

 **NOSSAMAN** LLP | Memorandum

TO: Monterey County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Ashley S. Walker, Senior Policy Advisor

RE: Legislative Program: 2024 Annual Report

DATE: January 28, 2024

I. Introduction

Nossaman LLP is honored to represent the County of Monterey before the State Legislature, and advocate on priority issues outlined in the County's Legislative Program. We look forward to continuing our success and work together, in partnership with the County, as we enter into what is sure to be another interesting and demanding legislative year.

II. Summary of Legislative Advocacy Actions in 2024

Nossaman collaborated with the County on the following legislative advocacy actions:

- **Monterey County's 2024 Legislative Advocacy Fast Facts:**
 - Reviewed 2,124 bills for potential impacts to the County.
 - Drafted 42 position letters and/or memos on proposed legislation.
 - Supported 18 bills.
 - Opposed 10 bills.
 - Advocated on 14 state budget proposals and/or other policy issues outside of specific legislation.
 - Requested State Budget funding for the San Lucas Drinking Water Project totaling \$20-25 million.
- **State Budget Funding Request:** Senator Anna Caballero requested the submittal of budget proposals for the 14th Senate District. We submitted a funding request for the clean drinking water project in the community of San Lucas. There were no other official solicitations for budget requests, as the State was facing a large budget deficit, but we met with and informed our entire delegation of our funding needs in San Lucas and elsewhere throughout the County. This included setting up a meeting for Supervisor Alejo and Supervisor Lopez with the Speaker's staff early on in 2024. There were a few directly funded projects in the final enacted budget, but it was noted at large that earmarked projects were not to be included. The San Lucas drinking water project was not funded through the budget.
- **Other State Budget and Policy Issues:** Nossaman kept the County updated on all relevant state budget proposals throughout the year, including the Governor's January proposal, the May Revise, and the Legislature's negotiation with the Governor and Administration on the final enacted budget. We worked with the County on the following state budget proposals or other local policy issues, outside of advocating on specific legislation.

Subject	Description	Action
BUDGET CalWORKs Program	County of Monterey letter opposing State Budget proposal to eliminate CalWORKs Family Stabilization Program and CalWORKs Expanded Subsidized Employment Program – cuts total over \$400 million.	3/12/24 letter to Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Sub. No. 3 and Assembly Budget Sub. No. 2
BUDGET Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program	County of Monterey letter supporting continued funding for HHAP program and securing permanent housing and needed services.	3/21/24 letter to Assembly Budget Sub. No. 5 Chair and Members and Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Sub. No. 4 Chair and Members.
BUDGET CRLA Rural Justice Centers	County of Monterey letter supporting Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia's \$10 Million Budget request for California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) Rural Justice Centers program.	5/10/24 letter to Speaker Rivas, Senate pro Temp McGuire, Asm. E. Garcia, and Senate and Assembly Budget Committees.
BUDGET GO-Biz Employee Ownership Hub	County of Monterey signed on to a letter with the Worker-Owned Recovery California (WORC) coalition supporting a request for \$1.5 million to fund the Employee Ownership Hub within the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz).	5/14/24 cosigned letter to California budget leaders.
BUDGET Future of Public Health	County of Monterey letter opposing the proposal to eliminate \$300 million ongoing Future of Public Health investments, with \$200 million dedicated to local health department workforce and infrastructure.	5/28/24 letter to Senate Budget and Fiscal Review, Senate Budget Sub. No. 3, Assembly Budget, and Assembly Budget Sub. No. 1.
BUDGET Homelessness Proposals	County of Monterey letter opposing proposals to cut funding for homelessness programs (e.g., Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program, Social Services and Behavioral Services Homelessness Programs).	5/28/24 letter to Senate Budget Sub. No. 3, Senate Budget Sub. No. 4, Assembly Budget Sub. No. 1, Assembly Budget Sub. No. 2, and Assembly Budget Sub. No. 5.
BUDGET Human Services Proposals	County of Monterey letter opposing \$1.3 billion in budget cuts to human services programs (e.g., California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Child Welfare Services, Adult Protective Services (APS), etc.).	5/28/24 letter to Senate Budget and Fiscal Review, Senate Budget Sub. No. 3, Assembly Budget, and Assembly Budget Sub. No. 2.
BUDGET Market Match Program	County of Monterey letter supporting funding for the Market Match Program that incentivizes CalFresh recipients to spend their benefits for farm-direct	5/28/24 letter to Senate Budget and Fiscal Review, Senate Budget Sub. No. 3,

