

# 2016 LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE



Candidate Name: Karina Cervantez Alejo Position You Are Running For: CA State Assembly (CA-30)  
Political Party Affiliation: Democratic Party Are You an Incumbent:  Yes  No

**INTRODUCTION:** Candidates for the state legislature in 2016 are respectfully requested to answer these questions relevant to the respective and often complementary roles of the state and city governments in California. While the League does not itself endorse candidates, the responses to this questionnaire will be shared with elected city officials in each legislative district for consideration in their own endorsement decisions as well as posted on the League website. Thank you for your participation. Please email your response to [Bismarck@cacities.org](mailto:Bismarck@cacities.org) or by fax to 916-658-8240 by no later than March 31. If you have any questions, please contact: League Public Affairs Director Bismarck Obando at [Bismarck@cacities.org](mailto:Bismarck@cacities.org) or 916-658-8273.

**LOCAL CONTROL.** The relationship between the state and cities functions best as a partnership where major policy issues are approached by the state with careful consideration of the varied conditions among the state's 482 cities and an appreciation of the importance of retaining local flexibility to tailor policies to reflect local needs and circumstances. Still, at times, cities have to respond to state legislation they believe undermines the principle of "local control" over important issues such as land use, housing, finance, infrastructure, elections, labor relations and other issues directly affecting cities. What is your perspective on local control and state preemption of local control? *(Please explain).*

As the Mayor Pro-Tem of the City of Watsonville, I know firsthand the impact local City Councils can have on a community. Each community faces different challenges and has unique needs. That is why I am an advocate for local control. Education, public safety, and transportation needs vary from city to city and it is important that those closest to the community make the decisions that hold the most weight. With that being said, I believe that state government does play a role in social and economic justice. In the Assembly, I will bring my experience working in local government with local communities to Sacramento. We need a leader who understands the diversity of our communities and the need for local as well as state control.

## 2016 LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

**TRANSPORTATION FUNDING.** Cities and counties are struggling with a \$78 billion, 10-year maintenance funding deficit for the local streets and roads system. This amount is needed simply to maintain existing infrastructure; delaying these repairs by just 10 years would increase the deficit to \$99 billion. Meanwhile, millions of cars, trucks, busses and other vehicles have been added in California, utilizing our already over-burdened transportation network. At the same time, gas tax revenues (that benefit both the state and local system) have not been raised since 1994; they have been eroded by inflation, expanded use of electric and more efficient vehicles, and more recently declined 26% since Fiscal Year 2013-14. How would you support addressing this infrastructure funding deficit?

- Additional state gas or other vehicle taxes:  Yes  No
- Additional state user fees (similar to the vehicle registration fee):  Yes  No
- Expanded local authority to raise taxes and fees locally:  Yes  No
- Return transportation funding from General Fund (\$1 billion/yr.) and reform CalTRANS:  Yes  No
- Combination of approaches:  Yes  No
- Other approaches? *(Please explain)*

Throughout California, our infrastructure is failing and we do not have the state revenue to fix our crumbling roads and bridges or our outdated public transportation. California needs a steady stream of revenue dedicated to improving our state's infrastructure. With an environmentally beneficial shift towards hybrid/electric and more fuel efficient cars, the gas tax is no longer sustainable for our state's needs. That is why I support increasing user fees as well as expanding local authority to raise fees for local projects. Investing in our infrastructure not only increases standard of living in communities across California, it also creates local jobs and encourages local economic growth. In addition, I support returning transportation funding from the General Fund to reform CalTRANS. We need to reduce our carbon footprint by getting out of our cars and into public transit. A new and improved CalTRANS will not only drastically reduce greenhouse gas emission but will also improve quality of life by getting people out of traffic.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING.** With the loss of \$1 billion in redevelopment funding that previously went to affordable housing and the exhaustion of past state affordable housing bond funds, California has virtually no resources to construct affordable housing. Affordable units often require additional public subsidy so that rents and/or purchase prices can be made affordable to low and moderate income households. What is your solution to the affordable housing crisis?

- Allocate a portion of state general fund dollars for affordable housing:  Yes  No
- Establish a new permanent source of affordable housing funding from a new revenue source such as a recently contemplated \$75 state tax or fee on various real estate instruments:  Yes  No
- Establish a local-state matching program, where local funding commitments to affordable housing are matched dollar-for-dollar with a state contribution:  Yes  No
- Reduce the regulatory burden on housing production imposed by CEQA and other regulations:  Yes  No

## 2016 LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

- Combination of these approaches:  Yes  No
- Other approaches? *(Please explain)*

Coming out of local government, I am also committed to continue to provide tools and tax credit programs for economic development, job creation and affordable to our cities and counties, especially in rural and disadvantaged communities across the state. These tools help provide incentives for local companies to expand or attract employers to invest in our communities in the 30th District and sets aside funding to construct workforce housing. I also plan to work closely with the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-BIZ) to leverage state resources and programs, such as the California Competes Tax Credit Program, when speaking with companies who could bring new jobs to the Central Coast. We also need to look to create new state funds to assist local governments to address homelessness in our state with new bonds to build transition and permanent housing for our most vulnerable residents.

**WATER CONSERVATION AND STORMWATER.** Faced with the ongoing drought and increasing federal and state clean water regulations, local governments have struggled to enforce water conservation requirements and remove contaminants from stormwater and urban water runoff without reducing funding for public safety and other general fund commitments. How should the state assist cities with this challenge?

- Providing increased grants through state bonds financed from the state General Fund:  Yes  No
- Providing cities and other water agencies with increased flexibility to implement water conservation rate pricing and raise funds locally:  Yes  No
- Combination of these approaches:  Yes  No
- Some other approaches? *(Please explain)*

In addition to protecting our natural environment, California continues to struggle and adapt to the realities of a historic four-year drought. Our state has been hit hard by this crisis, and in some communities, residents do not even have access to clean drinking water. This is simply not acceptable nor is it even remotely sustainable. As an appointee of Governor Jerry Brown's to the Central Coast Water Quality Board, which has a jurisdiction spanning nine counties, I've been working hard to promote policies that further conserve water. Still, conservation will only get us, as a state, so far. That's why in the State Assembly, I plan to work tirelessly to invest in our water infrastructure, such as the Salinas Valley interlake tunnel project, to increase our long-term water supply and to explore new technologies for water production, whether through possible safe desalination processes that protect marine life, or other new recycling processes among other innovative ideas to help our state better grapple with this unrelenting drought.

Candidate Signature: \_\_\_\_\_