

DEL
NORTE
COUNTY

2025 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM



Legislative Platform | Del Norte County Administrative Office

Board of Supervisors

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Introduction

To Del Norte County's State and Federal Legislative Delegation:

Del Norte County's State and Federal Legislative Platform outlines the policy and budget priorities of the Board of Supervisors and establishes the basis for advocacy efforts at the State and Federal levels of the Executive and Legislative branches regarding legislation and regulation. It also provides general direction and authorization to the County Administrative Office and all other County departments, the County's legislative advocates and state and federal delegation members, as well as the public on positions of support or opposition to key legislative, fiscal, and policy initiatives that impact the way the County does its business.

The Board of Supervisors aims to adopt its Legislative Platform early in the year, prior to most legislation reaching advanced stages in order to effectuate maximum effect however it is recognized that the State and Federal legislative and budgetary processes are fluid, dynamic, and iterative processes. As such, some additional legislative, regulatory and/or budgetary issues may arise after the adoption of this Platform, necessitating modifications to this document throughout the year which must be subsequently approved by the Board.

The Del Norte County Board of Supervisors recognizes the importance of advocating for its legislative and funding priorities in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. With that in mind, the Board is pleased to present its 2025 Legislative Platform.



Joey Borges, Chair

01/14/25
Date



Neal Lopez, County Administrative Officer

01/14/25
Date

General Principles

The Board of Supervisors has adopted a Strategic Plan which established the Board's Vision, Mission, and Values for the County of Del Norte, as an organization. The Vision, Mission, and Values are treated as the "foundational elements" of the Board's Strategic Plan and are composed of:

Vision

We aspire to exceed all expectations of government through outstanding public service for the residents and visitors to what we view as California's most spectacular place, Del Norte County.

Mission

To respect and honor the traditional values and diverse heritage of our community while advancing innovative solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Values

- *Workforce;*
- *Service to the Public;*
- *Integrity and Accountability;*
- *Transparency;*
- *Fiscal Responsibility; and*
- *Respect for this "Place of Plenty" and "Del Norte Culture" that exists here.*

In the spirit of the foundational elements of the Board's adopted, organizational Strategic Plan, the Board hereby adopts the following General Principles for this Legislative Platform:

1. Seek and support equitable levels of State and Federal funding for County-mandated programs. Oppose any legislation for new, transferred, or realigned mandated programs that do not contain their own sufficient and ongoing revenue source concurrent with the transfer of the obligation.
2. Seek and support legislation that facilitates orderly economic development within the County and preserves local land use authority.
3. Seek and support legislation to restore local control and oppose efforts that will hinder or limit the County's ability to self-govern and to maintain land use control.

4. Support legislation that provides tax and funding formulas for the equitable distribution of State and Federal monies. Oppose any attempt to decrease, restrict or eliminate County revenue sources.
5. Seek and support legislation that assures the County's authority to negotiate mutually acceptable tax sharing agreements for annexation, incorporation and redevelopment that protect or enhance the County's ability to provide services to its constituents. In cases of such jurisdictional boundary changes or the like, the County will negotiate from a position of no net loss in tax revenue to the General Fund as a result of the change.
6. Seek and support legislation that protects the County residents' quality of life, the responsible use of its diverse natural resources, and continued preservation of agricultural lands, cultural resources, wildlife habitat and open space.
7. Seek and support cooperation with the Federal and State government on regulatory and administrative issues affecting the County to ensure the protection and well-being of its citizens. Oppose administrative actions unsupported by objective documentation, including robust scientific data if it would harm residents and businesses.
8. Encourage and engage with local agencies and governments to cooperate for the betterment of the community and expand voluntary regional solutions to regional problems.
9. Seek and support legislation and regulations that allow the County to operate programs flexibly and for staff to perform their duties in the most efficient manner.
10. Support and encourage cooperative approaches between state and local agencies for the maintenance, improvement, and development of transportation infrastructure and public transportation systems.
11. Support the principles adopted by the National Association of Counties (NACO), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), and Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) where they are consistent with the principles and priorities identified by the County.

Legislative & Policy Areas

Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources

The Board supports efforts to conserve and preserve the county's natural resources to help restore its fisheries, maintain healthy forests, support clean reliable water supplies, and ensure agriculture is preserved for future generations.

