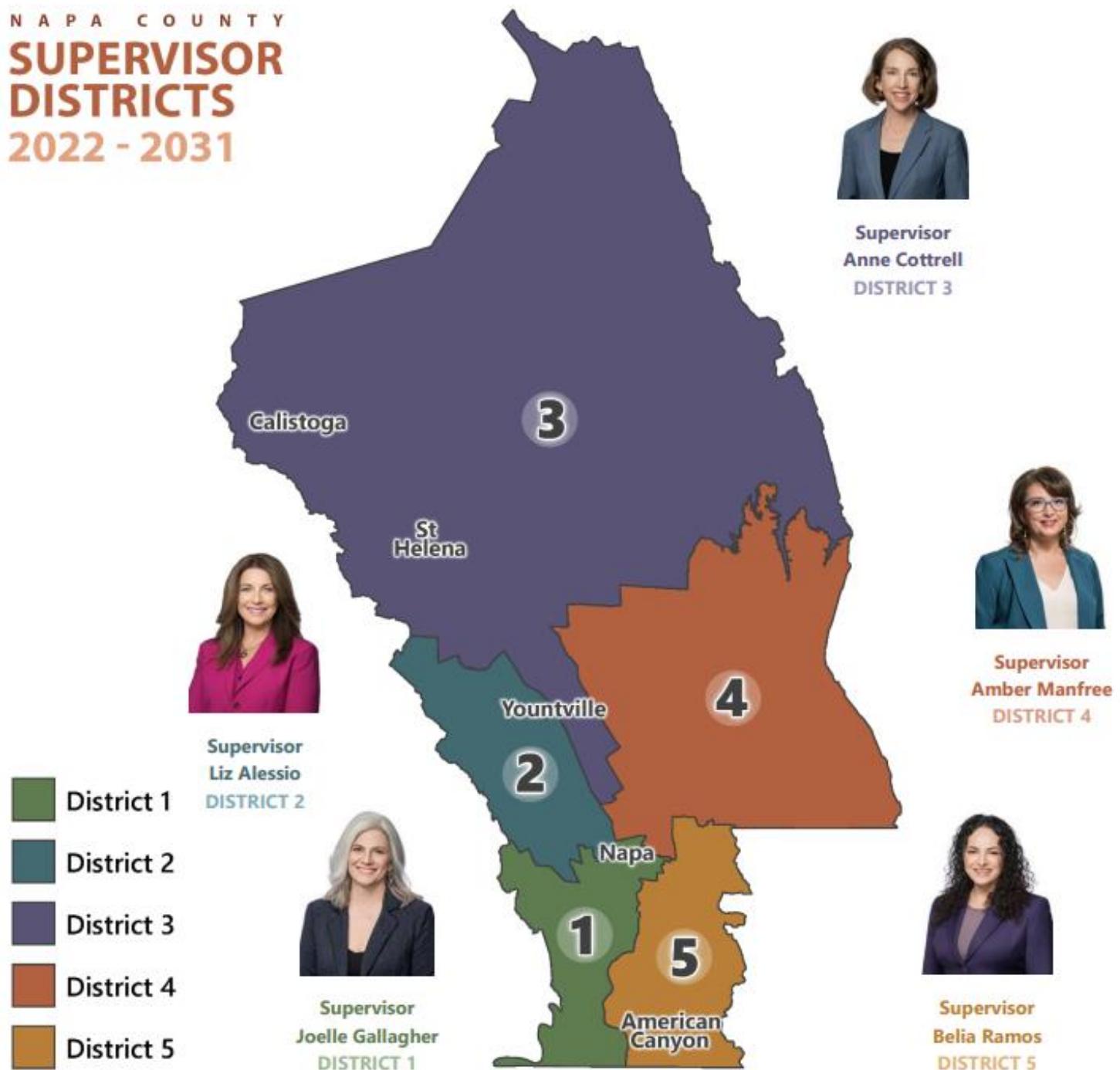


2026

N A P A C O U N T Y

California

NAPA COUNTY  
**SUPERVISOR  
DISTRICTS**  
2022 - 2031





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## Guiding Principles

1. Napa County will generally support efforts that provide for local discretion in new and existing programs required by the State and federal governments, including advocating for small county exceptions as appropriate, and will also generally support efforts that strengthen the County's capacity to deliver efficient, effective, and transparent governance to our residents.
2. Napa County will generally support efforts to maintain and enhance services that protect our residents and workforce, including children, seniors, homeless persons, immigrants and their families, persons with limited English proficiency, LGBTQIA+ persons, and other at-risk populations.
3. Napa County will generally support efforts that uphold the integrity of the County's Agricultural Preserve ordinance and promote commercial agricultural activities; conversely, the County generally opposes initiatives seeking to reduce its land use authority.
4. Napa County will generally support efforts that mitigate the current climatological emergency and promote the stable conditions necessary for the County's continued economic and agricultural prosperity and public well-being.
5. Napa County will generally oppose legislative and regulatory initiatives that detract from the County's operational efficiency by imposing new unfunded mandates or overlapping or redundant administrative burdens on counties without providing adequate resources to meet those obligations, sustain programs, and retain staff.

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## Key Themes

### **■ Adapting to New State and Federal Requirements in Social Safety Net Programs & Community Impacts of Health**

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**Policy:** Napa County supports actions to mitigate the harm created by H.R. 1 to families receiving Medicaid/Medi-Cal and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/CalFresh). The County also supports actions to mitigate the budgetary impacts of implementing the federal changes.

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**Background:** Counties in California are responsible for providing a broad range of services to our communities. These services, which encompass the lifespan, from child development programs to wraparound job seeking and training services and implementation of plans for community aging, permeate every facet of the county's work. Healthy communities are more likely to be collectively invested in their futures, including in the self-perpetuating cycle of identifying shared needs and building a robust network of community-based organizations and healthcare providers to address those needs. Careful planning and proper resources are required for county health and human services departments to provide a strong backbone for these community networks.