Subject	Description	Action
	fresh fruits and vegetables by providing a dollar-for-dollar match on CalFresh purchases at farm-direct outlets (farmers markets).	Assembly Budget, and Assembly Budget Sub. No. 2.
BUDGET Broadband Proposals	County of Monterey concerns regarding proposed reductions in broadband funding for Middle Mile Broadband Initiative, the Federal Fund Account last mile program (FFA) and the CPUC Loan Loss Reserve (LLR) Program.	5/30/24 letter to Assemblymember Gabriel, Assembly Budget Chair; Senator Weiner, Senate Budget Chair; Assemblymember Bennett, ASM Budget Subcommittee 4 Chair; Senator Becker, Senate Budget Subcommittee 2 Chair.
BUDGET Human Services Programs Restorations	County of Monterey regarding request to support budget restorations for human services programs; specifically to CalWORKs, Child Welfare Services and Adult Protective Services.	6/5/24 letter sent to health & Human Services Agency, DOF, CA Depat. Of Social Services, HHS Policy Consultant Senate Pres. Pro Temp, HHS Policy Consultant Assembly Speaker; ASM Budget Consultant on HHS; CWDA; CSAC HHS Advocacy Policy Consultants and RCRC Advocacy Policy Consultants; State Legislators representing the County of Monterey.
CPUC AT&T COLR Obligation Application	County of Monterey letter opposing AT&T's applications to the CPUC seeking relief from their Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) obligations.	3/12/24 letter to CPUC and to state legislators representing the County of Monterey.
CPUC Proposed Decision to Dismiss ATT COLR Application	County of Monterey letter supporting the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) Glegola's Proposed Decision to dismiss AT&T's application for relief from their Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) obligations, submitted in Application (A.) 23-03-003 on May 10, 2024.	5/23/24 letter to CPUC and state legislators representing the County of Monterey.
Support Letter: FY25 CPF Request Broadway Family Connection Project	Obtained letters of support for the County's Community Project Funding (CPF) requests in the FY25 Federal Budget for the Broadway Family Connection Project.	3/25/24 support letter from Sen. Laird to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla. 3/28/24 support letter from Asm. Addis to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla. 4/1/24 support letter from Speaker Rivas to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla.

