

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY POLICY COMMITTEE
HIGHLIGHTS**

Thursday, January 14, 2020

Zoom

[Environmental Quality Policy Committee Slides](#)

ATTENDANCE

Members: Chris Rogers (Chair); David Pollock (Vice Chair); Paul Akinjo; Jan Arbuckle; Emily Beach; Daniel Brotman; Illece Buckley–Weber; Tom Butt; Jon Canavan; Jen Cavanaugh; Anna Chouteau; Margaret Clark; Robert Collacott; Denise Diaz; Pat Eklund; Eric Friedman; Debra Garnes; Christopher Gerry; Marvin Heinz; Jean Josey; Derrek Kaff; Ariel Kelley; Mina Layba; Jesse Loren; Diana Mahmud; Julio Martinez; Daniel Martinez; Jenny McAdams; Marjorie Mohler; Kitty Moore; Cynthia Moran; Melissa Morgan; Devin Murphy; Eric Nelson; Richard O'Brien; Andy Pease; Randall Putz; Gabriel Quinto; Lisa Ann Rapp; Jeff Rosaler; Julie Ryan; Ester Sanchez; Kristine Scott; Martha Singh; Gary Singh; Andy Sobel; Niroop Srivatsa; Mireya Turner; Gillian van Muyden; Teresa Vargas; Arwen Wacht; Kevin Wilk; Bryce Wilson; Frank Yokoyama

League Partners: Rod Brewer; Justin Skarb

Staff: Derek Dolfie, Legislative Representative; Caroline Cirrincione, Legislative Policy Analyst

I. Welcome and Introductions

President Cheryl Viegas Walker, Mayor, El Centro, welcomed everyone to the first policy committee meeting of the year and thanked members for their service to all California cities. Mayor Viegas Walker explained that policy committees are vitally important and are directly connected to Cal Cities' core mission of advocating for the common interests of cities. She explained that this year has been challenging for city officials, as cities are facing public health and economic challenges due to the pandemic and the shutdown of local economies. Cities are also responding to nationwide calls for equity and justice and endeavoring to root out discrimination and racism in their communities.

Mayor Viegas Walker emphasized that Cal Cities, now more than ever, is committed to providing resources and information to help cities make informed decisions for their communities during these challenging times. She closed by thanking everyone in attendance for their work as a policy committee member.

Mayor Viegas Walker then introduced Carolyn Coleman, Cal Cities Executive Director. Ms. Coleman thanked committee members for all their work. She explained that at a time when cities needed help, they have stepped up and have been problem solvers.

Ms. Coleman said that the work of the policy committees is central to Cal Cities advocacy, which is at the heart of the organization. She thanked committee members again for serving on the committee and wished them a great meeting.

Chair Chris Rogers, Mayor, Santa Rosa, and Vice Chair David Pollock, Council Member, Moorpark, welcomed committee members and provided an introduction.

II. Public Comment

Chair Rogers asked if there was any public comment. Zane Hatfield, Director of Programs for Yolo Food Bank, highlighted the importance of SB 1383's food recovery program as a tool to eliminate food insecurity in the state of California.

III. General Briefing

In accordance with the customary practice of convening all policy committee members for a general briefing prior to the start of policy committee meetings, the Cal Cities advocacy team compiled a [General Briefing Update Document](#), which includes the latest on legislative and budgetary matters affecting cities.

IV. Overview of Parliamentary Procedure and Robert's Rules

Cal Cities staff briefly reviewed Parliamentary Procedures and Robert's Rules. This document is designed to provide examples of common procedural matters encounter by Cal Cities policy committees. This includes how to make a motion, vote on a motion, and determine if there is a quorum. Members were directed to the informational packet for more comprehensive detail.

V. Committee Orientation

Cal Cities staff provided a brief overview of the purpose of policy committees and the appointment process. This document details key committee roles and responsibilities such as adding agenda items, taking positions on bills, and the committee schedules and processes, among other things. Members were directed to the informational packet for more comprehensive detail.

VI. Existing Policy and Guiding Principles

Cal Cities staff explained the importance of the guiding principles. This document contains Cal Cities policies that reflect positions taken by the policy committee and Cal Cities Board and is used as a reference tool for Cal Cities staff when reviewing legislation. Members were directed to the informational packet for more comprehensive detail.