The impact that a comprehensive network of community-based organizations, primary and specialty care providers, and county health and human services has on the communities they serve is substantial and measurable. Children with proper nutrition and early childhood development experiences have better social and educational outcomes in school; adults with access to predictable streams of the resources they need can focus on building stable households; and older adults with convenient access to care and services can thrive.

2025 represented a significant shift in the way the State and federal governments implement and fund social-safety-net programs, particularly Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or CalFresh in California). Local governments will shoulder new administrative requirements and a greater share of the costs of running these key programs.

Careful planning by the State Legislature and the Departments of Social Services and Health Care Services in partnership with counties will be required to ensure these new requirements and greater share of costs do not overwhelm counties.

Napa County spent 2025 planning for the phase-in of these new requirements, working with other counties and Statewide associations, and will continue to be a forceful and vocal advocate for sustainable and common-sense solutions that put our clients and staff alike in positions to succeed.

## ● Agricultural and Rural Preservation

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**Policy:** Napa County supports actions to preserve and protect the county's agricultural land and to limit development in unincorporated areas.

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**Background:** Farmland in California is threatened by water shortages, natural disaster, and housing development. The California Department of Conservation estimates that approximately 47,000 acres of farmland were lost each year between 1984 and 2018, with the largest decrease coming to Prime Farmland, representing 816,000 acres or about 50 percent of the loss.<sup>1</sup> Urbanization accounts for the vast majority of this loss, about 1.2 million of the 1.6 million acres lost in that period.<sup>2</sup>

Napa County's 1968 Agricultural Preserve Ordinance and subsequent ballot measures approved by residents protect more than 32,000 acres of mostly Prime Farmland through 2058, with total conserved acres exceeding 37,000 acres, about 7 percent of the county's total acreage. Farmland protection is a vitally important climate solution for reaching the State's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets: an acre of California farmland produces between 58 to 70 percent less greenhouse gases than an acre of urban land, and proactive management of cover crops is essential to seeing actual reduction in emissions in addition to avoiding emissions.<sup>3</sup>

A foundational part of Napa County's advocacy is preservation of agricultural lands and prioritization of agricultural production on these lands.

## ◆ Economic Stability

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**Policy:** Napa County supports State and federal infrastructure policies which incentivize affordable housing in more densely populated areas. The County will support opportunities that allow continued improvement of county roads and bridges and investment in vegetation management and home hardening measures.

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**Background:** Californians in 2025 were subject to continued housing and job market challenges, in an economy that, absent the very largest<sup>4</sup> tech stocks, is stagnant.<sup>5</sup> Market shifts in California's wine industry and other rising costs have resulted in more competition for jobs with competitive wages; a smaller market due to decreased wine consumption from Americans under the age of 30, tariffs on

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<sup>1</sup> Source: California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Fast-Facts.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Greener Fields: California Communities Combating Climate Change*, American Farmland Trust, September 2018. [https://farmlandinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/AFT\\_CA-GrFields-web3\\_0.pdf](https://farmlandinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/AFT_CA-GrFields-web3_0.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Alphabet; Amazon; Apple; Meta; Microsoft; Nvidia; Tesla.

<sup>5</sup> Rogelberg, Sasha. “‘Big Short’ investor Steve Eisman warns the U.S. economy is a ‘tale of two cities’ that ‘is not even growing 50 basis points outside of AI.’” 8 October 2025. <https://fortune.com/2025/10/08/big-short-investor-steve-eisman-ai-us-gdp-growth-consumer/>

components and reciprocal tariffs on California wines, as well as rising labor costs and skyrocketing commercial property and liability costs. The result of this market shift in Napa from a local government perspective is a smaller pot of funding available for community-based organizations; and flat or declining local sales and tourism occupancy tax revenues.

As to housing, the fundamental basis for economic stability in a community, the State appears to have settled on urban infill development as its favored strategy to address the housing crisis. Napa County supports this approach, recognizing that responsibility for urban infill rests primarily with cities. The areas where the County can act to improve affordability will have mostly structural effects on our community.<sup>6</sup> Examples of these structural impacts include:

- Increasing local funds available for affordable housing projects through impact fees levied on construction in unincorporated areas, intended to incentivize city-center development;
- Improving county-maintained roads and bridges to reduce vehicle wear and tear;
- Developing and supporting other opportunities for disaster mitigation funding to scale up vegetation management and providing matching funding to residents for residential home retrofitting and defensible space projects; and
- Fighting for new laws and regulations that reduce administrative requirements and costs in permitting processes.

## **\* Environmental and Disaster Resilience**

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**Policy:** Napa County supports strategic federal and State investments to build more environmentally resilient communities.

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**Background:** Robust investment in environmental and disaster resilience is foundational to preparing for the future of Napa County. Building a resilient Napa County means executing a range of measures designed to mitigate the impact of future extreme weather on our environment, our people, and our economy.

This strategy is clearest in our Regional Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (RCAAP) and comprehensive investments in wildfire mitigation. Napa County's vision to achieve its climate goals, enumerated in the Regional Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, require a network of capital in which strategic investments by the State and federal governments complement self-sustaining local public- and private-sector investment, an ecosystem in which the County and its municipalities are not reliant on State or federal dollars to accomplish shared objectives.

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<sup>6</sup> Building costs in unincorporated Napa County are very high, between \$500 and \$600 per square foot; for a 1,400 square foot home, which is not large, a builder's costs will be between \$700,000 and \$840,000. Urban infill is a more cost-efficient method of addressing Napa County's housing shortage.

## ◆ Public Safety

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**Policy:** Napa County supports a re-framing of State justice system policies to more clearly acknowledge and account for the complex roles of local law enforcement and efforts to recognize and support the County's investments and management of mental health and rehabilitation services.

