



## Sunset Empire Transportation District BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### **Item 10b Legislative Advocacy Policy/Resolution Discussion**

**Date:** Feb. 26, 2026

**Summary:** At times, legislative issues arise that require SETD to respond quickly to advocate for its interests. SETD doesn't appear to have a resolution on file that gives the board chair or a designee authority to sign legislative position letters without a full board vote.

SDAO has a sample legislative advocacy policy/resolution that gives the board chair or a designee authority to take positions that align with established board advocacy goals and priorities.

**Attachments:**

- Sample legislative advocacy policy/resolution from SDAO

**POLICY OR RESOLUTION TITLE: Legislative Advocacy Policy**

**POLICY OR RESOLUTION NUMBER: [        ]**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the policy is to guide [DISTRICT] officials and staff in considering legislative or regulatory proposals that are likely to have an impact on [DISTRICT], and to allow for a timely response to important legislative issues.

The purpose for identifying Legislative Advocacy Procedures is to provide clear direction to [DISTRICT] staff and Board of Commissioners with regard to monitoring and acting upon bills during state and federal legislative sessions. Adherence to Legislative Advocacy Procedures will ensure that legislative inquiries and responses will be administered consistently with “one voice” as to the identified Advocacy Priorities adopted by the Board of Commissioners. The Legislative Advocacy Procedures and Advocacy Priorities will provide the [DISTRICT] General Manager, Board President, or other designee, discretion to advocate in [DISTRICT]’s best interests in a manner consistent with the goals and priorities adopted by the Board of Commissioners.

### **Policy Principles**

This policy provides [DISTRICT]’s General Manager, Board President, or other designee, the flexibility to adopt positions on legislation in a timely manner, while allowing the Board of Commissioners to set Advocacy Priorities to provide policy guidance. The Board of Commissioners shall establish various Advocacy Priorities and, so long as the position fits within the Advocacy Priorities, staff is authorized to take a position without board approval.

Whenever an applicable Advocacy Priority does not exist pertaining to legislation affecting the [DISTRICT], the matter shall be brought before the Board of Commissioners for formal direction from the Board of Commissioners.

Generally, the [DISTRICT] will not address matters that are not pertinent to the district’s local government services, such as social issues or international relations issues.

### **Legislative Advocacy Procedures**

It is the policy of [DISTRICT] to proactively monitor and advocate for legislation as directed by the Advocacy Priorities and by the specific direction of the Board of Commissioners. This process involves interaction with local, state, and federal government entities both in regard to specific items of legislation and to promote positive intergovernmental relationships. Accordingly, involvement and participation in regional, state, and national organizations is encouraged and supported by the [DISTRICT].

Monitoring legislation is a shared function of the Board of Commissioners and General Manager or designated staff. The Legislative Advocacy Procedures are the process by which staff will track and respond to legislative issues in a timely and consistent manner. The General Manager, or other designee, will act on legislation utilizing the following procedures:

1. The General Manager, Board President or other designee shall review requests that the [DISTRICT] take a position on legislative issues to determine if the legislation aligns with the district's current approved Advocacy Priorities.
2. The General Manager, Board President or other designee will conduct a review of positions and analysis completed by the Special Districts Association of Oregon and other local government associations when formulating positions.

If the matter aligns with the approved priorities, [DISTRICT] response shall be supplied in the form of correspondence to the legislative body reviewing the bill or measure. Advocacy methods utilized on behalf of the district, including but not limited to letters, phone calls, emails, and prepared forms, will be communicated through the General Manager, Board President, or designee.

3. All draft legislative position correspondence initiated by the General Manager, Board President or designee shall state whether the district is requesting "support", "support if amended", "oppose", or "oppose unless amended" action on the issue and shall include adequate justification for the recommended action.
  - a. Support – legislation in this area advances the district's goals and priorities.
  - b. Oppose – legislation in this area could potentially harm, negatively impact or undo positive momentum for the district, or does not advance the district's goals and priorities.
4. The General Manager or Board President may also provide correspondence of concern or interest regarding a legislative issue without taking a formal position on a piece of legislation.
5. When correspondence is sent to a state or federal legislative body, the appropriate federal or state legislators representing the [DISTRICT] shall be included as a copy or "cc" on the correspondence. The appropriate contacts at the Special Districts Association of Oregon and other local government associations, if applicable, shall be included as a cc on legislative correspondence.
6. A position may be adopted by the General Manager, Board President or designee if any of the following criteria is met:
  - a. The position is consistent with the adopted Advocacy Priorities;
  - b. The position is consistent with that of organizations to which the district is a member, such as the Special Districts Association of Oregon; or
  - c. The position is approved by a committee created by the Board of Commissioners.
7. All legislative positions adopted via a process outside of a regularly scheduled Board Meeting shall be communicated to the Board of Commissioners at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting. When appropriate, the General Manager, Board President or other designee will submit a report (either written or verbal) summarizing activity on legislative measures to the Board of Commissioners.

## **Advocacy Priorities**

### ***Revenue, Finances, and Taxation***

Ensure adequate funding for special districts' safe and reliable core local service delivery. Protect special districts' resources from the shift or diversion of revenues without the consent of the affected districts.

Promote the financial independence of special districts and afford them access to revenue opportunities equal to that of other types of local agencies. Protect and preserve special districts' property tax allocations and local flexibility with revenue and diversify local revenue sources.

Support opportunities that allow the district to compete for its fair share of regional, state, and federal funding, and that maintain funding streams. Opportunities may include competitive grant and funding programs.

Opportunities may also include dedicated funding streams at the regional, state, or federal levels that allow the district to maximize local revenues, offset and leverage capital expenditures, and maintain district goals and standards.

### ***Governance and Accountability***

Enhance special districts' ability to govern as independent, local government bodies in an open and accessible manner. Encourage best practices that avoid burdensome, costly, redundant or one-size-fits-all approaches.

Protect meaningful public participation in local agency formations, dissolutions, and reorganizations, and ensure local services meet the unique needs, priorities, and preferences of each community.

Oppose additional public meeting and records requirements that unnecessarily increase the burden on public resources without effectively fostering public engagement and enhancing accountability of government agencies.

Promote local-level solutions, decision-making, and management concerning service delivery and governance structures while upholding voter control and maintaining district control over local government jurisdictional reorganizations and/or consolidations.

Oppose legislation that weakens the liability protections of special districts and their public officials granted under the Oregon Tort Claims Act or similar federal legislation.

### ***Human Resources and Personnel***

Promote policies related to hiring, management, benefits and retirement that afford flexibility, contain costs, and enhance the ability to recruit and retain highly qualified, career-minded employees to public service. As public agency employers, support policies that foster productive relationships between management and employees.

Maintain special districts' ability to exercise local flexibility by minimizing state mandated contract requirements. Oppose any measure that would hinder the ability of special districts to maximize local

resources and efficiencies through the use of contracted services.

***Infrastructure, Innovation, and Investment***

Encourage prudent planning for investment and maintenance of innovative long-term infrastructure. Support the contracting flexibility and fiscal tools and incentives needed to help special districts meet Oregon's changing demands. Promote the efficient, effective, and sustainable delivery of core local services.

Prevent restrictive one-size-fits-all public works requirements that increase costs to taxpayers and reduce local flexibility.

***[Add Additional Priorities Relevant to Your District]***