



# NEWPORT BEACH

## City Council Staff Report

March 12, 2024  
Agenda Item No. 11

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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**TITLE:** City Membership in the League of California Cities

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### **ABSTRACT:**

At the request of Mayor Will O'Neill, the Newport Beach City Council discussed concerns and benefits related to the City of Newport Beach's membership in the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) at its February 27, 2024 study session. The Mayor and other Councilmembers expressed concern and provided examples of Cal Cities taking positions of support on or opposition to statewide measures that directly conflict with the City's positions on the measures. After hearing from City staff and Cal Cities representatives, the City Council unanimously agreed that additional discussion was needed and an item on the City's Cal Cities membership should be brought forward at the Council's March 12 regular meeting for further review and action.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- b) Direct staff not to renew the City of Newport Beach's membership in the League of California Cities; or
- c) Authorize staff to renew the City of Newport Beach's annual membership in the League of California Cities.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Cal Cities provides education, training and legislative advocacy services to 476 member cities. The City of Newport Beach has been a long-time Cal Cities member and its annual dues, which are based on population size, are currently \$24,800.

At its February 27 study session, the City Council reviewed and discussed the merits of and concerns related to membership in the League of California Cities. The city manager and city attorney provided an overview of City staff's involvement in Cal Cities' educational programs and committees, highlighting statewide collaboration and resources for several departments. Cal Cities' representatives also addressed the Council, sharing highlights of the services the organization provides to its members.

During the City Council's discussion, Councilmembers acknowledged that Cal Cities services have been useful to staff and the City. However, several members raised concerns about Cal Cities' taking positions of opposition or support on statewide measures that are in opposition to the City's position. Cal Cities support for and advocacy efforts related to Proposition 1 and Assembly Constitutional Amendment 13 were cited as examples.

The City Council unanimously agreed via a straw poll that an action item on the City's membership in Cal Cities should be brought forward at the Council's March 12 regular meeting for further review and action. Councilmembers also expressed interest in receiving additional information from Cal Cities that would aid in its decision as to whether or not the City of Newport should remain a member of the organization.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The City's Cal Cities membership dues for 2024 are \$24,800 and budgeted in the General Fund.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

**NOTICING:**

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

**ATTACHMENT:**

Attachment A – Letter from the League of California Cities