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CALIFORNIA

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Board Agenda Memo

MEETING DATE: January 28, 2026

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Tine Mathiasen, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Board

SUBJECT: Activating the Legislative Platform

RECOMMENDATION: Information only.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND:

Legislative advocacy is conducted both directly by the Board of Supervisors and County staff, as well as through the County's contracted lobbying firms and member associations. The County partners with Shaw Yoder Antwhi Schmelzer & Lange (SYASL) for state advocacy and Paragon Government Relations, Inc. (Paragon) for federal advocacy. Throughout the year, both firms work closely with County staff to advance the Board's priorities and Legislative Platform, including assisting with research on policy topics, reviewing bills and providing input, providing legislative updates, and participating in regular monthly coordination meetings focused on state and federal advocacy. The firms also work with the Board of Supervisors and staff to directly advocate on Nevada County's behalf, including assisting with Board visits to the State Capitol and United States Capitol to testify or to meet with the County's representatives.

To provide an overview of upcoming legislative issues and facilitate an interactive discussion with the Board, the panel will include Karen Lange of SYASL and Hasan Sarsour of Paragon. This panel will discuss Nevada County's key state-level advocacy wins in 2025 and the factors that contributed to their success.

Key state wins in 2025 include preserving landline reliability through Carrier of Last Resort advocacy; legislative actions supporting public safety and veterans, such as Senate Bill 229 which included Nevada County deputy sheriffs within the definition of peace officer, and Senate Bill 694 which addressed deceptive practices impacting service members and veterans; and affordability-focused advocacy, including fire

insurance legislation and Assembly Bill 564, which decreased the cannabis excise tax from 19% to 15% and supported small cannabis businesses.

Key federal wins in 2025 include advocacy around increased federal funding secured through the Congressionally Directed Spending (earmarks) process, reauthorizing the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program, progress in advancing conversations around disaster reform including FEMA reorganization and reimbursement processes, and affordability-focused advocacy such as fire insurance issues.

In addition, the panelists will provide an overview of the top federal and state priorities included in the County's 2026 Legislative Platform and their plan for advocacy. The discussion will focus on federal funding cuts to safety-net programs, their impacts on County services, and how the Platform will guide advocacy and messaging strategies. It will also highlight key state budget opportunities and challenges, and explain how the Legislative Platform will be used to support coordinated and effective advocacy at the state level.

Presenter Bios

Karen Lange

Shaw Yoder Antwhi Schmelzer & Lange, Partner

Following ten years of working with the firm's partners and staff as a legislative advocate, Karen Lange became a partner in 2016. Since beginning her career in public policy as a Congressional intern in 1998, Karen's vast expertise has evolved to encompass policy related to energy, health, agriculture, water, local government, and, most recently, animal welfare and the aftermarket auto industry. Prior to becoming an advocate, Karen served two separate stints as a staff member in the California State Assembly, including as Legislative Director for a member of the Assembly. In between, she worked for Navigant Consulting, which was advising the State of California on energy contracts procured by the state. Karen holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Berkeley.

Hasan Sarsour

Paragon Government Relations, Senior Associate

Hasan Sarsour is a proven advocate for the firm's clients, serving county governments on such issues as energy policy, agriculture, natural resources, public lands, and housing. Prior to joining Paragon Government Relations in 2011, Hasan worked as a staff member on the House Energy and Commerce Committee where he assumed responsibility for legislative issues within the panel's jurisdiction and was closely involved in hearings, briefings, and strategic initiatives to advance the chairman's legislative agenda. While on Capitol Hill, Hasan also served as a legislative assistant to Congressman Dan Maffei. In that capacity, he developed, planned, and advised the congressman on a range of domestic policy objectives, including health care policy, transportation projects, infrastructure issues, appropriations, and the federal budget. He also counseled the congressman on issues arising before the House Judiciary Committee. Hasan is a graduate of James Madison University in Virginia, where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science.

Item Initiated by: Carissa Cyr, Senior Management Analyst

Approved by: Tine Mathiasen, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Board

Submittal Date: January 12, 2026