

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Introduction

The Fiscal Year 2023/2024 WRCOG Legislative Platform (Platform) is designed to provide guidance to WRCOG and its member agencies on legislative, regulatory, and administrative issues with regional impacts and of mutual concern. Positions adopted by the WRCOG Executive Committee will guide the Agency's actions and communications with state, regional, and federal officials. By adopting this Platform, the Executive Committee provides guidance, parameters, and direction to the WRCOG Executive Director to protect WRCOG's advocacy interests.

Typically, items of legislative or advocacy interest are brought to WRCOG's attention by WRCOG's member agencies or partners, which desire WRCOG to take a position on the item, in order to demonstrate a united subregional stance on a particular issue. WRCOG does not currently employ full time legislative staff or lobbyists, and therefore has limited ability to commit significant time to legislative activities. For the *General Advocacy Platform* components described below, staff will, to the extent possible, monitor legislation that falls within the scope of the adopted Platform and use the Platform as a guide to initiate or respond to issues and/or requests raised by WRCOG's member agencies. Through its own internal efforts and by leveraging partner resources, staff will strive to also provide timely information on the impacts of such legislative, regulatory, or administrative initiatives to member agencies through WRCOG's existing Committee structure with an emphasis on the Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee.

GENERAL ADVOCACY PLATFORM

In 2021 (revisited in 2023), the WRCOG Executive Committee established the following Agency-wide Strategic Plan Goals, which are listed below and comprise the *General Advocacy Platform (Platform)*:

1. Serve as an advocate for the subregion.
2. Identify and help secure grants.
3. Ensure fiscal solvency and stability of WRCOG.
4. Communicate proactively.
5. Develop projects and programs that improve infrastructure.
6. Develop and implement programs that support resilience.
7. Provide a safe and inclusive environment that values employees.

GUIDING ADVOCACY PRINCIPLES

The *Guiding Advocacy Principles* (Principles) are intended to facilitate the timely and effective implementation of the Agency's advocacy agenda. The advocacy process often requires actions or responses that were not anticipated in the process of drafting this document. In addition to the need to identify and evaluate potential actions, the legislative process moves quickly during some phases of the legislative cycle. In those cases, it is not practical for the WRCOG Committee structure to convene quickly enough to provide direction on specific actions.

The approval of this document specifically delegates that authority to either the Administration & Finance Committee, Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee, Executive Committee Chair, and/or Executive Director, depending on the circumstance. Globally, all designated authority shall be limited to actions that do not conflict with the Platform or the following Principles:

- a. Protect and advocate for local control and resources including local autonomy for land use, financial, and quality of life decisions.
- b. Seek financial sustainability and independence.
- c. Defend against proposals that constrain or intrude on local policy-making authority, including quality of life and economic development.
- d. Avoid intra-agency conflicts: take reasonable efforts to avoid inserting the resources and identity of WRCOG to determine the outcome of conflicts between member agencies.
- e. Exercise restraint: strive for the best use of WRCOG resources by limiting action to issues best addressed by WRCOG rather than a different agency or partner.
- f. Collaborate for efficiency: proactively engage and coordinate with stakeholders who share WRCOG's policy interests in order to maximize our collective voice and minimize our resource allocation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

In furtherance of the Platform, and within the confines of the Principles, authority is granted for action in the following four areas:

1. Advocacy: initiate and react to legislative, regulatory, and administrative proposals.
2. Convening: serve as catalyst for dialogue and issue-specific education.
3. Facilitating: promote collective action among stakeholders in furtherance of effective local action.
4. Targeted action: deliberately and intentionally prioritize the needs and interests of Western Riverside County as a whole.

Administration & Finance Committee

The Administration & Finance Committee shall be authorized to take or direct actions on behalf of WRCOG that are consistent with the four implementation actions above. The Committee shall be authorized to take or direct action that that is inconsistent with, or falls outside the scope of, the Goals or Principles subject to the consent of $\frac{3}{4}$ of members who vote on the action. Actions to be considered by the Administration & Finance Committee shall fall into one of three categories:

1. Lack of urgency: the matter is not time sensitive and will not be jeopardized by waiting for the Committee to convene.
2. Heightened sensitivity: the topic is likely to garner strong conflicting opinions among members and no opportunity for debate has occurred.
3. Not covered by Goals or Principles: topics not contemplated by the broad confines approved in this document.

Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee

The Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee serves as the default clearinghouse for all advocacy actions not excluded in this document (i.e., time sensitive). Their membership shall be determined annually by the Executive Committee Chair for the current legislative year and their primary actions shall consist of providing recommendations to the Administration & Finance Committee.

When impractical or unnecessary to defer to the Administration & Finance Committee, the Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee is authorized to take or direct actions on behalf of WRCOG that are consistent with the four implementation actions above.

Executive Director

When practical, the Executive Director shall defer to the Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee to make policy decisions related to the Agency's advocacy efforts. When not practical (i.e., time sensitivity), the Executive Director is authorized to take or direct actions that are in furtherance of the Agency's approved Goals and Principles. This shall include the implantation actions defined above and may also specifically include the written or verbal representations necessary to support the agency's interests.

Executive Committee Chair

Throughout the advocacy process, there are circumstances where the voice of an elected official, versus a staff person speaking on behalf of a group of elected officials, can be more persuasive. Within the confines listed throughout this document, the Executive Committee Chair is authorized to represent WRCOG in a manner consistent with the Goals, Principles, and implementation actions described above.