VII. Cal Cities 2021 Strategic Priorities

The committee was updated on the Cal Cities 2021 strategic priorities. Cal Cities staff discussed the virtual League Leaders retreat and explained the process by which strategic priorities are established. The Cal Cities 2021 strategic priorities are as follows:

- 1. Secure state and federal funding for local COVID-19 public health response and economic recovery for all.** Secure direct and flexible funding and resources for cities of all sizes so they can continue to protect residents from the pandemic, deliver essential services, support small businesses, and lead the recovery in our communities. Improve communication and coordination with regional, state, and federal governments on public health orders and programs to stimulate equitable economic recovery.
- 2. Secure funding to increase the supply and affordability of housing and resources to assist individuals at risk of – or already experiencing – homelessness while preserving local decision making.** Secure additional resources to increase construction of housing, particularly affordable housing, workforce housing, and permanent supportive housing, and ensure cities retain flexibility based on the land use needs of each community. Increase flexibility and resources to provide navigation assistance and emergency shelters, and strengthen

partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure mental health, substance abuse treatment, and wraparound services are available for adults and youth at risk of – or already experiencing – homelessness in our communities.

3. **Improve state-local coordination and planning to strengthen community disaster preparedness, resiliency, and recovery.** Pursue additional resources and support to mitigate the effects of climate change, sea level rise, catastrophic wildfires, and flooding in our communities. Promote community disaster preparedness, resiliency, and recovery in collaboration with the state and federal governments. Increase availability and access to the National Flood Insurance Program to include other natural disasters.
4. **Protect and modernize critical infrastructure.** Seek increased state and federal resources for critical and sustainable local infrastructure projects including roads, public transit, active transportation, water availability, and broadband deployment that enhance workforce and economic development and improve quality of life.

VIII. Adoption of 2021 Work Program

In order to produce the committee's work program, committee members were asked to respond to an online survey illustrating the top priorities for the committee to focus on in the coming year.

Cal Cities staff provided an overview of the proposed work plan, followed by an open discussion. The committee agreed the work plan was broad and encompassed a wide swath of potential issues. One member highlighted the importance of continuing the Rule 20 program, a vital local government funding source for undergrounding utility lines. Others explored how the Environmental Quality Policy Committee could participate in discussions about housing mandates in high fire zones. Lastly, a member raised how cities are losing green spaces to housing development and the value of those spaces in communities throughout the state.

Ultimately, the committee unanimously adopted the following items as their work program:

- Solid waste and recycling;
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Energy and utilities; and
- Emergency/disaster preparedness and response.

IX. Local Climate Initiatives Discussion

Chair Rogers started an open dialog about local climate initiatives and opportunities for cities in the climate mitigation and adaptation space. A robust conversation ensued, with many committee members sharing examples from their communities. Specifically, there were several examples of regional collaboration to address climate issues such as sea level rise and moving to clean energy resources. One community teamed up with a non-profit, mobilizing volunteers to maximize the return on local climate investments. Another individual highlighted the Climate Mobilization movement and encouraged Cal Cities and other local governments to adopt resolutions declaring a climate emergency. Other project ideas related to clean transportation, reducing a city's carbon footprint, recycled water for irrigation, and more.

X. Budget Update

Cal Cities staff updated the committee on the Governor's record-breaking \$227.2 billion budget proposal for the 2021-22 fiscal year. The proposed budget includes a \$164.5 billion General Fund and projects \$34 billion in total reserves and surplus. The budget significantly restores the state's rainy day fund and economic support reserves that were diminished last year. A surplus of \$15 billion, largely in one-time funds, is available for spending to address COVID-19 and support resilience and recovery.

Cal Cities staff also updated the committee on the Governor's climate resiliency budget priorities. Specifically, these priorities center on wildfire preparedness and forest management, and electric vehicle deployment. While investments in these areas help make the state more resilient to climate change, there is little to no money included in the proposed budget that goes directly to local governments to address issues like sea level rise or implementing climate change adaptation projects. More information on the climate resiliency budget priorities can be found on the [Cal Cities website](#).

Additional information on the budget can be found in the [General Briefing document](#).

XI. Legislative Agenda

Cal Cities staff briefed the committee on bills that have been introduced and what they are expecting to see in this year's legislative session. Cal Cities staff discussed bills related to solid waste and recycling, energy and utilities, wildfires and forest management, sea level rise and coastal issues, climate change, and hazardous materials. More information on specific bills discussed can be found in the slide deck [linked](#) at the top of the document.

Next Virtual Meeting: Thursday, April 15, 2021, 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm