

## Waterman & Associates – Federal Policy Accomplishments

Waterman & Associates (W&A) has provided federal legislative and administrative services on behalf of Solano County since 2009. During that time, the firm has successfully promoted the County's policy objectives in Washington, D.C. while earning the respect of the California congressional delegation, key administration officials, and pertinent national organizations, including the National Association of Counties (NACo).

W&A's approach to lobbying emphasizes teamwork and collaboration. In conjunction with the Board of Supervisors, key Department heads and County staff, the firm has registered a number of notable achievements on behalf of Solano County. Listed below are some of the firm's recent accomplishments.

### Health and Human Services

- *Medicaid* – As part of this year's debate over repealing and replacing the *Affordable Care Act* (ACA), W&A has worked tirelessly on behalf of Solano County to protect the Medicaid program from draconian cuts. With the prospect that health care reform efforts could be revived on Capitol Hill, the firm continues to work with the County's congressional delegation and other key members of Congress to maintain the Medicaid program as a means-tested entitlement and preserve provisions in current law allowing for expanded program eligibility and coverage standards.
- *Home Visiting Program* – W&A has successfully worked to ensure continued funding for evidence-based, cost effective programs operated by Solano County, including the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) and Healthy Families America (HFA) models. Solano County is one of 21 counties in the state that has received federal competitive grant funding to improve maternal and child health and prevent child abuse and neglect. As part of its advocacy efforts, W&A has been participating in a national Home Visiting Coalition, with outreach efforts aimed at key members of Congress and committee staff.
- *Prevention and Public Health Fund* – W&A continues to partner with NACo, the County Health Executives Association of California, and others to fight the proposed elimination of the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Targeted most recently in congressional efforts to repeal the ACA, the nearly \$1 billion annual Fund assists state and local governments and non-profit organizations as they address local community health needs.
- *Child Welfare* – W&A was involved in recent legislative efforts that resulted in key reforms to the child welfare system. Pursuant to the *Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act* (HR 4980; PL 113-183), policy changes affecting child welfare agencies include provisions requiring states to include a "reasonable and prudent parent standard" – similar to what already exists in California – to enable foster youth to participate more readily in extracurricular, cultural, and social activities with their peers. The law also eliminates Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) as a permanency goal for children under the age of 16 in order to continue to push agencies to find a permanent placement for youth with a family. Since passage of HR 4980, W&A has been involved in discussions with the Department of Health and Human Services regarding issues related to the implementation of PL 113-183.

- *Human Trafficking* – With human trafficking on the rise and of grave concern to Solano County, W&A has continued to advocate for additional federal resources to address this crisis. A recent new law, the *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act* (PL 114-22), establishes a Domestic Trafficking Victims Fund through the Department of Justice, which is paid with federal fines from persons convicted of trafficking and other sex crimes. Under the law, three-year competitive block grants are available to states and counties addressing the issue, with grants focused on collaboration, training, and funding for services provided by entities involved with sexually exploited youth.

## **Water Resources**

W&A has been a strong advocate for key Solano County water projects under the purview of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The firm has successfully worked with the Bureau, Corps, and the County's congressional delegation to ensure continued funding for the following projects:

- The Solano Project (Bureau of Reclamation). The project has received roughly \$3.7 million annually in recent years, with dollars set aside for various resource management activities, as well as facilities, operations, maintenance, and replacement activities.
- San Pablo Bay and Mare Island Strait (Corps). Funding for operation and maintenance (dredging) activities have totaled between \$2 million and \$6.4 million per year over the course of the past several appropriations/Corps Work Plan cycles.
- Suisun Bay Channel dredging (Corps). Funding has totaled roughly \$4 million to \$5 million per year.
- Other relevant Corps projects receiving annual appropriations: Sacramento River Bank Protection project; Sacramento River, 30 foot project; Sacramento River and Tributaries, debris control; Sacramento River Shallow Draft Channel; San Francisco Bay Long-Term Management Strategy.

*Delta Counties Coalition (DCC)* – Waterman & Associates continues to be an active participant in the DCC on behalf of Solano County. As the County's Washington, D.C.-based coalition representative, Waterman & Associates has promoted the County's federal water policy interests and objectives with key federal agencies and members of Congress. While much of the coalition work has been devoted to opposing the State's twin tunnels project while at the same time promoting alternatives to CA WaterFix, significant time and attention has been devoted to other Delta-related federal issues.

*California Water/Drought Policy Legislation* – W&A has worked with Solano County's congressional delegation and other Delta-area lawmakers in opposition to legislation that would block legal protections for the Delta and its fisheries. Although several California water policy changes were enacted in late 2016 after years of contentious debate, the most egregious changes to federal and state water management practices have continued to be rejected in Congress.