Recommended Actions:

- A. Support legislation that will ensure the retention of lands in agricultural production.
- B. Support the promotion of agricultural economic development activities.
- C. Support the reauthorization of California's cap and trade program and direct Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds, as well funds that will be made available under recently passed Prop. 4, to Del Norte County for projects to improve coastal resiliency, improvements to local water purveyor systems, investment in the sustainability of north coast dairy operations, and improving forest health and wildfire prevention.
- D. Support the allocation of transportation resources to the improvement of important goods movement corridors and farm-to-market routes.
- E. Support legislation that would ensure water and air quality standards are retained at a level that enables agricultural production to continue without significant lessening in the quantity or quality of production.
- F. Support the continuation of statewide public education curricula that address the essential role that agriculture plays in California and world economics.
- G. Support restorative funding for the Division of Measurement Standards, within the California Department of Food and Agriculture to ensure that consumer protection and commercial device accuracy support is maintained.
- H. Support full funding for UC Cooperative Extension given its vital role in delivering research-based information and educational programs that enhance economic vitality and the quality of life in California counties.
- I. Seek or support programs, regulation, legislation, and funding at the state and federal levels to mitigate fire danger with fuel load reduction in critical forests and watersheds and enhance programs for funding recovery when fires occur.
- J. Support efforts to permanently prohibit new mining activity in the Smith River watershed given the community reliance on water from the Smith River.

K. Oppose legislation and/or designations of threatened and endangered species if legislation or designation is made without proper scientific justification or without proper consideration of local impacts on land use, public access, economic conditions, or other factors determined to be significant to Del Norte County.

Economic Development

The Board advocates for economic development opportunities suitable to our rural community's unique character through business development. Moreover, the Board supports legislative efforts designed to foster economic development tools and funding options for effective programs and job creation.

Recommended Actions:

- A. Coordinate with other regional governments, agencies, districts, and public/private partnerships on the development of an update to the current Del Norte County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).
- B. Seek and support efforts that would advance the goals identified in the 2019-2024 CEDS, specifically:
 - Goal 1: Diversify the regional economy to include technology-based firms, light manufacturing and health care enterprises that provide living wages to local workers.
 - Goal 2: Promote successful tourism industry expansion
 - Goal 3: Support expansion of sustainable agricultural, forestry and fishery products.
 - Goal 4: Invest in improving and maintaining a comprehensive transportation network that meets the needs of local industry, commuters and visitors.
 - Goal 5: Enhance education, workforce training, housing and healthy lifestyle opportunities in the County to support existing residents and businesses as well as the workforce of the future.
 - Goal 6: Create a thriving small business environment which fosters entrepreneurship and innovation.
- C. Seek funding for deployment, installation and expansion of high-speed internet service (aka broadband) to all parts of the County to drive economic development and job opportunities, support county service delivery, and improve health, education and public safety outcomes for residents.
- D. Support workforce training and employment and support additional workforce development programs through Del Norte County to expand opportunities to business and residents.
- E. Support legislation that expands community revitalization and economic development tools including funding options for projects that provide demonstrable benefits to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions and improve energy efficiency.

Health and Human Services

Del Norte County residents face many challenges regarding health and behavioral health. In particular areas, the County has the highest prevalence *per capita* with respect to domestic violence calls for assistance, overdose deaths (including 0-5 year olds), and the highest incarceration rate of women and Native Americans. With this data in mind, the Board of Supervisors prioritizes the following areas:

Family and Juvenile Services and Child Support Services

- A. Serving Youth with Complex Needs. These are individuals who are hard to place both in-county and out-of-county placements. The state guidelines restrict approved placement options and flexibility for placements. The Board supports legislation and budget action that affords the County and county partners maximum flexibility to ensure the safe placement of these individuals.
- B. Support amendments to the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) to better align the FFPSA with California's Continuum of Care Reform initiatives and prevention services provided in the state.
- C. Support investments in county workforce needs including significant investments into the social work and health care workforce and grant funding to schools of social work to increase the statewide pool of Masters-Level Social Workers.
- D. Support ongoing state funding and resources to bolster county human services departments' safety net programs, emergency services and disaster preparedness and response including for the purpose of training county staff and volunteers on emergency response.
- E. Support efforts that facilitate family access to program services, remove barriers to access, and ease administrative burdens, while preserving local control and local child support agencies' (LCSAs) ability to utilize effective, equitable, and flexible collection tools and methods.
 - a) Support efforts that promote increased access to program services, the elimination of barriers to those services, and the expansion of supportive services.
 - b) Maintain the discretion to appropriately design and manage the delivery of the child support program at the local level, while maintaining close partnership with the state.
 - c) Support the continued ability to use effective, equitable, and flexible collection tools and methods to support families.

