

Nueces County
87th Regular Legislative Session
Legislative Agenda
DRAFT

The Nueces County Commissioners Court looks forward to working with our state leaders on policies and programs that will enhance the quality of life for all residents of Nueces County. This legislative agenda has been developed with input from county officeholders, business, public health, economic development, tourism and environmental entities. The County welcomes the opportunity to foster collaboration with state partners and entities to advance policies that will provide counties the tools necessary to serve their constituencies as well as work towards a prosperous government and state economy.

Top Priorities

- Oppose any attempt to limit or prohibit the authority of county officials to use public funds to communicate with legislators and regulatory entities, as well as pay membership dues to organizations that hire registered lobbyists.
- Support legislation that would allow additional filings fees in civil cases.
- Support the Port of Corpus Christi Authority (PCCA) proposal to develop real property it owns inside the boundaries of a municipality in the same way PCCA was authorized to develop Naval Station Ingleside; namely, for job creation and retention, economic development, industry, commerce, manufacturing, housing, recreation, and infrastructure installation
- Support increased state funding for the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program.
- Support legislation maximizing the number of insured and reduce the number of underinsured Texans by securing available federal and state funds to reform and renew opportunities to broaden the net of coverage, particularly given the uncertain status of the Medicaid 1115 Waiver, ongoing or future health pandemics, as well as the need to close racial and socioeconomic inequality gaps.
- Support legislation that will allow an increase in local vehicle registration fees, and other revenue sources for the reduction of property taxes without imposing any additional revenue caps.
- Support legislation that authorizes a local government to contract or agree with a military unit of the United States Department of Defense assigned to a military installation that is located within the state to perform government and services in accordance with Chapter 791, Government Code.

Local Control

- Oppose unfunded state mandates and support the passage of legislation in the form of an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Texas that would expressly prohibit the imposition of a mandatory governmental program on Texas counties, whether by an act of the Texas Legislature or a state agency or by an executive order, unless the State

of Texas has fully funded and disbursed all necessary funds to enable Texas counties to operate said governmental program.

Taxes

- Oppose unreasonable revenue caps.
- Preserve and protect Nueces County's ad valorem tax base.
- Support the Texas Tax Assessor-Collectors Association's (TACA) 87th Regular Session legislative recommendations. (Attached)
- Support efforts to improve the driver license renewal process and continue identify efforts to enhance driver license offices in Nueces County.

Disaster Preparedness & Emergency Management

- Support legislation that requires equal treatment of local governments and prevents a state official or state agency from placing additional restrictions on a city's use of federal funds from future stimulus legislation related to a health pandemic that impedes the flexible use and prompt expenditure of funds as authorized by Congress.
- Support simplified reporting system and increased investment in public health IT Infrastructure needs to allow for real time communication and disease surveillance between local health departments, medical institutions, Texas Department of State Health Services and the Center for Disease Control
- Support windstorm insurance reform that will provide affordable, equitable rates for the Texas coast. Oppose unnecessary rate hikes from the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA).

Governance

- Establish uniform term limits for all county boards & commissions.
- Support legislation advanced by the Texas Tax-Assessor Collectors Association that would clearly define in statute the timeframe for processing vehicle title and registration paperwork; and authorize a process for transferring vehicle title and registrations, when necessary, to a different county.
- Support local control of emergency management operations.

Transportation & Economic Development

- Support legislation that creates a Nueces County Regional Mobility Authority
- Support Hotel Occupancy Tax legislation that permits expansion of sporting facilities category to include additional sports activities and venues. **(Marez)**
- Support legislation that provides educational and workforce training in underserved areas. **(Marez)**
- Oppose legislation that impairs the flexibility of local government to utilize all economic development tools currently available.

Education

- Support increased educational opportunities and job creation/retention for the residents of Nueces County and the Coastal Bend region through the Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corporation, Port of Corpus Christi Authority, public schools, Del Mar College, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi (TAMUCC) and Texas A&M University Kingsville (TAMUK).

- Support TAMUCC exceptional item request for the Lone Star Unmanned Aircraft Systems Center for Excellence and Innovation (LSUASC) Emergency Management service enhancement.
- Support TAMUCC exceptional item request Strengthening Texas' Coastal Economy Through Sustainable Commercial Oyster Aquaculture
- Advance the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's 60x30TX goals:
 - improve the higher education funding system to incentivize quality, workforce readiness, and certificate and degree completion;
 - fully fund TEXAS grants, Tuition Equalization Grants and Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) grants;
 - streamline the college credit transfer process towards quicker certificate and degree completion and reduced student debt;
 - support the goal of all high school graduates completing at least 12 student credit hours of Dual Credit courses;
- Meet industry workforce needs through alignment and expansion of: trade and technical skills training, apprenticeships, internships, and work-based learning opportunities, along with funding for workforce Dual Credit programs, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) and industry-specific certifications and degrees
- Nueces County supports enhanced formula and non-formula funding for Del Mar College, TAMUCC and TAMUK and authorizing Tuition Revenue Bonds for requested capital projects.

Infrastructure

- Discussion of supporting legislation to remove the historical designation on the old Nueces County Courthouse. (Chesney/Gonzalez)
- Support legislation that preserves existing historical preservation and improvement tools.
- Support legislation and funding that continues the implementation of Texas State Water Plan.
- Support legislation and funding that continue the implementation of the Texas State Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF) to meet the statewide effort to help protect urban and rural Texas from flood and natural flood related events and the associated loss of life and economic costs.
- Support legislation and programs that will develop a long-range plan identifying resources needed which will enhance broadband connectivity and access to local governments, public education, healthcare, employment, news, and information.

Public safety & Behavioral Health

- Support additional funding for mental health services and the implementation of a state mental health plan to ensure efficient and effective use of state resources.
- Support legislation that supports the duties and roles of county justice of the peace officers. (**Support Texas Justice of the Peace & Constables Association**)
- Support full state funding for all mandatory Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program placements in an amount adequate for year-round programs.

- Support increased funding to ensure timely and appropriate access to inpatient and outpatient community-based services and supports for Texans with a behavioral health diagnosis.
- Consider extending banning firearms at voting locations 500 or 1,000 ft.

Environmental

- Supports proposals to strengthen code enforcements that promote health and safety. **(Vaughn)**
- Support legislation that provides transparency with utility, transportation or chemical projects within a local community. **(Vaughn)**

General

- Where possible and where interest are similar, the County will coordinate its legislative agenda with other political jurisdictions and key community stakeholders in the region and provide assistance to those entities.