

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

July 28, 2015

MAP 21 REAUTHORIZATION

As the July 31 deadline for expiration of the current extension of MAP 21 reauthorization approaches, Congress is scurrying for a strategy to address surface transportation programs. Earlier in the month, the House approved H.R. 3038, the *Highway and Transportation Funding Act*, which would provide \$8 billion in patchwork funding to keep MAP 21 programs afloat through December 18. As previously reported, in the Senate the Environment and Public Works Committee approved S. 1647, the *Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy Act (DRIVE Act)*, which would authorize highway programs over six years. The DRIVE Act has been merged with highway safety provisions drafted by the Commerce Committee, transit provisions drafted by the Banking Committee, and funding provisions drafted by the Finance Committee. Senate Majority Leader McConnell (R-KY) has inserted the package as an amendment to an unrelated veterans bill, H.R. 22. While pledging to complete this process by July 31, the Senate may have to accept a short-term extension to avoid an interruption in transportation programs, and several options have been offered in both the House and Senate. House Leaders announced on July 28 that they plan to approve a three-month highway spending bill and then leave town for the August recess, which would force the Senate to accept the short-term measure for the time being. As a further complication, the Senate has voted to attach the controversial reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank to the DRIVE Act, which many House conservatives oppose.

PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

While floor action on appropriations measures appears to be stalled for the foreseeable future, work at the committee level continues. The House Appropriations Committee recently released its report to accompany the *FY 2016 Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies*

Appropriations bill. The measure would provide essentially level funding of \$1.49 billion for community health centers, a \$79.2 million increase to \$1.82 billion for substance abuse block grants, a \$34.7 million increase to \$607 million for immunizations, a \$21 million increase to \$461.5 million for mental health block grants, and a slight increase in preventative health services block grants to \$170 million. It also includes \$638.2 million for the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, also a slight increase over FY 2015.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT

We continued to work closely with national stakeholder groups to advocate for full Senate action on S. 192, the *Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act*, bipartisan legislation that would reauthorize OAA for three years and strengthen important social services programs to help seniors stay independent and at home. On July 16, we were notified by Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee staff that S. 192 would be voted on later in the day by the full Senate. The bill was approved by voice vote without opposition, and has been sent to the House for consideration. To date, the House Energy and Commerce Committee has not drafted its version of OAA reauthorization, nor scheduled action on the Senate bill. July 14th marked the 50th Anniversary of the signing into law of the original Older Americans Act.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

We continued to urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to take action on Chairman Grassley's S. 1169, the *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act*, reiterating the need for adequate Federal resources to address juvenile justice and delinquency prevention needs in the community. On July 23, the Judiciary Committee marked up and approved S. 1169 with bipartisan support. As approved by the committee, the bill would authorize \$160 million per year for five years

for juvenile justice program, with a 2% increase each year. It also updates the standards for how juveniles should be detained for the first time since 2002, and adds additional support for youth with mental illnesses. The bill will now be placed on the calendar for full Senate consideration, pending release of the Committee's report to accompany its action.

TANF REAUTHORIZATION

Led by Human Resources Subcommittee Chairman Boustany (R-LA), members of the House Ways and Means Committee introduced a package of legislative proposals to amend and reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. We provided the eight measures to County staff for analysis, as well as Chairman Boustany's overarching draft bill, the *Improving Opportunity in America Welfare Reauthorization Act of 2015*, which would reauthorize TANF through 2020. The proposals are intended to strengthen TANF and better help its beneficiaries move from welfare to work, and range from ending the separate, higher work requirement for two-parent families, to increasing the share of adults expected to work or prepare for work by preventing states from receiving certain "credits," to provide up to \$300 million annually to states to test ways to better serve welfare beneficiaries by improved case management, better coordinated benefits, and a choice of service providers. The committee held its initial hearings on these proposals on July 15.

PIPELINE SAFETY

We provided staff support for County Planning and Development Assistant Director Dianne Black during her July 14 trip to Washington, DC to testify before the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power. Congresswoman Capps serves on the Subcommittee, and Ms. Black was invited to testify at an oversight hearing on pipeline safety to discuss the County's experiences in responding to the recent Plains All American pipeline failure that led to the Refugio oil spill.

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT RELIEF

We have closely monitored Congressional efforts to address the ongoing drought in California. In the House, Congressman Valadao (R-CA) recently introduced H.R. 2898, the *Western Water and American Food Security Act*, which would allow the use of more water from the federally-operated Central Valley Project and the state-operated State Water Project in times of drought, unless reducing water flow is necessary to ensure the long-term survival of a species. The legislation also includes provisions to speed up construction of new water storage projects. The House approved H.R. 2898 in mid-July, and the next step would be for the Senate to also consider drought relief legislation. Senator Feinstein is reportedly leading an effort to draft a measure that could eventually be merged with H.R. 2898.

v Tom Walters v