- F. Increase public and community awareness of child support and foster strategic partnerships at all levels of government.
 - a) Support efforts that advance the child support program as a critical safety net service leading to family financial stability.
- G. Support efforts to expand sharing of information through local agency collaboration and automating data exchange to enhance services to families.
 - a) Support the facilitation of increased data sharing between LCSAs and partner agencies for improved outcomes for families.
 - b) Increase the capacity to collect and analyze accurate demographic data to ensure equity within the program.
- H. Restore existing funding that will enable the child support program and LCSAs, as a critical part of the social safety net, to continue to reach unserved families and lift children out of poverty.
 - a) Restore FY 25 funding reductions and maintain adequate funding to ensure LCSAs can effectively address local needs, allowing the program to serve as a vital safety net for children in California.
 - b) Raise awareness on the implications of federal matching funds and the necessity for consistent funding for optimal customer support.

Fentanyl and Opioids

- A. The Del Norte County Board of Supervisors supports stricter laws and criminal consequences for possession of fentanyl and other opioids and supports robust State support and funding for Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) in county jails.
- B. The Board supports legislation to address opioid overdose prevention and treatment through local education agencies such as legislation to encourage county offices of education to establish a County Working Group on Fentanyl Education in Schools, focusing on outreach, awareness, and collaboration with local health agencies and opioid settlement workgroup regarding fentanyl overdoses.

Health Care Delivery

- A. SB 525 (Durazo, 2023) sets a new health care minimum wage of \$25 per hour for hours worked in covered health care employment. These increases are outside of the current county salary structure and will exacerbate staffing and budget shortfalls. The County supports additional time and State Funding to meet these requirements.
- B. The Board of Supervisors supports expanding the authorized types of expenditures allowed under Medi-Cal to include fitness, physical activity, recreational sports, and

mental wellness or recreational sports programs, activities, or memberships to the list of community supports that Medi-Cal can pay for.

- C. The Board of Supervisors supports the continued expansion of health care insurance coverage to all Californians, regardless of immigration status.
- D. The Board of Supervisors supports deleting the age limitation and immigration status on CalFresh eligibility in order to expand the population eligible to receive benefits.

Behavioral Health

- A. The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) reforms approved in Proposition 1 (now known as the Behavioral Health Services Act, or BHSA) impact local funding and control, which will destabilize the services in Del Norte County funded by the MHSA. This reform shifts the funding components significantly, which will decrease the funding available for current programs funded by MHSA. In addition, the reforms eliminate the funding available to address new program initiatives, such as the Crisis Care Mobile Unit and CARE Court staffing. Del Norte County supports consistent funding for existing behavioral health programs and opposes reductions or redirections in funding.
- B. SB 43 (Eggman, 2023) broadened the eligibility and definition of gravely disabled to people who are unable to provide for their personal safety or necessary medical care under 5150 law. The County does not have dedicated or sufficient funding to support these expansions. As staff needs and resources become more known, the Board supports advocacy for permanent State funding to address the needs of the expanded population and associated workload.
- C. The CARE Act and its follow-up legislation is intended to serve as an upstream intervention for individuals experiencing severe impairment to prevent avoidable psychiatric hospitalizations, incarcerations, and Lanterman-Petris-Short Mental Health Conservatorships. The program is voluntary, and the eligible participants are anticipated to be a small group. However, it will require significant staffing and community collaboration once it becomes operational in Del Norte County. The Board supports dedicated and sufficient funding to implement this model.
- D. A new DHCS requirement mandates that Counties provide 365/24/7 mobile crisis services to the Medi-Cal population. This program requires an increase of staffing and costs. The Board strongly supports robust and ongoing funding to provide these important services.