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**Background:** Our residents prioritize feeling safe in their homes and on Napa County's streets and a fair and effective justice system that balances stable reentry, rehabilitation, and reduced recidivism. Napa's communities additionally prioritize efforts that protect the rights of victims of crimes and reduce opportunities for repeated instances of victimization.

Critical to our public safety is a robust and professional law enforcement agency whose officers can use their extensive training and experience to protect residents of and visitors to the County from threats to that public safety. Too often, though, the Legislature takes up single issues without considering how its actions affect the ability of law enforcement agencies to carry out their sworn duty. Napa County will in its advocacy hold the Legislature to the same high standards expected of our law enforcement officers in expecting clear and precise drafting in and sound reasoning for public safety bills.

Napa County's \$133 million jail project, completed in 2025 after roughly two years of construction and supported by approximately \$110 million in local funding, enables our Corrections Department to strengthen its focus on mental health support and rehabilitation. Given this substantial local investment, Napa County will continue to advocate for maintaining local control of corrections operations and oppose any new oversight measures that could hinder that effort. Similarly, Napa County's juvenile justice program consistently ranks among the highest performing in the State in graduate success and recidivism rates. The State ceded responsibility for juvenile justice to counties in 2023; it is wholly inappropriate for the State's legislators to now try to claw back control of this critical community support system.

## ◆ Quality of Life

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**Policy:** Napa County supports State and federal initiatives that provide support for the County's lower-income residents as well as streamlined eligibility processes for access to services. Napa County supports increased investments in health and human services programs ranging from affordable child development services to older adult programs and protections. Those supports enhance the quality of life for residents, visitors, and our workforce alike.

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**Background:** Napa County is a net importer of jobs, meaning that more people come into the county each day to work than leave.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Source: Workforce Alliance of the North Bay, 2024 Economy Overview for Napa County:  
[https://www.workforcealliancenorthbay.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Economy\\_Overview\\_Napa\\_County\\_CA\\_9580.pdf](https://www.workforcealliancenorthbay.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Economy_Overview_Napa_County_CA_9580.pdf). Total employment in Napa County:

Areas where Napa County seeks to improve our quality of life include maintenance of the roads and bridges for which the County is responsible; older adult support services and child development services; expanding access to fixed-wireless broadband or satellite internet; and the restoration of critical State Library funding used locally for e-book purchases.

Finally, the State and federal governments continue to impose new administrative requirements on the County that often include additional burdens of documentation passed along to our clients and customers, generally without accompanying funding. Even when operation funding is allocated, it is subject to penalties based on accuracy and includes no additional funding for administration costs. This puts greater burdens on existing county staff to learn new program reporting requirements in addition to their existing job duties. This is frustrating and expensive for County staff and those we serve, and finding ways to reduce bureaucracy will improve the experience of residents who rely on County services.

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## Key Issues

### Access to Health Care

■◆ Applicable themes: **Adapting to New State and Federal Requirements in Social Safety Net Programs & Quality of Life**

**Policy:** Napa County supports federal legislative and administrative actions to ensure that individuals currently eligible for Medicaid/Medi-Cal continue to maintain coverage. The County supports federal legislation to reverse the burdensome work requirements that will effectively result in the loss of coverage due to new administrative paperwork required of beneficiaries and county staff. The County supports measures to maintain the financial and operational viability of the community's hospitals and clinics.

Napa County, a member of the County Medical Services Program, will advocate for adequate ongoing funding to the CMS fund, realignment funds to which were eliminated, in the range of \$800m per year.

**Background:** About one in four Napa County residents, more than 34,000 in total, is enrolled in Medi-Cal, and will be responsible for substantial new eligibility and administrative requirements as a result of HR 1. County personnel, not State or federal employees, will be responsible for trying to make sure current enrollees do not fall through the cracks.

While Federal changes mostly involve new administrative burdens and work requirements, the Governor's 2025-26 budget simply reduces Medi-Cal benefits available to all enrollees and cuts off enrollment for undocumented immigrants beginning January 1, 2026. Staff can mitigate administrative

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87,875 jobs. Total labor force residing in Napa County: 71,773; total labor force participation: 62.7%, for a total local labor force of approximately 45,000. This margin is consistent with the County organization's workforce, of which approximately half commutes from outside Napa County.

disenrollment under federal requirements through proactive action. But both categories of new State cuts will directly and immediately reduce access to critical preventative care that keeps our residents out of the emergency room. To this end, the County supports comprehensive immigration reform that improves and simplifies the current legal immigration system and includes a national strategy for coordination among federal, State, local, and tribal authorities.

The network of Napa County healthcare providers, despite a principal focus on primary care, is insufficient to meet the needs of the current Medi-Cal population. Providers' capacities will be further hobbled by reduced Medi-Cal reimbursements and increased churn as patients are administratively disenrolled. Within the county, there are two emergency departments at Providence Queen of the Valley and Adventist Health St. Helena, and the ways in which these will be impacted are easily predicted – higher volume, longer wait times, and more severe presentations, all of which will contribute to greater staff burnout and turnover.<sup>8</sup> Notably, Adventist Health St. Helena is classified as a rural hospital: California's eventual allocation of the \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Program included in HR 1 should be implemented by State officials such that funding is allocated fairly to rural healthcare providers, not simply to providers located in urban areas who provide telehealth services to residents of rural areas.

Improving community access to primary care has far-reaching effects in reducing health disparities across the socioeconomic spectrum<sup>9</sup>, decreased use of emergency room services and hospitalizations<sup>10</sup>, improving workforce participation<sup>11</sup>, and long-term cost savings in social services programs<sup>12</sup>. These outcomes must be a priority for State and federal policymakers.

HR 1 will also impact access to and the viability of local specialized service providers.<sup>13</sup> Patient access to specialized healthcare services often require referral from primary care. Reducing access to primary care will have the downstream effect of reducing patient access to the specialized providers.

