



Agenda Date: 5/24/2005  
Agenda Placement: 9D

## NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Britt Ferguson for Nancy Watt - County Executive Officer  
County Executive Office  
**REPORT BY:** Britt Ferguson, Assistant County Executive Officer, 253-4406  
**SUBJECT:** Conceptual Approval of County Code of Ethics

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

County Executive Officer requests conceptual approval of the proposed County Code of Ethics.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In accordance with direction received from the Board at your 2004 retreat, staff have developed a draft County Code of Ethics and Manager's Credo. The proposed Code of Ethics is focused around three "Core Ethical Principles:" Integrity, Accountability and Service, reflecting what staff believes to be the core values of the organization. The Manager's Credo recognizes the special role that managers play as ethical models and leaders.

The proposed Code of Ethics and Manager's Credo focus on values rather than precise ethical rules. The goal is to get employees thinking about the ethical implications of all that we do and, ultimately, to create an "ethical culture" in the organization.

Once you have approved the Code of Ethics and Manager's Credo in concept, staff will seek input from the unions representing County employees. Following that process, a Code and Credo will be brought to your Board for final approval and a program designed to provide ethics training for all employees will begin.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Is there a Fiscal Impact?                      No

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of

Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

## **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

At your Board's 2004 retreat, one of your goals was the development of a Code of Ethics for the County. To accomplish this goal, the County Executive Officer (CEO) appointed a Committee of department heads and other staff to develop a draft Code of Ethics and an implementation and training plan for the Code. That Committee worked for over 8 months on this project and recently recommended Code of Ethics language as well as language for a Manager's Credo to the CEO. This draft Code and Credo were discussed with department heads and revisions made based on that discussion. The resulting proposed Code of Ethics and Manager's Credo are now before you for your conceptual approval.

As you can see, the proposed Code of Ethics is focused around three "Core Ethical Principles:" **Integrity**, **Accountability** and **Service**. Staff sees these Principles as being effectively the core values of the organization, as reflected, among other places, in your adopted Mission and Guiding Principles. The Manager's Credo, which all managers will be asked to affirm, recognizes the special role that managers play in setting an example of ethical behavior and providing leadership on ethical issues.

You will note that both the Code of Ethics and Manager's Credo focus on values rather than detailed rules. The intent here is not to provide precise direction on how to deal with specific ethical issues. Rather, the goal is to get employees thinking about the ethical implications of all that we do and, ultimately, to create an "ethical culture" in the organization. An ethical culture is one in which concern about ethical behavior informs all that we do and the organization, at all levels, is regularly engaged in reflecting upon and discussing the ethical implications of our actions. The Code and Credo will also inform and be supplemented by other, more specific, rules and policies and by individual departmental codes of conduct.

From staff's perspective, the Code of Ethics, Manager's Credo and the creation of an "ethical organization" are part of a larger effort to further position the County, as an organization, to deal with the changing local government environment and to serve our citizens as efficiently and effectively as possible. Other initiatives related to this "strategic positioning" effort will be brought to your Board for approval in the future.

Once you have approved the Code of Ethics and Manager's Credo in concept, staff will seek input from the unions representing County employees. Following that process, a Code and Credo will be brought to your Board for final approval.

Ethics training has already been scheduled for department heads and managers and plans are being made to send certain employees to training sessions put on by the Josephson Institute of Ethics (this training is more general in nature and not specific to the County's Code of Ethics). In addition, a consultant has been retained to assist staff in preparing an ethics training curriculum for all employees. Once the Code of Ethics and Manager's Credo receive your Board's final approval, staff will begin a training program designed to ensure that all current employees receive ethics training within 6 to 8 months and that on-going ethics training opportunities are provided to staff. In addition, ethics components will be integrated into the County's new employee orientation and supervisory training programs.

There is no fiscal impact associated with your conceptual approval of the Code of Ethics and Manager's Credo, though there will be costs related to the planned ethics training. The exact amount of those costs have not yet been determined.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

A . Proposed Code of Ethics and Manager's Credo

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Britt Ferguson