Public Health

- A. Advocate for adequate funding for communicable disease prevention and control outside beyond COVID-19.

- B. Support legislation that broadens Public Health’s ability to provide mental health and prevention services in home visiting and other public health programs.
- C. Support proposed bond funding that would provide resources to address safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, drought prevention, flood protection, extreme heat mitigation, clean energy, and workforce development programs.
- D. Support the establishment of the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable Supplemental Benefits Expansion Program. Clear evidence indicates that increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables can help improve health outcomes and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.
- E. Support legislation that expands the work and detail regarding data collection on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). Public Health would benefit from the disaggregation of ethnicity-based data in ACEs screenings, and create guidance for culturally and linguistically competent screenings. This change in policy and practice has the potential to positively impact the Del Norte community by promoting culturally sensitive and linguistically competent ACEs screenings, supporting community-based healthcare organizations, raising public awareness, and ultimately contributing to the health and well-being of children and families in these areas.
- F. Support legislation that expands and improves vaping, and cannabis and cannabis-product health warnings on packaging. This should include information on the pharmacological effects of cannabis use, information on the implications and risks associated with high potency cannabis products, the potential for THC to exacerbate certain mental health conditions, cannabis use by minors and breastfeeding and pregnant people, and health warnings on packaging and/or technology that combines vaping with potentially other addictive activities, such as gaming.

Government Finance and Operations

The State has chosen in the past to use local County resources to balance its budget. Historical efforts have included suspension of Proposition 1A and Proposition 42 - two initiatives that were approved by the voters to safeguard local property tax revenues and transportation monies from being used to balance the State Budget. In 2010, California voters passed Proposition 22, which protects gas tax funds from being taken by the State, further narrowing the State’s options for balancing its budget, as well as Proposition 26, which reduces the State’s ability to adopt new fees and revenues. Consequently, the State is left with few options for reducing its gap between on-going expenditures and revenues, which puts local County resources further at risk. The Board is opposed to the practice of using resources that should be provided to local jurisdictions in order for the State to have a balanced budget.

Additionally, in 2011 the State transferred responsibility for providing many public services from State government to counties and other local governments (Realignment). The transferred responsibilities included law enforcement and public safety services, care for abused and neglected seniors and children, mental health and substance abuse recovery programs, and monitoring and detaining specified felony offenders. Though funding is provided for the realigned programs, it is not sufficient to implement all programs fully.

Recommended Actions:

- A. Support legislation to prohibit the State from passing any new law or regulation that imposes additional costs on local governments to provide services unless the State provides a source of State funding to pay the additional costs.
- B. Advocate for full funding of realigned programs and a local funding allocation formula that provides a fair share to cover realigned programs.
- C. Advocate for the development of a special grant program from the state that would be accessible to rural counties to provide funds dedicated for the delivery and support of indigent criminal defense programs within rural counties. As evidenced by a 2022 report on the indigent defense system in Del Norte County conducted by the Office of State Public Defenders' Indigent Defense Improvement Division, Del Norte County has one of the highest per capita incarceration rates in the state (55th out of 58 counties). According to this report, many rural counties with limited resources to dedicate to public defense suffer from similar outcomes. As such, the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors believes that the state should invest flexible funds directly into these communities to allow for the recruitment and retention of qualified counsel and support staff to address this disparity by counties that otherwise are fiscally unable to do so.
- D. Advocate for a long-term reauthorization of mandatory entitlement funding for state and federal PILT programs. In the absence of a long-term renewal, Del Norte County will support continued full funding for PILT via the appropriations process.
- E. Oppose any new increased responsibilities for counties related to pension contributions and advocate for an appropriation to local governments of discretionary state budget surplus funds specifically for the purpose of reducing the unfunded accrued liability for local government pension programs when possible.
- F. Support ongoing efforts aimed at preserving the multi-year reauthorization of the SRS program and expanded eligible uses of (County) Title III funds.
- G. Seek or support permanent funding for County Veteran Service Officers who participate in the CalVetCounty Subvention Program.