The increase in need for indigent care as a result of disenrollments will increase the cost to counties. Prior to the ACA, State realignment funds supported the County Medical Services Program (CMSP) for 35 (smaller) counties. Shifts in funding (from \$250m pre-ACA funding to \$10m) since the passage of the ACA resulted in CMSP being largely unfunded currently from its two prior sources of funding. Napa County will advocate for reinstatement of CMSP funding to provide for life-saving care to our residents who

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<sup>8</sup> The three closest adult Level I trauma hospitals are about 50 miles away, in Sacramento, Oakland, and San Francisco. The closest pediatric Level I trauma hospital is in Sacramento.

<sup>9</sup> Rose *et al.*, Primary Care Visit Regularity and Patient Outcomes, *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 2018 Oct. 26, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6318173>.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> Testimony of Dr. Brian D. Smedley, Ph.D., National Collaborative for Health Equity, before the Subcommittee on Health of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, U.S. House of Representatives, 23 June 2009, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-111hhrg74088/html/CHRG-111hhrg74088.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Examples of specialty care providers include oncology (cancer), nephrology (kidneys), cardiology (heart), and orthopedics (bone and tissue). <https://www.cms.gov/priorities/innovation/key-concepts/specialty-care>

cannot afford healthcare or health insurance, with CMSP anticipating a volume of approximately 125,000 residents affected by administrative Medi-Cal disenrollment or who are unable to afford increased ACA subsidies following their expiration on December 31, 2025.

CMSP expects this new obligation to cost, in 2025 dollars, approximately \$800m per year moving forward. Napa and its CMSP counterparts will advocate fiercely for sufficient funding, including restoration of realignment funding previously redirected to the State, and will in turn work to coordinate a unified standard of care.

## Airport Operations

- ◆ Applicable theme: **Quality of Life**

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**Policy:** Napa County supports an expedited, appropriate solution and decision on a new flight path into the County's airport.

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**Background:** Residents of southern Napa County oppose the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) new flight path into the Napa County Airport. The County will engage the FAA to determine an appropriate solution to the issue.

## Behavioral Health

- ◆ Applicable themes: **Adapting to New State and Federal Requirements in Social Safety Net Programs & Quality of Life**

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**Policy:** Napa County supports policies to improve the quality and accessibility of behavioral health services, including changes to the Medicaid Institution for Mental Diseases (IMD) rule limiting the ability of facilities to provide care; funding to train and recruit behavioral health workforce; and, increased investments and flexibility to provide behavioral health services.

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**Background:** The Board of Supervisors in 2025 approved the use of \$20.5 million in local funds to convert a Reentry Facility, which, given the State's shift in institutional preference from a corrections-based to a behavioral health-centered model, no longer made operational sense, into a Behavioral Health Treatment Center that will help the County meet a flood of new mandates related to behavioral health.

California's budget swung from ephemeral surplus to delayed recognition of structural deficit over the past five years. During the surplus years, the State spent more than was sustainable in the long run, passing dozens of new and ongoing behavioral health initiatives in the Legislature and providing only short-term funding for local implementation. As federal aid ran dry and income and sales tax revenues flattened, costs have now become untenable, and funding has been provided on year-to-year bases. Nowhere is this divergence more prominent than in behavioral health services.

The State's top priority, in light of the flat revenue forecast, should be to plan for a cohesive behavioral health ecosystem built on sustainable, long-term, reliable funding for local implementation. Achieving

this vision requires a predictable and properly funded workforce development framework that enables communities to recruit, train, and retain qualified staff to meet community needs. Allocating remaining Proposition 1 (2024) funding for behavioral health, which measures in the billions of dollars in keeping with these principles of sustainability should be the top deliverable for this priority of building a sustainable behavioral health ecosystem.

The State must consider strategic merger of new and existing behavioral health local mandates, which are already chronically underfunded. Counties, including Napa, create organizational efficiencies by merging programs with similar reporting requirements under a single umbrella. The County supports a similar approach by the State: in a time when we must all do more with less, finding ways to combine administrative obligations would be a welcome and much-needed relief.

Napa County's network of CBOs is intimately familiar with the need to do more with less, and as the maze of State statutory and regulatory requirements has grown ever more complex, CBOs have found it correspondingly more difficult to recruit and train a behavioral health workforce that can meet these mandates. The County recognizes the invaluable contributions of community nonprofit partners in addressing BH needs and will continue to advocate for local control of funding to support BH needs of our community, including funding for local CBOs

Finally, the obligations of counties as it pertains to the forensic aspects of behavioral health have never been greater. With the State shift in criminal justice to a more behavioral health-centric approach, county behavioral health staff now spend more time than ever before preparing for, waiting in, and testifying before courts for justice-involved clients. The State has not so far recognized this increased burden and workload by either providing resources for dedicated forensic behavioral health or finding ways for insurers, including Medi-Cal and private insurers, to shoulder some of this financial burden. Reform in this area will provide significant relief to time and money pressures on local behavioral health departments.

## **California's Property Insurance Market and the FAIR Plan**

◆ Applicable themes: **Economic Stability & Environmental and Disaster Resilience**

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**Policy:** Napa County supports federal and State legislation and regulatory actions to address the residential and commercial property insurance crisis.

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**Background:** Wildfires of monumental scale continue to devastate California's landscapes. In their wake, residents returning to damaged or destroyed homes face complex and uphill battles to secure insurance payouts necessary to rebuild. The fight to solve California's property insurance crisis this year gained powerful advocates in Los Angeles County – and Napa County welcomes these new partners in our ongoing efforts.

Napa County's property insurance advocacy is intrinsically tied to the tens of millions of dollars of local General Fund and private investment in fire mitigation at residential and commercial properties across the county. We have strategically invested in dozens of miles of dozer lines and consistent, methodical

vegetation management. Napa is far safer from wildfire now than in 2017 and 2020, and residents and businesses are fully invested in this approach.

Napa is a small county and seeks to become fully self-sustaining in our wildfire mitigation efforts. State and federal funding are unreliable, and Napa County's residents and workforce cannot depend on such funding to protect lives and property.

A critical part of becoming self-sustaining is realizing a return on this investment, not only through more effective wildfire mitigation and response, but also through widely available admitted-market property insurance at rates that appropriately reflect Napa's exposure to wildfire.

In California, legislative and regulatory measures that require insurers to take into account home hardening measures and parcel- and landscape-level defensible space efforts in their underwriting decisions and ratemaking applications will be necessary to align incentives. Allowing insurers to craft their own solution has led to unsustainably high enrollments in the FAIR Plan and a ratepayer bailout; the proper solution is incentivization of household-level mitigation and the building of community-level resilience. Napa County has a significant competitive advantage here: buy-in from property owners, robust local resources, and a relatively small land area all work in our favor over our neighbors and other rural counties across California, and our insurance rates should reflect these discrepancies.

Napa County continues to track the Insurance Commissioner's Sustainable Insurance Strategy and will look for the Commissioner to hold insurers to their coverage commitments under the Commissioner's disaster modeling regulations. The County also expects the Commissioner to limit the use of the catchall "hardship" exemption to that particular regulation and will advocate for regulatory changes if it is used to limit insurer portfolios in Napa County.

Napa County conducted extensive federal advocacy on property insurance reform in 2025 and expects to continue to do so in 2026. This is a national issue. Property insurance markets are not only in crisis in California: Gulf states like Florida and Alabama have already navigated similar challenges; wildfires are affecting the growing population of the Mountain West in unprecedented ways; and wind and hail damage across the Midwest and Great Plains have created a residential property insurance crisis more widespread and difficult to solve than the one unfolding in California.

Property insurance is a nationwide issue that merits use of Congress's investigative power and oversight authority and the grant of new enforcement power within Department of Treasury's Federal Insurance Office to correct market manipulation and misconduct by insurers.

## Carrier of Last Resort Obligations

- ◆ Applicable themes: **Quality of Life & Public Safety**

**Policy:** Napa County supports continued use of copper-line telephone service as a reliable, cost-effective means of serving rural unincorporated areas of the County, including support for the California Public Utilities Commission to issue rulemaking rather than involving the State legislature and a statewide coverage mapping program led and funded by CPUC.

**Background:** For 3,195 residents of Napa County, copper-line telephone service is a key backstop to maintain connection with the outside world. Copper-line service is resilient: it does not require a battery backup to work during power outages. It is generally cheaper for consumers to have a copper line phone than a cell phone plan or broadband (high-speed internet) service<sup>14</sup>, and copper line exists in places where it is unprofitable for telecommunications firms to expand broadband coverage. Finally, it is easy for people of all ages and technological acumen to use: just pick up the phone and dial. The maintenance of copper lines also supports skilled labor opportunities for California's workforce.

Napa County recognizes that there are likely areas of the county, particularly within incorporated city limits, where cell phone coverage is sufficiently widespread and broadband or fiber-optic infrastructure may be sufficient to make maintaining copper line coverage unnecessary. However, it is not urban areas where maintenance of copper lines is difficult or costly, and absent affordability protections through California's LifeLine program<sup>15</sup>, Napa County will oppose discontinuation of copper line service in these rural and otherwise poorly served areas.

Napa County opposes discontinuation of copper line service and cessation of existing carrier of last resort obligations in rural, unincorporated areas of the county, where residents lack reliable access to high-speed internet and consistent cell coverage. This includes participation in the ongoing California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) rulemaking related to carrier of last resort obligations and opposition to any legislative efforts to circumvent the CPUC. Napa's baseline position is that the proper forum for debate about carriers of last resort is the CPUC and the California legislature is fundamentally an improper venue.

<sup>14</sup> An outstanding question for California's policymakers is, given the high costs of installing and maintaining fixed wireless infrastructure and cell phone towers in remote areas across the State, whether broadband is the long-term answer or if satellite internet provides a more resilient and lower-cost solution for high-speed internet access.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.californialifeline.com/en>, website available in multiple languages.

## Farmworker Housing

◆ ● Applicable themes: **Quality of Life & Agricultural and Rural Preservation**

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**Policy:** Napa County seeks continued State support past FY 2027 for its Farmworker Housing program.

**Background:** Napa County, in partnership with the local wine industry, operates three farmworker housing centers in the northern part of the county, open 11 months per year and each housing 60 farmworkers at a cost of \$18 per night. Napa is unique among California counties in this public-private structure and nearly year-round availability. Both of these characteristics reflect the structural challenges of growing winegrapes that meet the exacting standards of Napa's industry.

The County receives \$250,000 in revenue from the State of California under a 10-year agreement set to expire in FY 2027, and tenant rents account for another \$1 million, representing a 50 percent increase in rental rates in eight years. Napa has increased the private assessment by 45 percent since FY 2018, and annual assessment revenues of about \$658,000 are more than double the State's contribution.

Rental-rate and assessment increases have partially offset a 50 percent increase in costs for food, utilities, maintenance, and supplies since 2018. But the County's operating gap, up 136% in the same period, is projected to grow, from \$263,571 in FY 26 to \$463,355 in FY 30. Napa County's annual appropriation has grown 300 percent over this period to meet these costs – a pace that is not sustainable.

The Farmworker Housing program has been a successful and worthwhile investment of public and private funds: between 2014 and 2024, the Centers have maintained a 96 percent occupancy rate.<sup>16</sup> The farmworkers who utilize these Centers form a reliable corps of skilled labor and return to lodge with us year-over-year, in some cases for more than a decade. The Centers address a critical need for safe, affordable, and stable housing among low-income farmworkers. The unique CSA4 funding model is assessed annually and reauthorized every 5 years. In 2022, the assessment received 86.6 percent approval from vineyard owners, demonstrating the strength of the local support and partnership more than twenty years after its establishment.

***Napa County and its private partners will in 2026 seek partners in the legislative and executive branches to both renew this State appropriation for another ten years and increase the annual appropriation to reflect increased costs.***

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<sup>16</sup> Source: California Human Development Occupancy Reports. Excluding the pandemic years 2020 and 2021.

## FEMA Reform

◆ Applicable themes: **Economic Stability & Environmental and Disaster Resilience**

**Policy:** NAPA County supports reforms to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to foster a more efficient, transparent and flexible system for disaster preparedness and response.

**Background:** FEMA serves one of the most important roles in the federal government, coordinating mitigation, response, and recovery from disasters nationwide. Napa County supports reforms on how FEMA carries out that mission to keep our nation's emergency management capabilities and performance at their peak.

In 2025, bipartisan members of Congress introduced a comprehensive FEMA reform package (H.R 4669), spearheaded by House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) and Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA). Napa County supports these proposed reforms, which would bring significant and positive changes for local governments and our residents. Napa County supports an approach that would transition FEMA's disaster assistance from a reimbursement-based model to a grant-based model, allowing local governments to access funds faster and maintain stronger financial flexibility during recovery. It would also increase the federal cost share (up to 85 percent) for communities that adopt forward-thinking mitigation strategies.

*Napa County also supports the proposal's streamlined environmental and historic preservation reviews for local projects and the creation of a public accountability dashboard to track FEMA's review and approval timelines. For residents, the reform package would replace the complicated patchwork of disaster-aid applications with a single, universal application covering all federal disaster programs. It also gives states greater flexibility to design emergency housing solutions that reflect local conditions, rather than a "one-size-fits-all" federal approach - a reform that will have direct and lasting effects on survivors' quality of life in the wake of a disaster.*

## Local Control Measures

◆ Applicable themes: **Agricultural and Rural Preservation & Quality of Life**

**Policy:** Napa County urges the State to address implementation challenges associated with the recent changes to local land use authority through subsequent cleanup bills.

Napa County requests that the State allow existing judicial precedent related to local control of emergency medical services to stand.

**Background:**

*Local Control in Land Use*

California's legislature in 2025 passed a wide-ranging legislative package from the Governor diminishing local land use authority. The two-part package included a host of new statutory exemptions, notably including a useful new exemption for certain wildfire risk reduction projects that include home

hardening or defensible space projects within 200 feet of a structure in a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

However, the “near miss” analysis, which allows certain projects to take advantage of certain CEQA exemptions when they fail to qualify for a single element of the exemption by completing analysis only on that exemption lacks the clarity needed for local governments to understand how to conduct CEQA analysis for single elements. For instance, Public Resources Code Section 21080.40, which exempts from review certain affordable housing projects that, among other things, use prevailing wage standards, is subject to near miss analysis. But if the missing element is that the project does not use prevailing wage standards, local governments are supposed to find a way to conduct CEQA analysis of this missing concept – one that is far too attenuated from potential environmental impacts to lead to useful and definitive analysis, and too easily challenged in court as a result.

The Legislature, through these and other measures, continues to pass laws that are vague and difficult for counties to implement successfully. Land use is a defining issue in Napa County, and the County will advocate for greater precision in legislative drafting and clearer intent statements from authors about how new mandates should be interpreted and implemented.

Another portion of the reform package freezes the authority of local governments to enact residential building codes more stringent than those required by the State until 2031. Napa County and its municipalities are in the midst of adoption of a countywide Regional Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, which calls for the use of “reach codes” to enhance resilience and preserve the climate conditions that sustain Napa’s wine industry. Napa opposes the State’s regulatory freeze, which frustrates the County’s efforts to improve our climate resilience.

*Napa’s overarching land use priority is and will remain defending agricultural use of historically agricultural land. Napa is the smallest and most rural of the Bay Area’s nine counties, and our communities find it a worthwhile use of time and resources to retain a piece of California’s agricultural heritage in a part of the state that has spent the last fifty years tearing out fruit and nut trees in the shift to a high-tech, service-based economy that is no less boom-and-bust than the orchards it replaced.*

#### *Local Control in Emergency Medical Services*

Established statutory and judicial precedent has repeatedly affirmed county responsibility for the administration of emergency medical services and with that, the flexibility to design systems to equitably serve residents throughout our jurisdiction. Counties are required by the Emergency Medical Services Act to create a local EMS system that is timely, safe, and equitable for all residents, and do so by contracting with both public and private agencies to ensure coverage of underserved areas. This unified authority is particularly important for small jurisdictions like Napa County that include significant unincorporated rural areas with difficult terrain. Fragmenting that authority and abrogating years of precedent would create a patchwork of providers in rural and unincorporated areas—the very problem the EMS Act, passed over forty years ago, intended to resolve.

## Pest and Disease Detection and Control

\* Applicable themes: **Environmental and Disaster Resilience**

**Policy:** Napa County supports continued state investments in environmental and disaster resilience to help farmers reduce their climate impacts through a range of measures, such as incorporating compost in lieu of synthetic fertilizers, using low-smoke burn technologies to produce biochar on-site, and adopting no-till practices.

**Background:** Napa County administers several vital agricultural programs that protect the county's agricultural industry from pests and diseases. These programs, funded through a combination of State and federal initiatives, represent some of the County's most critical agricultural functions. Grapevines are at high risk of disease being introduced in planting stock, and insufficient resources to properly address this risk. The dedicated staff responsible for managing these programs play a pivotal role in maintaining vineyard and forest health through early detection and rapid response. Napa County's robust pest exclusion regulations, together with State laws, ensure that incoming plants and raw materials are properly quarantined.

