

2020 Platform

Updated Rural Plank

California draws strength from our diversity, both culturally and geographically. The economy of California is built on the combination of the robust commercial and industrial enterprise of our urban areas and the abundant natural and agricultural resources of our rural areas.

In recognition of the special opportunities and challenges in developing policies and programs that work in rural communities, California Democrats will:

- Encourage elected officials to consider the effect on rural California of any new policies or programs by asking if they are fair and if they will work in rural California communities;
- Support legislation that provides funding for equal services to all communities in order to enhance the vibrant culture, historical significance and economy of rural areas;
- Support policies that consider financial capacity in rural areas when implementing State requirements for recycling, composting, hazardous waste and storm water control; adjust compliance timelines and targets as needed, or provide funding to support such programs;
- Support equitable distribution of state resources, programs, and tax dollars based on need, not population, ensuring equitable investment in rural community development and infrastructure, such as water, sewer, power, internet, and transportation;
- Support policies that balance the lawful and responsible ownership of firearms for hunting, sport and personal protection with the growing need for gun safety laws;
- Sustain a lasting and respectful relationship with Tribal Nations and bolster efforts to support tribal sovereignty, economic development, culture, language, restoration of ancestral land and natural resources;
- Respect the value and cultural diversity of immigrants' contributions to California's rural and agricultural economy by demanding stronger protections for agricultural workers, including: regulation of work hours, worker safety, the elimination of agricultural exemption to child labor laws, provisions for adequate housing for migrant workers, harassment protections, and sanitary facilities in the field;
- Commit to closing the "digital divide" by allocating State funds to build out broadband infrastructure in rural California and require oversight by the CA Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), to hold broadband providers accountable for their levels of service;
- Support resources to improve rural election administration and technology, and provide funding for vote by mail elections in rural counties;
- Support increased financing, subsidy options and tax incentives to promote new affordable housing development in rural counties;

- Create a rural economic development plan and encourage rural business growth in order to create and retain jobs;
- Improve rural disaster resilience by increasing vegetation management on both public and private rural roads, providing fire safe clearing on State and Federal land at the Wildlife-Urban Interface (WUI), and providing funding for emergency equipment and public safety grade communications for evacuation and recovery;
- Provide financial incentives for private homeowners to remove fuels from properties; • Prevent insurance agencies from dropping fire insurance and/or refusing to insure new owners in WUI areas.