

CITY OF LA PALMA
COUNCIL POLICY

NUMBER: 2

DATE (Adopted/Amended): March 3, 2015

SUBJECT: Legislative Advocacy and Official City Positions

POLICY:

This Policy includes City Council Guiding Principles and procedures for adopting and communicating official City positions on legislation, regulations, or grant applications by or to other government bodies and for maintaining positive intergovernmental relations. The City Council recognizes the need to protect La Palma's interests and local legislative authority and to identify various avenues to implement its strategic goals. The purpose of the policy is to guide City officials and staff in considering legislative or regulatory proposals and to allow for a timely response to legislative issues important to the City, including letters from the Mayor to the Legislature and/or Congress consistent with this policy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Preserve Local Control

Preserve and protect the City's powers, duties and prerogatives to enact legislation and policy direction concerning local affairs, and oppose legislation that preempts local authority. Local agencies should preserve and enhance authority and accountability for revenues raised and services provided.

Promote Fiscal Stability

Support measures that promote fiscal stability, predictability, and financial independence. Support measures that preserve the City's revenue base and local control over local government budgeting, recognizing that economic cost is a determinate in considering the merits and/or impacts of any proposed legislation or regulation. Oppose measures that make cities more dependent on the County, State or Federal Governments for financial stability, such as mandated costs with no guarantee of local reimbursement or offsetting benefits. Oppose measures that shift local funds to the County, State or Federal Governments, without offsetting benefits.

Support Funding Opportunities

Support opportunities that allow the City 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 could also include dedicated funding streams at the regional, state and federal levels that allow the City to maximize local revenues, offset and leverage capital expenditures, and maintain City goals and standards.

ADVOCACY PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

It is the policy of the City of La Palma to proactively monitor and advocate for legislation as directed by the Guiding Principles and by the specific direction of the City Council. This process involves interaction with federal, state and local government entities both in regards to specific items of legislation and to promote positive ongoing intergovernmental relationships. Such ongoing positive relationships are fostered by ongoing participation and involvement by the City Council and City staff in national, state, and regional organizations and through ongoing communications and cooperation with local legislators. Therefore, to the extent practical, involvement in such organizations or efforts is encouraged and supported by the City.

Monitoring legislation is also a shared function of the City Council and City staff. City Council Members can request consideration of legislative positions through the Council Request process set forth in Council Policy 1, Council Norms. City staff is responsible to provide periodic updates on legislative proposals and recommendations for official City positions. In providing the necessary information to the City Council, staff shall include the following:

- A basic summary of the legislation;
- How the legislation may impact the City of La Palma, including potential fiscal impacts;
- Positions taken by other bodies including the League of California Cities (LOCC), Association of California Cities – Orange County (ACC-OC), other cities or local agencies, and/or other relevant professional or non-profit organizations; and,
- Current status of the legislation.

Whenever possible the City Council should be given the opportunity to consider and adopt official positions formally before communication through letters or other means are prepared. The Mayor is authorized to sign letters on behalf of the City Council once an official position is taken. Such communication should be in the form of letters unless other forms have been requested by a legislator or a body to which the City is a member such as the LOCC. For legislation, positions will generally be communicated initially to the author, the representative of the City to the legislative body, and advocacy organizations to which the City belongs, such as the LOCC. As legislation progresses, further correspondence may be sent to pertinent legislative committee members, other legislators or to the Governor or President without additional action by the City Council. Staff is responsible to provide periodic updates relating to the item once a position has been adopted by the City Council.

In cases where urgent action is required, or when a City Council meeting will not be held in time for the communication to be effective, communication on behalf of the City may still be sent if the following criteria is met:

- Timing does not allow for full City Council consideration.
- The position is consistent with the Guiding Principles adopted as a part of this Policy.
- The position is consistent with that of organizations to which the City is a member, such as the LOCC.
- The position and correspondence sent are communicated to the City Council as soon as possible with the supporting information normally included in a request to the City Council.

In addition to official City positions on legislation, regulations or grant applications, individual City Council Members, the City Manager, and members of the City's Management Team (Police Chief, Department Directors, Police Captains) may take a position on such items and communicate regarding those positions so long as they clearly indicate that the letter reflects their individual position and is not the position of the City of La Palma. In no case shall a member of City staff take or communicate a position which is contrary to an official position of the City. Copies of any communication from an individual City Council Member or City staff member shall be provided to the full City Council for information.

BACKGROUND: This policy replaces prior City Council Policy 33, Communication of Official City Positions adopted on April 18, 2008.

REVIEW:

This policy is to be regularly reviewed every two years or more frequently as required.