*Water Infrastructure Legislation* – W&A has aggressively promoted Solano County's interests as part of the biennial process to renew the *Water Resources Development Act* (WRDA). Recent WRDA reauthorization bills provide for a number of important reforms, including:

- *Levee Vegetation Policy Review* – The Army Corps is required to conduct a comprehensive review of the agency's one-size-fits-all levee vegetation removal policy which, if left unchanged, would translate into billions of dollars in compliance costs to Solano County and other entities. In conducting the review, the Corps is required to consult with specific stakeholders, including representatives of state and local governments, federal agencies, and appropriate nongovernmental agencies. It should be noted that Solano County's federal advocate played a lead role in securing this statutory language.
- *Water Infrastructure Financing Innovation Act* – W&A was involved in the creation of a five-year WIFIA pilot project that provides credit assistance for drinking water, wastewater, and other water resources infrastructure projects. The program is modeled after the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, which provides low-cost credit that states can leverage with private investment for major road and bridge programs.
- *State Revolving Fund* – W&A worked with key members of Congress to modify the existing revolving fund program to increase the affordability of SRF financing to local communities, increase flexibility in the uses of the Clean Water SRF to address local water quality concerns, and promote more cost-effective management of infrastructure financed by SRF resources.
- *Expanded Role for Non-Federal Interests* – WRDA law now provides for an expanded role for state and local governments, as well as other non-federal entities, in water infrastructure development. For example, non-federal entities may provide funds to the Corps to carry out studies for proposed water infrastructure projects and non-federal entities may carry out and build projects – or contract with the Corps to carry out the work on a federal project – if the agency approves the proposal and the project is authorized by Congress.

*National Heritage Area Legislation* – Waterman & Associates has worked closely with the state's senators and key House members to develop legislation that would designate the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta as a National Heritage Area (NHA). While the bill has not yet been enacted, measurable progress on the legislation has been made.

### **Transportation Reauthorization**

Waterman & Associates has successfully promoted Solano County's surface transportation priorities during the last two highway and transit reauthorization cycles. Specifically, the County's advocates:

- Played a lead role in ensuring that *MAP-21* and the *FAST Act* maintained a dedicated federal funding stream for local, *off-system* bridges. This provision is critically important to Solano County, which owns a high percentage of off-system bridges that are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete (SD/FO).
- W&A led efforts to secure a provision in the *FAST Act* that opens up funding under the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) for locally owned bridges that are *on* the federal-aid highway system. This new component of federal law benefits Solano County, which has a large percentage of local on-system bridges that are in need of additional federal resources.

- Worked to ensure that local infrastructure receives more federal-aid highway dollars through a revised Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP). The most recent transportation law also gradually increases the percentage of STBGP funds that are suballocated to local areas, from 51 percent in fiscal year 2016 to 55 percent in fiscal year 2020.
- Successfully advocated for a number of provisions that streamline the delivery of surface transportation projects.
- Successfully fought to remove legislative language that would have rescinded unobligated balances for previously earmarked transportation projects. (Projects in Solano County that could have been impacted include: \$1.6 million to replace Winters Bridge between Solano and Yolo Counties; \$2.4 million for the Cordelia Hill Sky Valley transportation enhancement project; \$17.48 million to upgrade and reconstruct the I-80/I-680/SR 12 Interchange; \$3.2 million to upgrade Jepson Parkway at the North and South Gates of Travis Air Force Base; and \$12.1 million to construct a reliever route system on I-80).

### **Local Law Enforcement Funding**

W&A has worked successfully to protect and enhance funding for key local law enforcement and criminal justice programs that are of direct interest to Solano County, including the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, Justice Assistance Grant/Byrne funds, and the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP).

### **California National Guard Enlistment Bonuses**

W&A was actively involved in efforts to defeat a recent Department of Defense plan to order thousands of former National Guard members from California to pay back enlistment and reenlistment bonuses and incentives totaling as much as \$20 million. The enlistment “clawback” was shelved after Representative Garamendi championed language in the fiscal year 2017 *National Defense Authorization Act* that requires the Pentagon to waive the National Guard recruitment bonuses *unless* there is evidence that a service member knew that they weren’t eligible to receive the benefit.

### **Tribal Affairs**

- *Fee-to-Trust Reform* – Waterman & Associates has been the leading voice among local government advocates in promoting a series of legislative reforms to the U.S. Department of the Interior’s fee-to-trust process. For the first time since the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its controversial *Carcieri v. Salazar* decision in 2009, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs approved a comprehensive trust reform package during the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress that would have, among other things, given counties a voice in the fee-to-trust process.
- *Scotts Valley Casino* – Waterman & Associates has provided members of the Solano County Board of Supervisors and County staff with access to key decision makers within the U.S. Department of the Interior and Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 2016 and 2017, the County’s Washington representatives arranged for meetings between Solano County and Department officials regarding the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians’ application to have land in Vallejo taken into federal trust status.

**Housing, Community Development, and Homeless Assistance**

Waterman & Associates has worked closely with Solano County's congressional delegation to protect key housing and community development programs from proposed budget cuts, including the Community Development Block Grant program, HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants, the HOME Investment Partnerships program, and the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative.