

INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

March 6, 2025



To: City Council
From: City Manager Department
Prepared by: Jennifer Aguilar, Management Assistant
Subject: **City's 2025-2026 Legislative Platform**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **ADOPTS** the City's 2025-2026 Legislative Platform: and

FINDS the action exempt from CEQA review under CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3).

BACKGROUND:

The 2025-2026 Legislative Platform for Indian Wells sets forth the City's legislative positions and provides a framework for participation in the legislative process on a statewide level. It is important for the City to be involved in the Sacramento political field, and to have an influence on the laws passed that affect cities or improve our State. Since the legislative cycle covers a two-year period and many bills roll over into the second year of session, the City, in response to recommendations from our legislative partners, began adopting a two-year Platform in 2021 with much success.

The City's involvement in both state and federal legislative processes continues to increase year over year through the submission of position letters and participation in legislative tours in Sacramento. This document allows staff to efficiently process letters of support or opposition without going to Council for direction on each legislative issue, ensuring alignment with Council priorities and legislative interests which, new to this Platform, are outlined in their own section with specific ties to our guiding principles for increased transparency and clarity.

Staff reached out to our State legislative offices, the City's lobbyist, the League of California Cities, the California Contract Cities Association, and the Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce for input on the top issues for the 2025-2026 legislative session. Top issues anticipated to affect the City are local control, housing and land use development, public safety, and homelessness.

The City continues its partnership with the League of California Cities in coordinating efforts and campaigns to protect local government interests. The City supports the

League of California Cities' four strategic priorities for 2025 outlined below and includes them in the Platform:

1. Protect local revenues and expand economic development tools;
2. Strengthen climate change resiliency and disaster preparedness;
3. Strengthen and modernize critical infrastructure; and
4. Secure investments to prevent and reduce homelessness and increase the supply of affordable housing.

New this year is a list of more specific interest issues to Indian Wells and the region, where staff believes the City can be more proactive in its efforts to shape public policy. Specifically, staff seeks Council support to advocate for and seek legislation to do the following:

City of Indian Wells Legislative Priorities

1. Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Reforms: City will seek legislation that provides Indian Wells and other cities in the Coachella Valley opportunities to support and receive RHNA credit for the development of student and workforce housing to support local colleges (e.g., College of the Desert and California State University San Bernardino-Palm Desert Campus.)
2. Property Tax Equity: City will seek legislative support to revise the tax equity allocations from the 1980s for no/low property tax cities (e.g., Indian Wells) to get its fair share of property tax revenue.

Other Special Interest Legislative Priorities

1. Senate Bill 1 Transportation Bill Reforms: Provide incentives to cities that exceed the street maintenance goals of SB1 (e.g., high pavement condition index) with the reduction or elimination of the maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement to obtain the City's share of SB1 funds.
2. Unfunded Mandates: Seek legislation that forces the State of California to meet its legal obligations to fund states for various unfunded mandate programs. Annually, the State of California pushes the financial payments to cities and counties to the next year. Over \$900 million is owed to cities, with \$209,183 owed to Indian Wells.
3. Regional Infrastructure Improvements: Investment into infrastructure improvements throughout California are necessary, especially in the Coachella Valley. This includes additional passenger rail service, improvements to the 911 System, funding for streets, highways, bridges, flood control, expanded utility capacity to meet the growing needs of the region, and much more.

4. Redevelopment 2.0: Seek legislation that provides a dedicated revenue source to encourage economic development and housing throughout the State.

The City's professional legislative representative is the firm of Joe A. Gonsalves & Son. Staff and Gonsalves communicate frequently as to positions on issues, proposed legislation affecting the City, issues the City has taken a position on, and assistance with various state departments or the Governor's Office.

February 21, 2025 was the last day for bills to be introduced this cycle. With policy committee hearings being scheduled and well underway this month, staff recommends adoption of the Platform for immediate use in evaluating and participating in the rapidly changing advocacy space in Sacramento.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

This action has been assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State and local CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City. The City acting as Lead Agency, has determined the 2025-2026 Legislative Platform qualifies as being Categorically Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2), 15060(c)(3), and 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines because it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change to the environment as there is no possibility that the action would result in a significant environmental impact, and because it does not constitute a "project" as defined in Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2025 - 2026 Legislative Platform