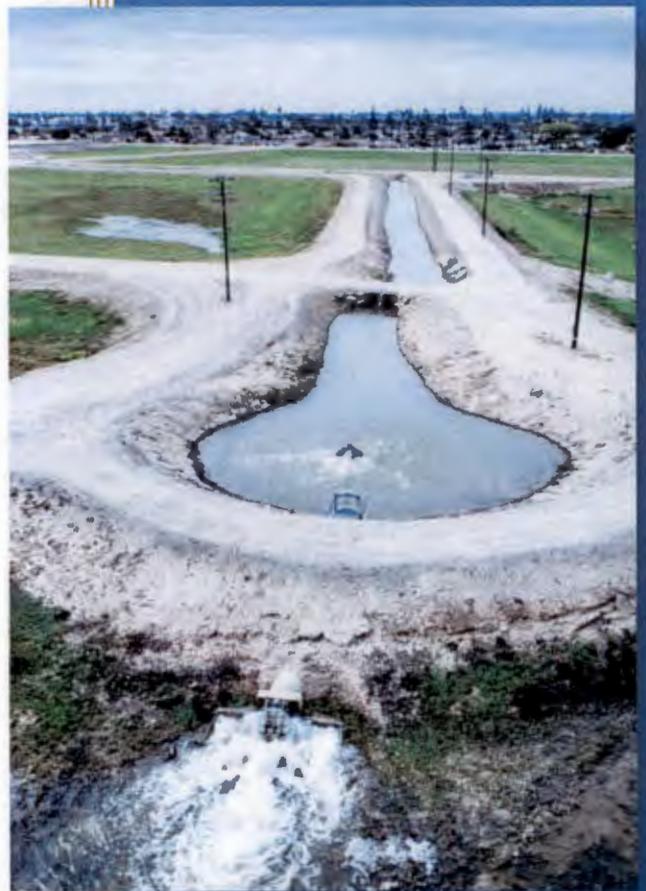




United Water Conservation District Legislative Policy & Platform



*Adopted by the Board of Directors on
September 12, 2018*

POLICY PURPOSE

United Water Conservation District has adopted a Legislative Platform intended to guide staff and contract lobbyists when evaluating legislative proposals introduced at both the federal, state, and local levels. Maintaining an updated platform provides for directed action and strategy development to address the most critical issues facing the organization in a timely and proactive manner. The platform will be updated every two years through the Executive Committee to reflect changes in priority issue areas but shall not prohibit advocacy on additional matters which may arise later in the year.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The District's General Manager may take a position of support, opposition, or support/oppose unless amended on proposed legislation or regulation on behalf of the District **in accordance with the adopted Legislative Policy & Platform**. Authority to provide letters of support or opposition to elected officials or committees and/or join coalitions as appropriate is afforded to the General Manager for matters addressed in the Legislative Policy and Platform.

If there are mitigating factors where the Board may want to take a position that varies from the approved Policy & Platform, or, if it is a matter that is not inherent in the Policy & Platform, the measure shall go to the full Board for direction.

Staff, with assistance from State and Federal lobbyists, will analyze the effects of proposed legislation or regulations on current and potential future District affairs, research positions of other similar professional organizations, and provide recommendations for District positions.

The Board of Directors shall adopt the Legislative Policy and Platform and testify on behalf of the District at the State and Federal level as needed, including, but not limited to, participating in meetings with legislators or public officials.

TRANSPARENCY

In the interest of transparency, the District shall provide periodic updates on positions taken in accordance with the Legislative platform via the following methods:

- Provide the public with updates on United's website www.unitedwater.org.
- Update the Board of Directors monthly at its regular Board meeting.
- Track results and present to the Board on an annual basis of which bills failed or were chaptered, in comparison to the District position.

POLICY UPDATE

The Legislative Policy and Platform shall be amended every two years or sooner if District goals change.

UWCD MISSION STATEMENT

United Water Conservation District shall manage, protect, conserve and enhance the water resources of the Santa Clara River, its tributaries and associated aquifers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order to achieve the District's Mission statement, the following guidelines have been adopted for the 18-19 Fiscal Year. These principles serve as a guide for the Legislative Platform, which provide direction in staff's development of positions on forthcoming federal and state legislation.