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<p>Support Letter: FY25 CPF Request Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement (CRFREE) Project</p>	<p>Obtained letters of support for the County’s Community Project Funding (CPF) requests in the FY25 Federal Budget for the CRFREE Project.</p>	<p>3/25/24 support letter from Sen. Laird to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla 3/27/24 support letter from Speaker Rivas to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla 3/27/24 support letter from Asm. Addis to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla</p>
<p>Support Letter: FY25 CPF Request Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP)</p>	<p>Obtained letters of support for the County’s Community Project Funding (CPF) requests in the FY25 Federal Budget for the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP).</p>	<p>3/25/24 support letter from Sen. Laird to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla 3/27/24 support letter from Speaker Rivas to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla 3/27/24 support letter from Asm. Addis to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla 3/28/24 support letter from Sen. Caballero to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla</p>
<p>Support Letter: FY25 CPF Request Family Justice Center</p>	<p>Obtained letters of support for the County’s Community Project Funding (CPF) requests in the FY25 Federal Budget for the Family Justice Center (Seaside).</p>	<p>3/25/24 support letter from Sen. Laird to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla 3/28/24 support letter from Asm. Addis to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla 4/1/24 support letter from Speaker Rivas to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla</p>
<p>Support Letter: FY25 CPF Request Fort Ord Blight Removal</p>	<p>Obtained letters of support for the County’s Community Project Funding (CPF) requests in the FY25 Federal Budget for the Former Fort Ord Blight Removal Project.</p>	<p>3/25/24 support letter from Sen. Laird to U.S. Senator Alex Padilla 3/27/24 support letter from Speaker Rivas to U.S. Senator Laphonza Butler</p>
<p>Support Letter: FY25 CPF Request Pajaro County Sanitation District Sewer System Improvement Project</p>	<p>Obtained letters of support for the County’s Community Project Funding (CPF) requests in the FY25 Federal Budget for the Pajaro County Sanitation District, Sewer System Improvement Project.</p>	<p>3/25/24 support letter from Sen. Laird to Rep. Zoe Lofgren 3/27/24 support letter from Speaker Rivas to U.S. Senator Laphonza Butler 5/8/24 letter of support from Speaker Robert Rivas to Rep. Zoe Lofgren.</p>

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Support Letter: FY25 CPF Request San Lucas Water Supply Project	Obtained letters of support for the County’s Community Project Funding (CPF) requests in the FY25 Federal Budget for the San Lucas Water Supply Project.	3/27/24 support letter from Speaker Rivas to U.S. Senator Laphonza Butler 5/8/24 letter of support from Speaker Robert Rivas to Rep. Zoe Lofgren
Support Letter: FY25 CPF Request Skate and Bike Park	Obtained letters of support for the County’s Community Project Funding (CPF) requests in the FY25 Federal Budget for the Skate and Bike Park Safe Access Project.	3/27/24 support letter from Speaker Rivas to U.S. Senator Laphonza Butler
Support Letter: Davis Road Widening and Bridge Replacement Project	Obtained letters of support for the County’s Department of Transportation’s Rural Surface Transportation Grant program (Rural) application for the Davis Road Widening and Bridge Replacement Project.	4/26/24 support letter from Senator Caballero to DOT Secretary Buttigieg 4/30/24 support letter from Speaker Rivas to DOT Secretary Buttigieg.
Support Letter: Monterey Salinas Transit SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit Project – CDP Application #3-23-0288	County of Monterey letter supporting Monterey Salinas Transit SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit Project which will provide high quality public transit to improve access for all residents especially those living in disadvantaged communities.	8/13/24 letter to California Coastal Commission
Comment Letter: Draft Engineering Report, San Lucas Water System Improvements” and the “Technical Memo, San Lucas Feasibility Study Peer Review	The County of Monterey strongly recommends the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) proceed with Alternative 1: Intertie with King City.	9/12/24 comment Letter submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board.
Support Letter: DOT Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects (NSFLTP) Program	Obtained letter of support from Senator Anna Caballero for the County’s \$10 million application to the Department of Transportation (DOT) NSFLTP Program for the Palo Colorado Road Storm Damage Repair Project.	9/18/24 Letter of support from Senator Caballero to DOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg.
County Resolution: Resolution in Support of California Property: Tax Apportionment Reform.	On October 15th, the County of Monterey passed a resolution to request the legislature reform state tax apportionments.	10/18/24 Resolution in Support of California Property: Tax Apportionment Reform. From Valerie Ralph, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

- **Positions on Legislation:** The County took 28 positions on bills in 2024. Nossaman worked with the County to draft position letters and memos based on feedback from county departments, worked with statewide organizations in coalitions where relevant, coordinated meetings with Members and

staff to relay our positions, and testified in all policy and fiscal committee hearing as bills we had position on were being heard.