- H. Advocate for adequate and sustainable funding from the state for court security as mandated by the state.
- I. In particular light of the passage of Prop. 36, seek or support legislation to achieve dedicated federal and state funding to ensure local criminal justice facility needs are adequately met and that sufficient capacity and sustainable funding for a continuum of substance use services exists to maximize public safety while reducing recidivism of offenders.
- J. Seek and support assistance from the State in possibly utilizing unused areas within Pelican Bay State Prison (PBSP) during construction activities associated with the Del Norte County Jail Rehabilitation Project which is currently being planned and designed. It is the County's understanding that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has shuttered portions of PBSP as the prison's population has been reduced. If these areas can be functionally segregated from actively utilized areas within the prison, the County would appreciate it being made available for use by the Sheriff's Office for jail operations during construction activities.
- K. Seek or support legislation requiring payment from the state for reimbursement of costs associated with holding felony inmates in the County Jail who are Incompetent to Stand Trial during the times when the transfer of those inmates to State Hospital is not possible or seek approval from the state for transfer of those inmates to Pelican Bay State Prison in lieu of holding them in the County Jail.
- L. As recommended by the Little Hoover Commission, seek a permanent rural exemption from the collection requirement of SB 1383 and seek further exclusions for rural communities for other elements of SB 1383 such as construction waste diversion and landscaping requirements.¹ If permanent exemptions for rural counties cannot be provided, efforts should be made to provide sufficient funding to rural communities to develop county programs that will comply with the requirements of SB 1383.
- M. Support increased and expanded funding for Rural Certified Unified Program Agency's (CUPA's) that were not certified by the State prior to June 1, 2000. Del Norte County's CUPA was certified prior to this date making us ineligible. In 2017 or so, the County received one-time rural funding. In 2022, Cal/EPA considered proposing statutory revisions to Health and Safety Code 25404.8 for the County's CUPA along with other

¹ Recommendation 7 from the Little Hoover Commission's Reducing California's Landfill Methane Emissions: SB 1383 Report #274 states, "The state should permanently exempt counties that produce less than 200,000 tons per year of waste from SB 1383 requirements, including edible food recovery, except to provide options at self-haul facilities for residents to separate their organic waste from their trash."

rural counties to become eligible for Rural CUPA Reimbursement funding. This did not advance. Del Norte County would support that change and increases in funding.

Housing and Land Use

State law requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to prepare a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) to allocate a share of the regional housing need to each city and county. These allocation plans do not adequately recognize the limited availability of necessary public infrastructure in unincorporated portions of counties, particularly community sewer systems, community water systems, and public transportation. With the changes in the 2017 Housing Bills, jurisdictions that fail to meet their RHNA are penalized with the loss of discretionary approval over housing projects. This presents challenges for rural counties that do not have the infrastructure in place for high-density residential developments. Also, recent legislation pertaining to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) should be revisited to allow more local control over ADUs, especially with respect to setbacks depending on lot sizes. Moreover, the County supports legislative efforts that promote strategic land use and development practices that maintain and/or increase local control.

Recommended Actions:

- A. Support state and federal efforts to develop affordable housing and expand housing and homeless assistance programs.
- B. Support legislation that would expand funding and enhance grant funding opportunities for Del Norte County service providers, including homelessness prevention programs, rapid rehousing assistance, homeless shelter and services, and affordable housing development and assistance programs.
- C. Support legislation that would emphasize the California Housing and Community Development Department's (HCD) role is focusing on providing funding programs that are easy for local governments to administer and facilitate affordable housing production.
- D. Support legislation that would remove barriers or constraints for the construction of multifamily, attached, or other housing products that are affordable by design.
- E. Support State and Federal funding and regulatory changes or guidance that supports landlords and prevents homelessness resulting from COVID-19 related financial impacts.
- F. Support any combination of plans, programs, regulation, or legislation at the state and federal levels to mitigate loss of homeowner's insurance coverage due to wildfire danger in the Wildland Urban Interface; coordinate with insurance companies, state agencies, homeowners and other stakeholders to minimize the loss of insurance coverage; and seek mutually beneficial conditions that would support wide availability of homeowners insurance at rates that are both competitive and risk based, while at the same time decreasing both the risk and danger of structure fires in the Wildland Urban Interface.

