



# FRESNO COUNTY FIRE

PROTECTION DISTRICT

*Honor, Integrity, Cooperation & Professionalism*

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** 07/09/2026

**To:** Board Directors

**Attn:** Brad Richter  
President

**From:** Fire District Staff

**Subject:** Policy 1209 Legislative Advocacy

## **BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING PAPER**

### **ISSUE:**

Recently the Board has expressed an interest in legislative advocacy. District legal counsel has provided advice on recent legislation that could affect the district. The District does not have a policy addressing legislative advocacy.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The expenditure of public funds for the purpose of supporting or opposing a ballot measure or candidate is prohibited by California Government Code § 54964.

However, California Government Code § 53060.5 allows the expenditure of public funds to advocate for or against proposed legislation or regulatory actions which will affect the public agency expending the funds.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The purpose of the policy is to guide the District officials and staff in considering legislative or regulatory proposals that are likely to have an impact on the District, and to allow for a timely response to important legislative issues.

The purpose for identifying Legislative Advocacy Procedures is to provide clear direction to District staff with regard to monitoring and acting upon bills during state and federal legislative sessions or rulemaking by regulatory agencies. Adherence to Legislative Advocacy Procedures will ensure that legislative inquiries and responses will be administered consistently with "one voice" as to the identified Advocacy Priorities adopted by the Board of Directors. The Legislative Advocacy

Procedures and Advocacy Priorities will provide the District Fire Chief, or other designee, discretion to advocate in the District's best interests in a manner consistent with the goals and priorities adopted by the Board of Directors.

District legal counsel has reviewed and participated in drafting the District Legislative Advocacy policy.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The Board could decide not to adopt the Legislative Advocacy policy or could adopt a revised policy.

**IMPACTS** (*Consider potential consequences related to each of the following areas of concern for proposed alternatives*):

- Fiscal – No Known Impact
- Operational – No Known Impact
- Legal – No Known Impact
- Labor – No Known Impact
- Sociopolitical - Allows the District to consistently communicate how proposed legislation affects emergency response, firefighter safety, wildfire preparedness, and community resilience.
- Policy – No Known Impact
- Health and safety - No Known Impact
- Environmental - No Known Impact
- Interagency – Could lead to stronger regional emergency preparedness and more consistent public safety legislation.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Board of Directors adopt the Legislative Advocacy policy as presented.

**APPROVED:**

  
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Josh I. Chrisman, Administrative Officer

July 9, 2026

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**Date**

## Legislative Advocacy

### 1209.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to guide the District officials and staff in considering legislative or regulatory proposals that are likely to have an impact on the District, and to allow for a timely response to important legislative issues. Although the expenditure of public funds for the purpose of supporting or opposing a ballot measure or candidate is prohibited,<sup>1</sup> the expenditure of public funds is allowed to advocate for or against proposed legislation or regulatory actions which will affect the public agency expending the funds.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose for identifying Legislative Advocacy Procedures is to provide clear direction to District staff with regard to monitoring and acting upon bills during state and federal legislative sessions or rulemaking by regulatory agencies. Adherence to Legislative Advocacy Procedures will ensure that legislative inquiries and responses will be administered consistently with "one voice" as to the identified Advocacy Priorities adopted by the Board of Directors. The Legislative Advocacy Procedures and Advocacy Priorities will provide the District Fire Chief, or other designee, discretion to advocate in the District's best interests in a manner consistent with the goals and priorities adopted by the Board of Directors. This policy is intended to be manageable, consistent, and tailored to the specific needs and culture of the District.

1 Cal. Gov. Code § 54964.

2 Cal. Gov. Code § 53060.5; Vargas v. Salina, 46 Cal.4<sup>th</sup> 1 (2009).

### 1209.2 POLICY GOALS

- Serve as an active participant with other local governments, the California Fire Chiefs Association, the Fire District Association of California and the California Special Districts Association, and other local government associations on legislative and regulatory issues that are important to the District and the region.
- Advocate the District legislative and regulatory interests at the State, County, and Federal levels.
- Inform and provide information to the Board of Directors and District staff on the legislative and regulatory process and key issues and legislation or regulations that could have a potential impact on the District.
- Seek grant and funding assistance for District projects, services, and programs to enhance services for the community and reimbursement for State mandated programs.

### 1209.3 POLICY PRINCIPLES

The Board of Directors recognizes the need to protect District interests and local control, and to identify various avenues to implement its strategic and long-term goals. It is the policy of the District

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to proactively monitor and advocate for legislation and regulations as directed by the Advocacy Priorities and by the specific direction of the Board of Directors.

This policy provides the District Fire Chief, or other designee, the flexibility to adopt positions on legislation or regulations in a timely manner, while allowing the Board of Directors to set Advocacy Priorities to provide policy guidance. The Board of Directors shall establish various Advocacy Priorities and, so long as the position fits within the Advocacy Priorities, staff is authorized to take a position without board approval.

Whenever an applicable Advocacy Priority does not exist pertaining to legislation or regulations affecting the District, the matter shall be brought before the Board of Directors at a regularly scheduled board meeting for formal direction from the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may choose to establish a standing committee of two Directors, known as the "Legislative Advocacy Committee", with the authority to adopt a position when consideration by the full Board of Directors is not feasible within the time-constraints of the legislative or regulatory process.

Generally, the District will not address matters that are not pertinent to the District's local government services, such as social issues or international relations issues.