- **Positions on November 2024 Ballot Propositions:** The County of Monterey supported several California State Propositions. Below is an overview of the positions we supported and the outcome for each.
 - **Proposition 2 – Education Bond:** Proposition 2 is a bond measure allowing the state to borrow \$10 billion to help fund repairs and upgrades at thousands of public elementary, middle, and high schools and community colleges across California. Proposition 2 would provide \$8.5 billion in facility renovations and new construction for TK-12 schools, with 10% of the funds dedicated to small school districts. Community colleges would receive \$1.5 billion.
County Position: Support.
Outcome: Passed.
 - **Proposition 3 – Marriage Equality:** The California Constitution provides that only a marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California, and federal law permanently enjoins the state from enforcing this constitutional provision. This measure would repeal this unenforceable constitutional provision instead of providing that the right to marry is a fundamental right, as specified. If approved by the voters, this measure would repeal language in the California Constitution stating that marriage is only between a man and woman.
County Position: Support.
Outcome: Passed.
 - **Proposition 4 – Safe Water Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness And Clean Air Bond Act:** The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 would have the state borrow \$10 billion to pay for climate and environmental projects.
County Position: Support.
Outcome: Passed.
 - **Proposition 5 – Affordable Housing and Public Infrastructure: Voter Approval:** Initially moved through the Legislature as Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 1 and amended through passage of ACA 10. This constitutional amendment would reduce the voter approval threshold from two-thirds to 55% for general obligation bonds that fund public infrastructure, affordable housing projects, and permanent supportive housing for persons at risk of chronic homelessness—and any associated ad valorem taxes needed to pay the interest and redemption charges on bonded indebtedness.
County Position: Support.
Outcome: Failed.
 - **Proposition 6 – Involuntary Servitude: Slavery:** The Proposition would repeal language prohibiting involuntary servitude except to punish crime and replace it with language prohibiting slavery and involuntary servitude absolutely. It also would prohibit the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation from disciplining any incarcerated person for refusing a work assignment but authorize the department to award credits to incarcerated persons who voluntarily participate in work assignments.
County Position: Support.

Outcome: Failed.

- **Proposition 35 - Provides Permanent Funding for Medi-Cal Health Care Services. Initiative Statute:** Makes permanent the existing tax on managed health care insurance plans, currently set to expire in 2026, which the state uses to pay for health care services for low-income families with children, seniors, people with disabilities, and other groups covered by the Medi-Cal program. Requires revenues to be used only for specified Medi-Cal services, including primary and specialty care, emergency care, family planning, mental health, and prescription drugs. Prohibits revenues from being used to replace other existing Medi-Cal funding. Caps administrative expenses and requires independent audits of programs receiving funding.

County Position: Support.

Outcome: Passed.

- **Proposition 36 - Allows Felony Charges and Increases Sentences for Certain Drug and Theft Crimes. Initiative Statute:** Allows felony charges for possessing certain drugs, including fentanyl, and for thefts under \$950—both currently chargeable only as misdemeanors—with two prior drug or two prior theft convictions, as applicable. Defendants who plead guilty to felony drug possession and complete treatment can have charges dismissed. Increases sentences for other specified drug and theft crimes. Increased prison sentences may reduce savings that currently fund mental health and drug treatment programs, K-12 schools, and crime victims; any remaining savings may be used for new felony treatment program.

County Position: Support.

Outcome: Passed.