- G. Support reform of the current housing element requirements to streamline and simplify existing housing element law and ensure the housing element places a greater emphasis on obtaining financing and enabling production, rather than the overly detailed data analysis now required under state law. Further allow local housing elements to create flexible and creative solutions that fit their communities. Housing element reform should conserve state and local resources by promoting consistency with statutory requirements, including transparent standards that are uniformly applied and includes timelines for comment periods and decision-making.
- H. Support a regional approach to housing needs by supporting collaboration with communities within multiple jurisdictions that are within close geographical proximity, particularly rural communities, on state housing requirements and resources.
- I. Support legislation and budget action to fund, or provide low or no-interest loans, to upgrade water or wastewater infrastructure serving economically disadvantaged areas or areas suitable for providing affordable housing.
- J. Support the preservation of federal funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and increasing the funds available under the program, to expand the availability of a mix of housing types in the County for existing and future residents, students, and employees whose income cannot support the cost of market rate housing in the County.
- K. Oppose imposition of one-size-fits-all land use, building and development guidelines related to sustainability.
- L. Oppose legislative actions or reform measures that penalize jurisdictions for non-compliance with state-mandated Housing Element update schedules.

State, Federal, and Tribal Lands Management

Del Norte County is composed of predominantly state and federal public lands. The tax-exempt status of public land is a major source of concern for the Board as it has led to an eroded local tax base. The Board supports activities and policies that promote responsible land management that integrates local government involvement in Federal and State land management decisions. The County supports increased State and Federal funding for public land management to address deferred maintenance of infrastructure in forests and fire prevention and mitigation activities. The County supports connecting community planning that supports off-highway vehicle recreation, mountain biking, trail usage, and similar planning and implementation.

Recommended Actions:

- A. Support Del Norte County's No Net Loss policy as it relates to the further acquisition of land within Del Norte County by state and federal agencies.
- B. Support legislation that provides environmental mitigation credit² for public projects proposed in Del Norte County based on the large portion of non-taxed public lands that exist in Del Norte County, specifically the Redwood State and National Park, the Six Rivers National Forest, the Lake Earl Wildlife Area, the Crescent City Marsh Wildlife Area, etc. which all effectively decrease developable land available in Del Norte County and, by extension, limit opportunities for economic utilization of land within the County.
- C. The Del Norte County Board of Supervisors prioritizes the continued operation of the Pelican Bay State Prison and opposes any potential closure of this institution. The prison is a major source of employment in the area, as well as having a multiplier effect on the larger Del Norte economy. Its potential closure would be devastating to the region, and as such, its continued operation remains a firm County priority.
- D. Support efforts to develop tangible recreational opportunities within the Smith River National Recreation Area.
- E. Support mandatory coordination activities with federal agencies regarding any federal action that may have an impact on Del Norte County.

² Under this proposal, when public projects are permitted they would be “credited” for the existing amount of public land within Del Norte County, rather than being required to identify land on or off the project area as “mitigation areas” for the impacts resulting from the development being permitted. Normally, mitigation of environmental impacts is required under a Coastal Development Permit and/or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife during the permitting of projects subject to an environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act.

- F. Generally oppose efforts to designate federal lands within Del Norte County as *Wilderness Areas* except in situations where the federal government will provide a tangible offset to the County for the loss of the use of the land.
- G. Support legislation that limits the President's ability to declare National Monuments under the Antiquities Act of 1906.
- H. Support legislation that would require input from affected counties during the development of Forest Plans, Travel Management Plans, or other contemplated Plans, Programs, etc. by the Forest Service.
- I. Monitor federal actions related to the management of federal lands, including the purchase of new federal land, and the changing of federal land use.
- J. Monitor the federal activity interests of various local tribes within the County.
- K. Support efforts to reform wildfire budgeting to enable the Forest Service to use more of their annual budget on pro-active forest management rather than fire suppression.
- L. Support using disaster funding to respond to forest fires and provide robust post-fire mitigation money to improve future fire prevention and forest health activities.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Reliable, safe, and modern public infrastructure is vital to the economic development of and quality of life of residents and visitors of the County. Upgrading and maintaining our local roads, water supplies, and wastewater infrastructure not only helps the County provide basic services to residents, but also provides the foundation for future economic growth and business development. Additionally, due to our isolated geography and remote location the County is reliant upon transportation pathways into and out of the County to support the citizens and economy of our region which include state highways, a commercial airport, two general aviation airports, and the port of Crescent City.

