

# Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

October 29, 2018

## FEDERAL BUDGET

Congress adjourned in early October after racing to complete floor action on numerous bills, including a long-term reauthorization for Federal Aviation Administration programs, assistance for the opioids crisis, disaster assistance reform, and a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers authorization package. The crowded legislative schedule also included efforts to enact as many of the twelve individual appropriations bills as possible before the October 1 start of the new Federal fiscal year. A three-bill “mini-bus” made up of the Energy-Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction-VA bills was enacted on September 21. In addition, a funding package made up of the Defense Department and Labor-HHS-Education bills was signed into law on September 28. This pace of appropriations work is the most productive in over ten years and funds about 75 percent of the Federal discretionary budget. However, 7 out of 12 of the funding bills remain unfinished and a Continuing Resolution to provide interim funding through December 7 has been signed into law to allow Congress time to complete the bills after the election.

## IMMIGRATION POLICIES

We contacted the House and Senate Judiciary Committees and the local delegation to reiterate the County’s support for bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform. President Trump has indicated that he will be pressing for border wall funding and related immigration priorities in the Lame Duck Session of Congress and House Majority Leader McCarthy recently introduced H.R. 7059, *the Build the Wall, Enforce the Law Act of 2018*, to focus the debate around various border security and immigration enforcement proposals.

We have urged that any immigration legislation taken up in the Lame Duck include an earned

path to citizenship and continuation of protections provided under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. We also emphasized the County’s opposition to the separation of families and any mandates on counties to enforce immigration laws.

## PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING

We urged members of the House-Senate Conference Committee for the *FY 2019 Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations Act* to provide the highest possible funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) and other local public safety needs in the final version of the legislation. The President proposed to eliminate SCAAP in his budget submission to Congress. We requested conferees to fund the program at the \$255 million level from the House version of the bill, rather than the \$100 million proposed by the Senate. Since 2000, the program has been reduced by 70 percent and California counties stand to lose the most when the program is underfunded. The CJS funding bill is likely to be among the last bills to be resolved before Congress adjourns at the end of the year.

## FARM BILL/NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Authorizations for some USDA programs expired on September 30 and negotiations on a 2018 Farm Bill are continuing for possible action in the Lame Duck Session. Differences between the House and Senate versions of H.R. 2, *the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018*, particularly over the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, remain unresolved, as do some issues around farm programs. The likelihood of a simple extension of current authorities is increasing, through committee leaders want to keep the pressure on to negotiate a compromise final version of the legislation.

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT**

We urged the House and Senate Judiciary Committees to move legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), citing the importance of these resources to local law enforcement officials for combatting domestic violence and protecting victims. We also contacted the local delegation and urged them to work with the Committees to expedite reauthorization legislation. Most VAWA program authorizations expired on September 30, but a short-term extension through December 7 has been enacted to allow time to address the issue in the Lame Duck Session.

**HOUSING/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Despite extensive negotiations by House-Senate conferees, the *FY 2019 Transportation-Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act* was not completed in October and must now be finalized in the Lame Duck Session. We recently joined other national stakeholders in lobbying Congress for FY 2019 funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program and other housing and community development programs in the bill. 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.) The House *FY 2019 THUD* spending bill proposes to cut HOME funding by \$162 million and we urged conference committee members to support the Senate language to keep the current level of funding at \$1.36 billion. Other housing and community development programs are largely proposed for funding levels that would sustain the increases gained in last year's bipartisan budget agreement.

**LOS PADRES WILDERNESS**

We contacted the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to urge them to act on Senator Harris' S. 1959, the *Central Coast Heritage Protection Act*, in the Lame Duck Session. The legislation would expand Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River designations in the Los Padres National Forest, the Carrizo Plain National Monument, and designate the Condor National Recreation Trail. The Committee held a hearing on the legislation in August, which is normally one of the necessary prerequisites for passage in the Senate.

**LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION**

A bipartisan Senate coalition led by Senator Cantwell (D-WA) and Senator Burr (R-NC) is continuing to press for enactment of legislation to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, following its expiration at the end of September. The LWCF is funded through oil and gas leasing revenues on the Outer Continental Shelf and is used to support habitat preservation, outdoor recreation and federal land acquisition. The authorization for the program briefly lapsed in 2015 until it was extended in that year's Lame Duck Session and a similar scenario is likely for this year.