- Fight overdraft of the hydrologically connected aquifers and the manifested seawater intrusion while working to enhance the water quality of the aquifers through the use of District programs/facilities.
- Maximize District operations while complying with Federal/State environmental laws to protect the availability and use of the region's limited water resources.
- Conduct District affairs in a business-like manner that promotes transparency for all financial activities and protects the District's assets, promotes sound internal controls that result in positive independent financial audits, and maintains professional and financial integrity.
- Construct, operate, and maintain facilities needed now and in the future to put local and imported water resources to optimum beneficial use by people while complying with environmental laws.
- Monitor groundwater conditions to detect and guard against problems and to report those conditions to the Board of Directors and the public.
- Seek opportunities to develop cooperative programs with other agencies in order to maximize use of District resources and promote mutually beneficial projects.
- Participate in activities that promote public awareness about the District and its primary function of water conservation, partake in community involvement projects to enhance the relationships within the areas the District serves, and have strong involvement in county, state and national issues related to the District's mission.
- Protect and augment groundwater supplies necessary for the public health, welfare and safety of the people of the State of California.
- Provide recreational facilities and opportunities for the public in the most cost efficient manner possible, in order to comply with the District's FERC license requirements.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM – Local Control

Support legislation that would:

- Maintain the authority and fiduciary role of the Board of Directors to manage the water supply, public contracts, procurement, financial administration, public records, and human resources practices, as well as regular operations.
- Require that the federal and/or state governments provide reimbursement to local governments for the implementation of newly-mandated federal/state regulations.
- Recognize the realities under which a local governing body must operate necessitates judicious use of closed door sessions.
- Further protect local government revenue and rights from being taken, confiscated, diverted or otherwise used to aid state government operations and responsibilities.
- Advance the District’s ongoing mission and goals with respect to all District facilities, including but not limited to Santa Felicia Dam, Lake Piru, and Freeman Diversion.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM – Water Supply and Sustainability

Support legislation that would:

- Enhance stormwater capture, sediment management, water conservation, and ecosystem restoration.
- Promote the District’s ability to manage groundwater and surface water.
- Recognize groundwater recharge as a beneficial use of water supply and allow flexibility to manage groundwater at the local level by agencies that have the technical expertise to ensure the health of the aquifer is maintained and competing uses are balanced.
- Address localized drought impacts, protect water supply, and strengthen the District’s water rights and water right priorities.
- Emphasize the use of advanced technologies such as solar and hydro power, in addition to seeking incentives and grants for their implementation.
- Fund and expedite the construction of groundwater (for example, Aquifer Storage and Recover, or “ASR”) and surface water storage projects that will enhance the opportunities to use additional water resources for future water supplies in Ventura County, including but not limited to State Water.
- Allow for additional state and local funding for sustainable water management programs that improve sustainability, drought resiliency, and water quality.
- Add to the reliability and security of water supplies.
- Promote and expand opportunities for new potential water supply sources such as water recycling (including both direct and indirect potable reuse), groundwater recharge, water storage, brackish and ocean water desalination, and surface water recharge as new potential sources of water supply, including the treatment, storage and distribution of said water sources.
- Support projects that protect Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM – Increased Efficiency

Support legislation that would:

- Streamline and modernize water rights modification attempts.

- Streamline and modernize the application process for permits related to California Environmental Quality Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act, as well as Lake and Streambed Alterations Agreements and the California Fish and Game Code.
- Encourage innovative and cooperative water resources projects that will be of regional benefit.
- Provide funding for data collection in the Santa Clara River watershed which would allow the District to make sound science based decisions and avoid regulatory decisions based on assumptions or outdated information, including but not limited to updating species listing status based on the most current data preferably using the most modern technology, and working towards realistic and updated recovery goals based on this best available science.
- Promote transparency and public participation in local government, while preserving procedures that continue to foster efficient government proceedings.
- Address redundancy and conflicting regulations between regulatory agencies.
- Provide resources needed at state agencies and avoid understaffing/underfunding.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM – Health, Safety and Security

Support legislation that would:

- Rely on science-based drinking water regulations to maintain or improve water quality.
- Promote the District’s ability to meet primary and secondary drinking water standards.
- Create incentives, financial and other, for water treatment projects.
- Support invasive species prevention, containment and control efforts, including but not limited to Dreissenid mussels (quagga and zebra mussels).
- Promote and maintain the ability of UWCD to protect and secure critical infrastructure from cyber or physical threats and damages.
- Fight overdraft of the hydrologically connected aquifers and the seawater intrusion.
- Protect the quality of surface water and groundwater.
- Support watershed-based management and point source pollution control programs that protect and improve surface and groundwater water quality for urban and agricultural uses, as well as for the environment as appropriate.

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM – Administrative and Fiscal Responsibility

Support legislation that would:

- Mitigate external operational costs to UWCD and/or its ratepayers, thereby enhancing water affordability.
- Oppose the imposition of unreasonable or unfunded state mandated programs, or increased fees and charges/taxes on UWCD customers.
- Ensure regulatory actions provide funding to local governments for implementation and ongoing monitoring/operations.
- Have employee benefits decided at the local level and properly negotiated at the bargaining table, rather than imposed on by government mandate, thereby impeding on local administration of labor relations.