### **1209.4 LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY PROCEDURES**

It is the policy of the District to proactively monitor and advocate for legislation or regulations as directed by the Advocacy Priorities and by the specific direction of the Board of Directors. This process involves interaction with local, state, and federal government entities both in regard to specific items of legislation or regulations and to promote positive intergovernmental relationships. Accordingly, involvement and participation in regional, state, and national organizations is encouraged and supported by the District.

Monitoring legislation is a shared function of the Board of Directors and Fire Chief or designated staff including District Counsel. The Legislative Advocacy Procedures are the process by which staff will track and respond to legislative and regulatory issues in a timely and consistent manner. The District Fire Chief, or other designee, will act on legislation or regulation utilizing the following procedures:

1. The Fire Chief or other designee shall review requests that the District take a position on legislative issues to determine if the legislation or regulation aligns with the District's current approved Advocacy Priorities.
2. The Fire Chief or other designee will conduct a review of positions and analysis completed by the California Special Districts Association and other local government associations when formulating positions.
3. If the matter aligns with the approved priorities, District response shall be supplied in the form of a letter to the legislative or regulatory body reviewing the bill or measure. Advocacy methods utilized on behalf of the District, including but not limited to letters, phone calls, emails, and prepared forms, will be communicated through the Fire Chief or designee. The

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Fire Chief or designee shall advise staff to administer the form of advocacy, typically via letters signed by the Fire Chief, or designee, on behalf of the Board of Directors.

4. All draft legislative or regulatory position letters initiated by the Fire Chief or designee shall state whether the District is requesting "support", "support if amended", "oppose", or "oppose unless amended" action on the issue, and shall include adequate justification for the recommended action. If possible, the letter should include examples of how a bill or regulatory rulemaking would specifically affect the District, e.g. "the funding the District will lose due to this bill (regulation) could pay for X capital improvements."

a. Support – legislation or regulation in this area advances the District's goals and priorities.

b. Oppose – legislation or regulation in this area could potentially harm, negatively impact or undo positive momentum for the District, or does not advance the District's goals and priorities.

5. The Fire Chief may also provide a letter of concern or interest regarding a legislative or regulatory issue without taking a formal position on a piece of legislation or proposed regulation. Letters of concern or interest are to be administered through the Fire Chief or designee.

6. When a letter is sent to a state or federal legislative body, the appropriate federal or state legislators representing the District shall be included as a copy or "cc" on the letter. The appropriate contacts at the California Fire Chiefs Association, the Fire District Association of California and the California Special Districts Association and other local government associations, if applicable, shall be included as a cc on legislative letters.

7. A position may be adopted by the Fire Chief or designee if any of the following criteria is met:

a. The position is consistent with the adopted Advocacy Priorities;

b. The position is consistent with that of organizations to which the District is a member, such as the California Fire Chiefs Association, the Fire District Association of California and the California Special Districts Association; or

c. The position is approved by the Board of Directors or the Legislative Advocacy Committee.

8. All legislative or regulatory positions adopted via a process outside of a regularly scheduled Board Meeting shall be communicated to the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting. When appropriate, the Fire Chief or other designee will submit a report (either written or verbal) summarizing activity on legislative or regulatory measures to the Board of Directors.

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### **1209.5 ADVOCACY PRIORITIES**

#### **Revenue, Finances, and Taxation**

Ensure adequate funding for special Districts' safe and reliable core local service delivery. Protect special Districts' resources from the shift or diversion of revenues without the consent of the affected districts. Promote the financial independence of special districts and afford them access to revenue opportunities equal to that of other types of local agencies. Protect and preserve special Districts' property tax allocations and local flexibility with revenue and diversify local revenue sources. It is recommended that these practices may often be achieved through the legislative or regulatory review process in evaluating whether a State mandated program, or increased level of service is required, and if so, whether that program or service must be reimbursed by the State.

Support opportunities that allow the District to compete for its fair share of regional, state, and federal funding, and that maintain funding streams. Opportunities may include competitive grant and funding programs. Opportunities may also include dedicated funding streams at the regional, state, or federal levels that allow the District to maximize local revenues, offset and leverage capital expenditures, and maintain District goals and standards.

#### **Governance and Accountability**

Enhance special Districts' ability to govern as independent, local government bodies in an open and accessible manner. Encourage best practices that avoid burdensome, costly, redundant or one-size-fits all approaches. Protect meaningful public participation in local agency formations, dissolutions, and reorganizations, and ensure local services meet the unique needs, priorities, and preferences of each community.

Oppose additional public meeting and records requirements that unnecessarily increase the burden on public resources without effectively fostering public engagement, enhancing accountability of government agencies or appropriate nexus related reimbursement.

Promote local-level solutions, decision-making, and management concerning service delivery and governance structures while upholding voter control and maintaining Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) authority over local government jurisdictional reorganizations and/or consolidations.

#### **Human Resources and Personnel**

Promote policies related to hiring, management, and benefits and retirement that afford flexibility, contain costs, and enhance the ability to recruit and retain highly qualified, career-minded employees to public service. As public agency employers, support policies that foster productive relationships between management and employees.

Maintain special Districts' ability to exercise local flexibility by minimizing state mandated contract requirements. Oppose any measure that would hinder the ability of special districts to maximize local resources and efficiencies through the use of contracted services.

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### **Infrastructure, Innovation, and Investment**

Encourage prudent planning for investment and maintenance of innovative long-term infrastructure. Support the contracting flexibility and fiscal tools and incentives needed to help special districts meet California's changing demands. Promote the efficient, effective, and sustainable delivery of core local fire and safety services.

Prevent restrictive one-size-fits-all public works requirements that increase costs to taxpayers and reduce local flexibility.