The County's Pest Detection team annually deploys thousands of traps (over 6,200 in 2024) and conducts tens of thousands of inspections (more than 49,000 trap servicings and inspections in 2024) to identify high-risk areas.<sup>17</sup> Recent increases in pest and disease detections highlight the need to expand these programs.

Napa County supports continued State investment to help farmers reduce their climate impacts through a range of measures, such as incorporating compost in lieu of synthetic fertilizers, using low-smoke burn technologies to produce biochar on-site, and adopting no-till practices. Finally, Napa County is under an ongoing Live Oak Mortality emergency – there are dead and dying trees throughout Napa, and the health of our forests is tied directly to the health of our vineyards. Napa County will advocate for future climate bond funds to go to additional research that will help us identify pests and more robust response resources to improve forest health and minimize the impact of pests and disease on our environment.

## Public Health

■♦● Applicable themes: **Adapting to New State and Federal Requirements in Social Safety Net Programs, Quality of Life, and Agricultural and Rural Preservation**

**Policy:** Napa County supports legislative actions that enhances local investments in public health, its partners, and health considerations across policies that affect any identified need in the local Community Health Assessment (CHA) or may impact strategies of the local Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

<sup>17</sup> Notably, these figures are down since 2022, due to stagnant funding and rising costs.

**Background:** With the passage of Proposition 1 in 2024, the State committed to using approximately \$120 million<sup>18</sup> per year of the revenue from this ballot measure in new public health funding. Counties, including Napa, have significant public health responsibilities, including but not limited to communicable disease monitoring, the Women, Infants, and Children nutrition and education program, chronic disease prevention, health education, ensuring preparedness for future emergencies, and assuring local emergency medical services, and local emergency medical services. Draft proposals recently released by the State are concerning for offering minimal funding for several new mandates, as well as proposing to use a third-party entity as a fiscal intermediary rather than leverage existing local public health jurisdiction infrastructure to carry out fund local CBOs.

This approach flies in the face of the work undertaken by local health jurisdictions to understand their communities and the capacities of local CBOs. Napa County supports State and federal investments in local public health, and urges the State to leverage existing local public health infrastructure in its considerations for future developments and to ensure adequate funding for any new responsibilities. Proposed funding will be inadequate for local health jurisdictions now tasked to incorporate the behavioral health work, including convening state-funded CBOs that may not necessarily be in their jurisdiction, and their work into the local Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan.

One of the major public health lessons learned from the pandemic is that prioritization of local control whenever possible produces outcomes that reflect the relative strengths of a particular community and bolster more fragile connection points when needed. While the State's approach here is not consistent with our experiences during the pandemic, Napa will nonetheless work collaboratively in the state's efforts to regionalize public health work, but maintains that counties are best suited to coordinate local public health efforts.

Access to minimally processed and nutrient-rich food is critical to maintaining good health across the lifespan. Napa County will support state and federal legislative efforts that seeks to improve the health or addressed local health needs as identified in the Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

Napa's local CBO network is critical to public health in Napa County. Local CBOs are often well-positioned to take on primary prevention efforts to address behavioral health needs, particularly those CBOs that are embedded within school settings or have a focus on early child development. Napa County's substantial network of CBOs have supported many local behavioral health prevention efforts and may be overlooked by the state's future fiscal intermediaries. Part of what makes CBOs such effective public health advocates is their relationship as a trusted messenger with vulnerable communities. Increased enforcement of federal immigration laws and accompanying implementation strategies, like data-sharing between federal health and human services agencies and immigration enforcement authorities, causes significant fear of adverse immigration actions in Napa County's

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<sup>18</sup> California Department of Public Health, BHSA Population-Based Prevention Guide, Phase 2, p. 4, n. 1: [https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/CDPH%20Document%20Library/BHSA\\_Population-Based\\_Prevention\\_Program\\_Guide\\_Phase\\_2.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPP/CDPH%20Document%20Library/BHSA_Population-Based_Prevention_Program_Guide_Phase_2.pdf)

immigrant population. Additionally, the majority of CBOs in small counties are vulnerable to funding gaps and may not survive the loss in funding to continue supporting local public health efforts.

Finally, the State's Future of Public Health funding should continue as an ongoing investment independent of Proposition 1 funding. Proposition 1 funding is behavioral health-oriented, and it is unclear the extent to which the State plans to separate out funding designated for public health efforts. Consequently, the Future of Public Health investment remains a bulwark for local operations, and long-term, stable funding is necessary for public health departments to carry out their many mandates.

## Regional Adaptation

◆\* Applicable themes: **Quality of Life & Environmental and Disaster Resilience**

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**Policy:** As the State ramps up commitments of bond funds for a range of resilience and adaptation measures, Napa County will evaluate the emergency rulemaking proceedings to implement the program guidelines to identify alignment with County priorities and the Regional Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

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**Background:** Proposition 4 (2024) authorizes the State of California to borrow an additional \$10 billion, repayable over the next 40 years, for a range of resilience and adaptation measures. Nearly 40 percent of the bonds are allocated to water supply improvements and flood mitigation.<sup>19</sup> The next three biggest categories, representing a cumulative 40 percent of the remaining bonds, are designated for wildfire prevention and forest health, sea level rise and coastal restoration, and the protection and restoration of natural areas.<sup>20</sup> The remaining 23 percent of the bonds will fund energy infrastructure, State and local parks, extreme heat mitigation, primarily in urban areas, and improving resilience in the agricultural sector.<sup>21</sup> The intent of the State, in putting the measure to voters, was that “[m]uch of the bond money would be used for loans and grants to local governments, Native American tribes, not-for-profit organizations, and businesses,” with “some bond money...available for State agencies to spend on State-run activities.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Legislative Analyst's Office, Analysis of Proposition 4:  
<https://lao.ca.gov/BallotAnalysis/Proposition?number=4&year=2024>.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