Recommended Actions:

- A. Support all efforts to advance the construction of an alternate route of Highway 101 for the Last Chance Grade.
- B. Support legislation that improves and streamlines the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and provides funding to assist local agencies in implementing CEQA. The CEQA process and requirements should be simplified wherever possible including the preparation of master environmental documents and use of tiered EIRs and negative declarations, including Climate Action Plans and associated environmental impact reports for tiering under CEQA.
- C. Seek and support legislation, regulations, and grant funding for local and regional transit and transportation.
- D. Oppose efforts to eliminate or reduce obligations for phone carriers to provide basic phone services as “Carriers of Last Resort” as basic phone service remains a critical access issue for many Californians.
- E. Seek funding and financing, as appropriate, for priority infrastructure via the Federal Highways Administration and California Department of Transportation, as well as any other federal and state programs.
- F. Oppose efforts to further limit eligibility for communities to community participation in the Essential Air Service (EAS) program as well efforts to eliminate or reduce the Alternate EAS program.
- G. Support flexibility and realistic, affordable, and practical requirements that take into account terrain, geography, usage and affordability when considering legislative and regulatory requirements regarding electrification of public fleets. Oppose unilateral and uniform State requirements that do not account for local practical realities.
- H. Seek and support legislation that provides for greater flexibility and consideration of local input in setting speed limits along state highways. Specifically, taking into

consideration the fact that Highway 199 passes through portions of Jedediah Smith State Park, the Six Rivers National Forest/Smith River National Recreation Area, and recreationally designated segments of the Wild and Scenic Smith River around the communities of Hiouchi and Gasquet, which create unique conditions in terms of visitor-serving and recreational activities that current law does not properly account for, leading to speed limits in excess of what these communities generally consider to be safe based on input provided to the Board of Supervisors during community meetings.

Directed Federal and State Funding Priorities/Appropriations Requests

The Del Norte County Board of Supervisors recognizes that the State's FY 25/26 and the Federal FY 26 budgeting cycle may be challenging and resources may be constrained however, should there be opportunities to provide budget appropriations to the County and/or investments by State and Federal agencies within Del Norte County, the following priorities are hereby identified by the Board of Supervisors:

- A. The County has secured approximately \$3.1-million in prior Federal appropriations for rehabilitation of the Del Norte County Jail. Since the time of that appropriation, the County has assessed the jail to determine the extent of work necessary to address deficiencies that exist and it has been determined that the costs for the work necessary will exceed the Federal appropriation. As such, additional funding is needed. The County requests additional resources in order to meet this critical community need.
- B. Disaster Relief for individuals affected by forest fires, drought, and regulatory agency species protection activities (e.g. salmon, groundfish, crab, etc.). Dairy Farmers have yet to recover from the most recent drought, which resulted in extremely high feed and operational costs to dairies, creating significant financial harm to dairy farmers in the region. While some budgetary relief is available through the Department of Food and Agriculture, additional direct relief is needed. Further, for several years, fishing and crab seasons have been seriously delayed or closed entirely, creating severe financial hardship for businesses that rely on healthy crab and fishing seasons to survive. Federal and State-funded assistance to those affected individuals and businesses is needed and vital to the recovery of the affected industries.
- C. The Del Norte County Veterans Memorial Hall is a two-story, 16,000-square foot lath and plaster wall community center built in 1931 owned by Del Norte County. Unfortunately, the facility lacks many amenities and is inaccessible to many disabled users. The County seeks to improve conditions in the Veterans Memorial Hall to provide ADA compliance as well as allow the building to be used as a clean air or warming shelter during natural hazards such as wildfires or winter storms. Funding would allow many of these improvements to be made, significantly increasing the usability of the building to the community including for critical resiliency in the face of increasing occurrence of natural hazards such as wildfire smoke exposure, cold weather sheltering needs, and coastal and riverine flooding.
- D. In light of the growth of the frequency and severity of forest fires in northern California in recent years, and throughout the western United States, which have occurred largely upon federally managed lands, the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors would encourage the United States Forest Service to consider the purchase or lease of County

owned property located within the Six Rivers National Forest for the redevelopment of the Bar-O Ranch former youth detention facility as a wildland firefighting center for this region. The County has recently conducted a conditions assessment of the Bar-O Ranch facility and is prepared to discuss the sale or lease of this property to the federal land managers should those agencies be directed to examine this opportunity.