- **Other Advocacy Efforts:**

- **San Lucas Drinking Water Project:** We worked closely with the County's legislative delegation to advocate for a funding and/or legislative solution to address the lack of safe and clean drinking water in San Lucas. During the 2024 CSAC Legislative Conference, we coordinated a meeting with the Speaker's office to discuss the need for a solution. Supervisor Alejo and Supervisor Lopez attended that meeting. Nossaman advocated with our legislative delegation and bond authors to include language in the Climate bond that would allow San Lucas to apply for grants for safe, clean drinking water even though there has been a responsible party identified for the nitrate issues the water system has experienced. That language was included in Proposition 4 and passed by the voters. Additionally, we continued to work with the State Water Board as they released a "Technical Memo" and "Feasibility Study" on potential projects to address the drinking water issues in the community. Nossaman worked with the County to submit comments on these documents to the State Water Board.
- **Climate Bond:** The Legislature went through a lengthy negotiation on a climate bond between \$6 billion - \$10 billion bond, and ended up passing a \$10 billion bond – Proposition 4; which was passed by the voters in November 2024. Nossaman participated in the ACWA lobbying coalition on this issue and have had several meetings with Members and staff about the bond. Nossaman met with the County's entire Legislative Delegation to discuss our priorities in the Climate Bond. During these conversations, the importance of finding a funding solution for San Lucas was at the top of the discussion. The delegation understood the need for water infrastructure, particularly, dam funding and safe drinking water funding. Nossaman will now work with the County to access the funding programs in Proposition 4.

- **Dam Safety Coalition Update:** Nossaman participated as an active member of this coalition on behalf of the County. Early in 2024, the LAO proposed the Legislature consider removing funding from the recently created Dam Safety grant program in order to address the anticipated budget deficit last year. The County and WRA signed on to urge the Administration and Legislature to maintain dam safety as a priority in budgetary and water and climate bond discussions in 2024. The Coalition held many advocacy meetings to relay this message. Additionally, as climate bond negotiations began to heat up, the Coalition held advocacy meetings to relay the following messages:
 - Express our continued support for the “Dam Safety and Climate Resilience Local Assistance Program” and statutory language as established last year, as well as update decision makers on the progress of the current implementation.
 - Underscore our prior comment on the Governor’s proposed Fiscal Year 2024-25 cut from \$100 million to \$50 million for the “starter” funding for the program.
 - Urge substantial dam safety funding in any final climate resilience bond for the November 2024 ballot.

Ultimately, \$480 million was included in the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024 for dam infrastructure.

- **Veterans’ Home:** There are continued discussions with our Legislative Delegation about the need for a Veterans’ home in the Central Coast. While there was no legislation introduced, we continued to work with the delegation on creative ways to assist the Veterans Community.
- **Childcare Provider Rate Reform:** We research and reported on this issue at the request of the Legislative Committee. According to the Department of Social Services: “To increase positive outcomes for children, families, and the early care and education workforce, California will be setting childcare subsidy payment rates informed by the cost of care, moving away from market rates. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) worked with national experts, Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies (P5), to design and implement an alternative methodology process.” We received feedback from the County that in general, the County supports the alternative methodology process to set provider rates in lieu of a market rate survey. The Rate & Quality Advisory Panel held their final meeting on May 8, 2024.
- **Property Tax Apportionment Reform:** Santa Cruz County requested that Monterey County consider engaging in their efforts to request local State Legislators to evaluate at state property tax apportionment law for particular counties that have a lower percentage than other counties. Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito being some of them. Santa Cruz County passed a resolution requesting local Legislators “do everything possible to change state property tax apportionment law.” The County passed a similar resolution.
- **Extraordinary Session 1:** The Governor called a special session just hours before lawmakers were supposed to adjourn for 2024. His energy bill package failed to pass in the regular session, and he called on the Legislature to address this during a special session. Nossaman updated the County regularly on the discussion and debate.
- **Extraordinary Session 2:** The Governor called a second special session, to safeguard California values and fundamental rights in the face of an incoming Trump administration. The session was announced as an opportunity to focus on bolstering California’s legal resources to protect

civil rights, reproductive freedom, climate action, and immigrant families. The special session will run concurrently with legislative session in 2025.

- **Engagement with County Board of Supervisors and Staff:** Nossaman met with each Member of the Board of Supervisors to ensure our legislative program reflects the Board's vision. Nossaman met regularly with County staff in various Departments to provide updates on state legislation and our advocacy efforts.
- **Engagement with CSAC and RCRC:** Nossaman attended weekly legislative meetings with CSAC and other county advocates. In these meetings, we discussed the most important issues facing counties and coordinate strategy for supporting, opposing or amending legislation or budget proposals. Nossaman also kept in communication with RCRC staff regarding their legislative priorities on rural county related issues.
- **Engagement with Legislative Delegation and Staff:** Nossaman met with the County's legislative delegation and/or staff regularly to discuss legislative proposals and positions, budget requests and issues, and priority projects within the County. Additionally, Nossaman assisted the County coordinating topics for discussion at the annual Legislative Workshop.
- **Governor Newsom's Actions and Executive Orders:** Nossaman kept the County informed of anticipated or signed actions and/or executive orders that the Governor and Administration put forth that impacted the County.

III. Looking Ahead in 2025

While the Legislature and Administration accomplished some significant policy and fiscal goals in 2024, Sacramento will be as busy as ever in the coming year with several anticipated hot policy topics. The 2025 legislative session reconvened on January 6, 2025, after swearing-in newly elected members on December 2, 2024. This year in the Assembly, 65% of the members will have two or fewer years of legislative experience. In the Senate, that number is closer to 30%. While we expect there to be growing pains as new members and staffers acclimate to their new positions, this is also a great opportunity to build new relationships and rethink existing policies.

Both Pro Tem McGuire and Speaker Rivas have encouraged members to focus their introduced bills, limiting them to 35 per member for the two-year session. We expect to see many bills this session focused on improving affordable housing, job creation, reducing energy costs, addressing climate policy, improving public infrastructure, and alleviating everyday Californians' financial burdens.

Also, in response to anticipated federal policy, we also expect to see many bills focused on supporting immigrants and connecting those in need with essential services to bolster protections. The governor called a special session, which commenced on December 2nd and will run concurrently with the regular session, to safeguard civil liberties as threatened by the incoming presidential administration's promises. With the special session, the governor is proposing to create a litigation fund to bolster the state's legal resources to respond to policy proposals that could be harmful to Californians' immigration, abortion access, climate change, and civil rights.

Aside from the fact that a special session is limited to the subject matter for which it was called, there are no significant differences in the legislative process between a regular and a special session. However, one important note, regular session bills generally take effect on the following January 1, yet special session bills take effect on the 91st day after the adjournment of the special session. Of course, a

bill with an urgency clause in a special session will take effect immediately once the governor signs, just like an urgency clause bill in a regular session.

Below are the bills introduced in this special session, which the legislature has submitted to provide funding to the California Department of Justice (DOJ) should it be necessary. The County filed a letter of support for the following bills in December 2024.

- **SBX1 1 (Wiener)** -Includes \$25 million in funding proposed by Governor Newsom for the California Department of Justice to bolster legal resources and adds \$10 million for County Counsels and City Attorneys for similar purposes. It also expands on that effort by including \$25 million for Legal Aid efforts and legal services for local communities.
Current Position: Support
- **ABX1 1 (Gabriel)** - Will set aside up to \$25 million in funding to cover potential litigation costs for the California Department of Justice and other state agencies to challenge any unconstitutional or unlawful federal actions that threaten California's interests or values.
Current Position: Support
- **ABX1-2 (Gabriel)** - Will immediately allocate \$500,000 to fund initial case preparation for the California Department of Justice and other state agencies to challenge any unconstitutional or unlawful federal actions threatening California's interests or values.
Current Position: Support

The Senate has recently announced full Committee assignments, whereas Speaker Rivas has so far only announced the Assembly Policy Committee Chair assignments. Although we engage various policy committees throughout the year on the County of Monterey's behalf, the Committees and their respective chairs with which we tend to engage the most are noted below. There are several newly assigned chairs, and we will begin connecting with them on behalf of the County immediately.

The legislative delegation for the County of Monterey remains the same; however, Senator Caballero no longer represents the County due to redistricting.