

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

September 8, 2015

FY 2016 APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Congress returned from its August recess on September 8, and addressing funding for the rapidly approaching start of the new Federal Fiscal Year is one of its highest priorities. But there are only twelve legislative working days in September, and much of that time will be consumed debating the Iran nuclear agreement, and by Pope Francis' visit to Washington and address to Congress. As we have discussed on numerous occasions, President Obama has indicated he will not sign into law any appropriations bills that adhere to the sequester-level budget caps put in place by the Budget Control Act of 2011, and so far none of the bills drafted by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees would be acceptable. Further clouding the outlook is the controversy over funding for Planned Parenthood, with a group of conservatives going so far as to threaten a government shut-down over the issue. Congressional Leadership remains adamantly opposed to the idea of a shutdown, and there is a strong likelihood that the now all-too-common Continuing Resolution (CR) will be enacted by October 1 to keep the government operating. At this point it is difficult to speculate on how long the CR will run, or if any extraneous riders or provisions will be included in the legislation.

MAP 21 REAUTHORIZATION

Before recessing at the beginning of August, the Senate approved its MAP 21 reauthorization package as H.R. 22, the *Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy Act (DRIVE Act)*, which would authorize highway programs over six years. The House and Senate had previously passed a three-month extension of existing authority for highway programs, through the end of October. We have learned that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is nearing completion of the draft of its multi-year transportation bill, and a committee markup is possible the week of September 14. Committee

leadership has indicated that the measure could be on the House floor before the end of the month, setting the stage for House and Senate conferees to negotiate a final bill in October. The legislation is expected to be similar to the *DRIVE Act*, but could contain significant differences in areas dealing with project approval and environmental streamlining.

FY 2016 FUNDING FOR HOME PROGRAM

While spending levels for many programs of significance to the County have remained flat or slightly declined under the sequestration caps, the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program took a particularly egregious hit in the Senate version of the *FY 2016 Transportation, HUD, and Related Agencies Appropriations* bill. The measure proposes reducing HOME funding by 93 percent to \$66 million. HOME is the only Federal block grant program designed to create and preserve affordable housing to meet specific local needs, and the County uses it to provide additional services, capital improvements, and new affordable housing, as well as to address homelessness. As the recess ended, we joined other national stakeholders in aggressively lobbying Congress to restore HOME funding to at least the FY 2015 level of \$900 million when it negotiates final THUD spending levels. We also continue to advocate for other HUD programs of importance to the County, including CDBG, Homeless assistance, Housing for People with AIDS, and elderly housing.

FEE TO TRUST

After the Board took action on August 25 to officially authorize discussions with the Santa Ynez Chumash regarding Camp 4 and other issues, we provided the minutes of the Board's action and CEO Miyasato's letter to Tribal Chairman Armenta to House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Bishop (R-UT), Ranking Minority Member Grijalva (D-AZ), and all members of the Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs. We

also provided the information to Senators Boxer and Feinstein and their respective Indian Affairs staff. At this point there has been no further action scheduled on Congressman LaMalfa's H.R. 1157, the *Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians Land Transfer Act*.

Just before the August recess, Chairman Barrasso (R-WY) of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs introduced legislation to update and modernize the Department of the Interior's trust land acquisition process for Indian tribes as S. 1879, the *Interior Improvement Act*. The bill is intended to encourage local cooperation and better transparency from the Bureau of Indian Affairs regarding fee-to-trust applications by tribes, and includes provisions incentivizing the use of cooperative agreements. CSAC was involved in the development of S. 1879 and has endorsed the measure. Chairman Barrasso has not yet scheduled a markup, and companion legislation has not been introduced in the House.

340 DRUG PRICING PROGRAM

We provided County staff with the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) proposed Omnibus Guidance for the 340B Drug Pricing Program, released in the August 28 Federal Register. Under the 340B program, pharmaceutical manufacturers agree to extend discounts to eligible providers – including essential hospitals and community health centers such as the County's – as a condition of participating in the Medicaid and Medicare Part B markets. The program provides patients at these facilities with medications at reduced costs, and provides help in managing chronic conditions. Comments are due to HRSA by October 27, 2015.

TANF REAUTHORIZATION

In response to draft legislation to amend and reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program released by House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee Chairman Boustany (R-LA) as the *Improving Opportunity in America Welfare Reauthorization Act of 2015*, we provided the subcommittee with the County's policies regarding TANF reauthorization, including the restoration and enhancement of State and county flexibility to tailor work and support services that move families into self-sufficiency based on their unique needs. We also discussed TANF reauthorization with Subcommittee staff, and they indicated that Chairman Boustany is dedicated to moving forward with the legislation before the end of the year. It would be the first significant updating of TANF since 2005. The subcommittee held its initial hearings on the proposal on July 15.

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