- E. In 2018 the County adopted an Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Facilities Plan for the development and enhancement of OHV opportunities in Del Norte County. Specifically, the Plan included Goals for the promotion of OHV opportunities (Goal 1), maintenance of current OHV opportunities (Goal 2), and establishment of new OHV opportunities (Goal 3). To advance Goal 3, the County identified several potential projects, including the redevelopment of Federally-owned land located within the Smith River National Recreation Area (SRNRA) adjacent to County-provided OHV opportunities on County roads and trails located within the SRNRA. The County requests that the Forest Service invest in these opportunities to expand the OHV network and develop opportunities for OHV recreation in the SRNRA, particularly within the North Fork Management Area, which was specifically identified in the Forest Service's 1992 Smith River NRA Management Plan (pg. 22) as an area with an "excellent opportunity for managed OHV use."

Key Demographic, Social and Economic Indicators

Non-Incarcerated Population and Population Growth

Year	Del Norte County	1-Year Change	California 1-Year Change
2021	25,198	2.29%	-0.91%
2022	24,969	-0.91%	-0.53%
2023	24,855	-0.46%	-0.35%

Land Ownership (2022)

Tax Status	Del Norte County	Area (Sq. Miles)	% of Total Area
Exempt	Federal	701.30	69.06%
Non-Exempt	Private	229.52	22.60%
Exempt	State	82.09	8.08%
Exempt	Tribal (Trust)	2.01	0.20%
Exempt	County & City	0.57	0.06%
Exempt	Non-Profit/Land Trust	0.02	0.00%

Unemployment

Year	Unemployment Rate	
	County	State
2020	5.9%	4.1%
2021	9.7%	10.2%
2022	7.6%	7.3%

Median Household Income

Year	Del Norte County	California	Difference from State
2020	\$47,442	\$83,001	-42.8%
2021	\$48,108	\$84,831	-55.2%
2022	\$57,297	\$91,517	-46.0%

Source: 2024 Del Norte County Economic & Demographic Profile, Del Norte Transportation Commission

Del Norte County's Legislative Representatives and Advocates

State Legislation	Federal Legislation
<p>California State Assembly (2nd District)</p> <p>Assemblymember Chris Rogers P.O. Box 942849 Sacramento, CA 94249-0002 (916) 319-2002</p> <p>1036 5th Street, Suite D Eureka, CA 95501 (707) 445-7014 https://a02.asmdc.org/</p>	<p>United State House of Representatives (District 2)</p> <p>Congressman Jared Huffman 2330 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 (202) 225-5161</p> <p>317 Third Street, Suite 1 Eureka, CA 95501 (707) 407-3585 https://huffman.house.gov/</p>
<p>California State Senate (2nd District)</p> <p>Senate President Pro Tempore Mike McGuire 1021 O Street, Suite 8620 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 651-4002</p> <p>1036 5th Street Eureka, CA 95501 (707) 445-6511 https://sd02.senate.ca.gov/</p>	<p>United States Senate</p> <p>Senator Alex Padilla 331 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 (202) 224-3553</p> <p>501 I Street, Suite 7-800 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 448-2787 https://www.padilla.senate.gov/</p> <p>Senator Adam Schiff SD-B40B, Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 Phone:(202) 224-3841 https://www.schiff.senate.gov/</p>
<p>State Advocate and County Associations</p> <p>Shaw, Yoder, Antwih, Schmelzer & Lange (SYASL) 1415 L Street, Ste. 1000 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 446-4656 https://syaslpartners.com/</p> <p>California State Association of Counties (CSAC) 1100 K Street, Suite 101 Sacramento, CA 95815 (916) 327-7500 http://www.counties.org/</p> <p>Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) 1215 K Street, Suite 1650 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 447 4806 https://www.rcrcnet.org/</p>	<p>Federal Advocate and County Association</p> <p>Thorn Run Partners 100 M Street, SE, Suite 750 Washington, DC 20003 (202) 688-0225 http://thornrun.com/</p> <p>National Association of Counties (NACo) 25 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20001 (202)393-6226 https://www.naco.org/</p>