The Governor and Legislature in 2025 approved \$3.3 billion in bond expenditures for FY 2025-2026, some of which will backfill spending reductions because of the State's deficit<sup>23</sup>; timing on future allocations is yet to be determined.<sup>24</sup>

To this end, as the State ramps up commitments of the bond funds noted above, Napa County will proactively evaluate and provide comment on the emergency rulemaking proceedings to implement the program guidelines to advocate for State alignment to County priorities and the Napa Regional Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

## Regulation of Utilities Infrastructure

### ◆\* Applicable themes: **Public Safety & Environmental and Disaster Resilience**

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**Policy:** Napa County currently supports the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) directive to PG&E to split its efforts between undergrounding lines in particularly high fire risk areas and installing cladding to harden existing lines against fire. The County also encourages a comprehensive review by the CPUC of the 72-hour battery backup installation compliance rates.

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**Background:** Napa County presents challenging terrain for fire suppression, with sparsely populated mountains surrounding a narrow valley. As we saw in 2025 with the Pickett Fire, a wildfire that starts on the valley floor can spread quickly into nearby canyons. These canyons frequently lack roads and limit the ability of firefighters to establish a ground response presence; in the case of Pickett, elite and specialized firefighters were dropped in on helicopters to battle the flames.

Also in these same canyons and across Napa's challenging terrain are overhead utility lines. Napa County supports undergrounding of these lines at a pace that reflects an appropriate cost-benefit analysis for our residents, who are mostly PG&E customers and foot the bill for these improvements. The California Public Utilities Commission has directed PG&E to split its efforts between undergrounding lines in particularly high fire risk areas and installing cladding to harden existing lines against fire, a balance the County supports for the present moment. A track record of undergrounding on-time and on-budget, plus data demonstrating improved economies of scale for undergrounding, may in the future tip the County's position toward a greater proportion of PG&E's budget going to undergrounding and limited rate increases in exchange for significant new safety benefits.

A final priority for Napa County is to engage the California Public Utilities Commission on the issue of 72-hour battery backup installations. PG&E's current compliance rates for these installations across Napa and our neighboring counties remain unclear. The County urges a thorough and comprehensive review by CPUC of these installations.

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<sup>23</sup> The County will look for these backfills not to expand programs beyond sustainable levels, but rather backfill programs that State and local governments already understand and know how to do well.

<sup>24</sup> Legislative Analyst's Office, 2025-26 California Spending Plan, Proposition 4:  
<https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/5076>.

## Transportation & Infrastructure

◆\* Applicable themes: **Quality of Life & Environmental and Disaster Resilience**

**Policy:** Napa County supports a reauthorization of the federal Surface Transportation Act which provides flexibility to empower local governments to pursue locally-driven priorities. The County supports a funding framework focused on competitive grants rather than formula-driven grants, which favor more urbanized areas.

**Background:** The Federal government's efforts to reauthorize the Surface Transportation Bill will anchor Napa County's 2026 transportation and infrastructure agenda. As the County seeks to become more self-sustaining in its disaster preparedness efforts and reduce recovery costs, a fundamental element of local preparedness is a well-maintained system of roads, bridges, safety projects, and thoughtful and strategic decisions in undertaking new transportation projects.

In California, counties own and maintain approximately 40 percent of all public roads and nearly 30 percent of bridges. Nationwide, counties are responsible for 44 percent of public roads and 38 percent of bridges. In Napa County, where state highways are limited, the County maintains 87 percent (about 415 miles) of all public roads. This makes continued access to direct federal funding for counties a critical priority.

Federal transportation programs should provide flexibility that empowers local governments to pursue locally driven priorities without forcing projects into restrictive federal grant categories. Like other similarly situated counties, Napa favors a funding framework that emphasizes competitive grants, where small, high-capacity jurisdictions can make a strong case for individual projects, rather than formula-based grants, which favor large, urban projects with huge impact numbers.

## Vehicle License Fee Swap Obligation

◆◆ Applicable themes: **Quality of Life & Public Safety**

**Policy:** Napa County urges the State to create a statutory mechanism to reimburse local governments when no non-basic aid school districts remain within a county, without which the county faces a potential \$50 million annual loss in local revenue.

**Background:** In 2004, the Vehicle License Fee Swap (VLF) was created as part of a budget compromise. The State permanently reduced the VLF rate from 2.00 percent to 0.65 percent, significantly decreasing resulting revenues to counties, cities, and towns. The State also required local taxing agencies to shift an additional \$1.3 billion over two fiscal years to address the State's budget deficit. In exchange, the State agreed to reimburse the counties, cities, and towns for lost VLF revenues.

The ongoing VLF obligations were thereafter adjusted annually based on growth in the assessed value of property within the local agencies' boundaries. Funding for the State's in-lieu VLF obligation now flows through the Education Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) and property taxes that would

otherwise go to non-basic aid schools, which the State backfills to schools through an increased contribution.

***2025 marked the first year that the State fell short in meeting its obligation on VLF. This cannot be allowed to happen again: policymakers must recognize this funding swap as constitutionally inviolable and enshrine it in law.***

Current law does not provide a statutory mechanism to reimburse local governments when no non-basic aid school districts remain within a county. In Napa County, the largest school district, Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD), is the only remaining non-basic aid school district but it is trending towards basic aid status due to declining enrollment, a high property tax apportionment factor, and rising assessed valuation.

Once that occurs, Napa will become a complete basic aid county and instantly lose its statutorily provided means of funding the State's VLF obligation. The resulting \$50 million annual loss in local revenue would trigger a fiscal crisis for the County and its cities and town. Without a statutory fix, Napa County and its municipalities will be forced to substantially reduce public safety staffing and associated crucial programs, fundamentally altering the way essential public services are delivered.