

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

MAY 1, 2018

FEDERAL BUDGET

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees are focusing on restoring some semblance of “regular order” to the Federal funding process for FY 2019. The President’s Budget Proposal on February 12 officially began the appropriations process and the funding subcommittees have been holding hearings in anticipation of drafting their bills. We are continuing to contact the respective subcommittees and members of the local Congressional delegation to lobby in support of the County’s funding priorities.

The appropriations measures are widely considered to be some of the few must-pass bills remaining in Congress this year. The Bipartisan Budget Agreement that was enacted in February included a two-year deal to increase the budget caps, which means that the Appropriations Committees already know the overall top-line funding number that they will be working with this year. House and Senate leaders are hoping this will make it possible to draft the 12 individual appropriations bills and move them through initial floor consideration by this summer. Final enactment will remain a challenge and a lame-duck session of Congress will likely be needed to complete the process.

OPIOID CRISIS

Response to the opioid crisis continues to be a priority in both the House and the Senate. On April 24, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions approved Chairman Alexander’s (R-TN) S. 2680, the *Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018*. The bill includes numerous provisions to prevent or treat opioid abuse, focusing on the Committee’s jurisdiction overseeing Federal health agencies such as FDA, NIH, and CDC. Among these provisions, the bill would reauthorize for three more years grants to states for prevention, response, and treatment originally authorized in

the 21st Century Cures Act. Additional bills are under development by other Committees and both the House and Senate are expected to devote floor time to passing these bills this summer.

DISASTER RECOVERY

On April 27, the House passed Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Shuster’s Disaster Recovery Reform Act as part of H.R. 4, the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018*. The legislation includes provisions meant to improve pre-disaster planning and mitigation for disasters. The Disaster Recovery Reform Act was originally passed by the House last December as part of H.R. 4667, the *FY 2018 Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Assistance Act*. Since the Senate never took up those provisions, House leaders are attempting again to get it considered before the end of the year by attaching them to H.R. 4.

Federal agencies are also continuing the process of releasing disaster assistance funding that was approved in the Bipartisan Budget Agreement in February. HUD announced on April 10 the award of \$212,374,000 in CDBG-DR funds to the State of California to address unmet recovery needs resulting from disasters that occurred in 2017 and to increase the state’s preparedness for future disasters. CDBG-DR funds can be used for a broad array of recovery efforts, including restoration of infrastructure, housing, economic revitalization, and mitigation and preparedness. HUD will publish additional allocation details in the Federal Register and the State will develop an action plan for distribution of the funds, but a portion of the County is included on a list of seven most impacted areas in the State where the bulk of the funds will be focused.

FARM BILL/NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The House Committee on Agriculture voted 26-20, largely along party lines, to approve Chairman Conaway's (R-TX) H.R. 2, the *Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018*, on April 18. Many Democrats oppose the bill because of proposed limits on eligibility and greater emphasis on work requirements for able-bodied adults receiving food aid through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We contacted the House and Senate Agriculture Committees to advocate the County's priorities in anticipation of the action to draft a new Farm Bill, emphasizing the importance of provisions related to pest prevention programs and specialty crops grown in the County, as well as safety net nutrition programs such as SNAP and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. The House is likely to pass H.R. 2 in May, but the partisan dispute over SNAP makes it unlikely that a multi-year Farm Bill will be enacted this year.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

We continue to advocate for final action on legislation to ensure Federal resources needed to assist local government agencies in addressing juvenile justice and delinquency prevention needs in the community. Last May, the House passed Congressman Lewis' (R-MN) H.R. 1809, the *Juvenile Justice Reform Act*, to reauthorize and update the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, including providing more flexibility to states and local communities to best meet the needs of delinquent youth and improve public safety. The Senate passed Judiciary Committee Chairman Grassley's (R-IA) S. 860, the *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act*, in August, which would reauthorize the Act through 2021.

MARINE VESSEL EMISSIONS

We contacted the House Transportation Subcommittee on the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation to advocate in support of Congressman Lowenthal's H.R. 3682, the *Blue Whales and Blue Skies Act*, and contacted Congressman Carbajal to thank him for his support. The bill would implement a voluntary vessel speed reduction program modeled after the Vessel Speed Reduction Program administered by SPBAPCD and other agencies to help reduce air pollution and the risk of fatal vessel whale strikes in the Greater Santa Barbara Channel Region. The Subcommittee has not yet scheduled hearings on H.R. 3682.

CAMP 4 - LAND INTO TRUST

We attended the April 25 Senate Indian Affairs Committee hearing on Congressman LaMalfa's (R-CA) H.R. 1491, the *Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Land Affirmation Act*, which would ratify the action taken in 2017 by the Secretary of the Interior to place Camp 4 into trust. H.R. 1491 was approved by the House on November 29 and Senate Indian Affairs Committee Chairman Hoeven (R-ND) indicated at the hearing his willingness to schedule the bill for a Committee markup and consideration by the full Senate.

FIREFIGHTING – DRONE INTERFERENCE

We urged the House Judiciary Committee to schedule action on Congressman Cook's (R-CA) H.R. 1138, the *Wildfire Airspace Protection Act*. The bill would provide a criminal penalty for launching drones that interfere with fighting wildfires affecting Federal property, including National Forest and BLM lands in the County.