



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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Potential 2014 Federal Legislative Agenda Items

Federal Priorities (in alphabetical order)

Levee Recertification (new)

The City will work with stakeholders to respond to the requirements of the recertification process of the levees along the Columbia River.

Maintain Alternative Compliance Options for the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT2)

Seek assistance from the federal congressional delegation to maintain its alternate form of compliance with the treatment requirements of the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (LT2).

Municipal Bonds Interest Tax Exemption

The City opposes change the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds. Changing tax-exempt status of municipal bonds eliminates a financing tool that helps reduce the costs of public projects to taxpayers and ratepayers.

Portland Harbor Superfund

The City supports providing additional resources to EPA Region 10 for the Portland Harbor Superfund Site.

Reauthorization of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, the federal surface transportation bill

- The City will advocate for sustainable sources of revenue to provide for stable funding for investment in transportation infrastructure and transit services.
- The City supports the authorization of the Transportation Investment Regenerating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program and provide for increased competition, and funding.
- The City supports amending MAP-21 to allow for direct allocations of funding to Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).
- The City supports amending MAP-21 to restore flexibility in funding for transit and alternative modes of transportation.

Federal Policy Positions and Funding Priorities (in alphabetical order)

Economic Development

Permanent Authorization of the EB-5 Regional Care Program

The City encourages the Federal government to permanently authorize the EB-5 Regional Center program, which aims to stimulate the economy through job creation and capital investment by foreign investors.

Export Initiative Policies

The City encourages support for federal programs designed to boost American exports – the State Trade and Export Promotion Grant (STEP) program, the U.S. Export Assistance Centers and the Foreign Commercial Service.

Inclusive Entrepreneurship

The City supports the efforts of the SBA through its minority Business Development Agency to foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses, and the 8(a) Business Development Program help to small, disadvantaged businesses compete.

Energy, Environment, and Water

Brownfields Utilization, Investment, and Local Development (BUILD) Act (new)

The Brownfields Program needs to be reauthorized, giving the City the opportunity to weigh in on the process with the delegation.

Climate Change

Global climate change looms as a defining global issue and poses significant risks and opportunities for Portland.

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Incentives

The City actively supports legislation and policies that provide incentives for energy efficiency, investment in renewable energy projects, as well as investments in fuel-efficient vehicles and electric vehicles.

Coal Exports

A number of large coal-export facilities have been proposed for the Pacific Northwest, including three in Oregon. If they proceed, coal that is exported through several of these facilities would need to be transported through Portland, presenting potentially serious health concerns to Portland residents and businesses as well as exacerbating climate change.

Tar Sands – Keystone Pipeline

In light of the aims of the City's Climate Action Plan that aims to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from 1990 levels by 2050, the City expresses deep concern for the increase in Canadian tar-sands exploration and refining.

Farm Bill

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (new)

The City opposes cuts to the SNAP program, which provide food assistance benefits to approximately 47.6 million people nationwide.

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (new)

The City supports food policy reforms to create parity for subsidies to healthy fruits and vegetables at the same level as other types of food.

Health Care

Emergency Services Reimbursement (new)

Currently, a significant number of Portland Fire & Rescue's emergency responses are related to calls for service related to medical issues. In addition, Portland is exploring a model implemented in other cities that includes a nurse or another health professional at 9-1-1 to triage some calls for emergency medical service, reducing medical costs for the public and insurers. With this in mind, the City supports federal efforts to add health care reimbursement models that acknowledge the role of fire departments and 9-1-1 centers in providing medical services.

Drug and Alcohol Treatment

The City supports robust federal funding for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SABG) and the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The City also supports federal funding for mobile mental health crisis intervention teams.

Affordable Care Act "affordable coverage" definition (new)

The City supports a change to the definition of "affordable" in the Affordable Care Act to ensure families have access to buy insurance through the Exchange if the family coverage offered through their employer is not affordable. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) interpretation of the definition of "affordable" in the Affordable Care Act currently prevents families from accessing tax credits through the Exchange if an employer offers family coverage, even if that coverage is only available at an exorbitant cost. Specifically, the IRS interpretation is that if an employer offers affordable employee-only coverage to an employee, and the employer also offers family coverage, the family coverage is considered affordable no matter what its cost.

Prescription Drug Costs

The City supports reform to patent and other laws that results in higher U.S. costs for prescription drugs, such as asthma medications, that are affordable in other countries.

Housing Policy

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Support increased funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), a flexible resource which allows communities to address a wide range of unique community development and affordable housing needs.

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) provide grants to implement local housing strategies designed to increase homeownership and affordable housing opportunities for low and very low-income Americans.

Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act implementation

The City will continue to work with HUD on the implementation of the HEARTH Act, and work to establish Continuum of Care governance structure with the City's partners.

Housing and Urban Development/ Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD/VASH)

The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless Veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Immigration Reform

Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Comprehensive immigration reform should provide a pathway to citizenship, as well as consider guest worker programs and a focus on visa programs to bolster the needs of the high-tech economy, as well as provide for border security.

Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement (SAFE) Act (new)

The City opposes legislation linking officers asking immigration status with eligibility for COPS funding

Parks

Community Parks Revitalization Act

The City supports legislation, such as the Community Parks Revitalization Act, that will commit funding toward the rehabilitation and construction of our nation's community parks, as well as funding for recreational programming.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Funding (new)

Support increased funding for the LWCF program which provides matching grants to States and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities (as well as funding for shared federal land acquisition and conservation strategies).

Public Safety and Safety Communications Infrastructure

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program

The City supports increased funding for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program to provide funds for mitigation planning and the implementation of those plans before a catastrophe occurs.

Pipeline Safety (new)

The City will work with the delegation to highlight the need for oversight of gas and liquid fuel pipelines and tanks for safety and seismic preparedness.

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Program funding

Support funding to advance the practice of community policing by state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies.

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) hiring grant maintenance of effort modification (new)

Maintenance of effort requirements has impeded application as it is not clear local budgets can sustain employment of COPS funded officers the entire time.

Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

Support increased funding for the Byrne JAG grant program. Funding allows states and local governments to support a broad range of programs to prevent illegal drug activities, control violent crime and improve the criminal justice system.

Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) program (new)

The City supports GREAT, a school-based gang and violence-prevention program designed to teach youths to avoid gang membership, prevent violence and criminal activity, and assist youth in developing positive relationships with law enforcement.

Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funding

The City will continue to advocate for the preservation and expansion of the Urban Area Security Initiative, which provides resources to the region.

Revenue Authority

Internet Tax Freedom Forever Act

Oppose efforts to extend the law to pre-empt local taxes on the internet forever (since it came into effect in 1998 – taxes in place prior to 1998 are grandfathered). Advocate for the sunset of ITFA in 2014.

Digital Goods & Services Tax Fairness Act

Oppose the Digital Goods & Services Tax Fairness Act to sharply restrict, and in many cases, preempt, the ability of state and local governments to tax “digital goods and services.” The bill creates a nationwide “tax preference” for online goods and services over competing brick-and-mortar sales.

The Mainstreet Fairness Act and Marketplace Fairness Act

The City supports both the Mainstreet Fairness Act, and the Marketplace Fairness Act - legislation would grant states the authority to compel online and catalog retailers, no matter where they are located, to collect sales tax at the time of a transaction - exactly as local “brick and mortar” retailers are already required to do.

Wireless Tax Fairness Act

The City opposes legislative initiatives to preempt state or local taxing authority on wireless service providers and their property.

Online Travel Companies

The City opposes federal preemption of local authority or ability to collect revenue, specifically the proposed Internet Travel Tax Fairness Act, which would create an economic and competitive disadvantage for “brick and mortar” hotels by creating preemption for the collection of local hotel/motel taxes booked through Online Travel Companies (OTCs).

Telecommunications

Oppose Pre-Emption of Zoning of Cell Phone Towers

Oppose any attempt by the Federal Communications Commission or Congress to preempt state or local zoning, zoning procedures, and review deadlines for communication facilities.

Study Health Effects of Cell Tower Siting

Request that the Federal Communications Commission work with the US Food and Drug Administration to update studies on potential health concerns arising from radio frequency wireless emissions in light of the proliferation of wireless use.

Community Access Protection (CAP) Act

Support the CAP Act to eliminate unnecessary limits on the use of Public, Educational, and Governmental Access Channels (PEG) funds, create a technology neutral definition of a cable system, and bar discriminatory treatment of PEG channels.

Net Neutrality

The City supports net neutrality and will oppose efforts that prevent the right of everyone to use Internet data without regard to content, destination or source.

FCC Notice of Inquiry Acceleration of Broadband Deployment

Congress should reject any legislative or Federal Communications Commission initiative to preempt Portland's ability to manage its rights-of-way.

National Broadband Plan

The City supports local government's authority to provide municipal broadband and opposes any effort to restrict municipal broadband.

FirstNet

The City supports FirstNet, and advocates that local public infrastructure is utilized wherever possible to ensure optimal performance of the nation's first top-down, interoperable public safety network.

Workforce

Support Federal Paid Sick Leave Requirement

Support the Healthy Families Act to set a "national standard" for paid sick days.

Support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (new)

The Act would prohibit discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.