

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

April 29, 2019

BUDGET TALKS

The House Appropriations Committee is poised to begin marking up the first of the twelve annual appropriations bills this week, though a bipartisan agreement has not yet been reached on overall spending limits. The current budget spending caps were temporarily increased for FY 2018 and FY 2019, but will revert back this year, which would result in across-the-board spending cuts of approximately ten percent of discretionary spending. House leaders had planned to raise the caps through a floor vote on Budget Committee Chair Yarmuth's (D-KY) H.R. 2021 the *Investing for the People Act of 2019*, before the spring recess, but divisions among Democratic members, including a push by the Congressional Progressive Caucus for higher non-defense discretionary spending, caused the bill to be pulled from consideration. Instead, the House adopted a "deeming resolution" that sets an overall spending limit without specifying how much is allotted to defense or non-defense programs. This allows the House Appropriations Committee to begin drafting its individual bills, but only postpones the necessary vote on the budget enforcement legislation. If the spending caps legislation is not enacted, any FY 2020 appropriations would be subject to across-the-board cuts through sequestration to enforce the limitation.

We are continuing to work in coordination with other local government stakeholders to advocate for the County's funding priorities in the annual appropriations bills and to oppose the President's proposals to reduce or eliminate many key programs. Our local delegation members are also weighing in with their spending priorities for the coming fiscal year and we are working with them on budget justifications and background information.

CAMP 4

The House of Representatives passed Representative LaMalfa's H.R. 317, the *Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Land Affirmation Act of 2019*, earlier today by voice vote. The bill is identical to the County-supported version of H.R. 1491 from the 115th Congress. Although the legislation passed the full House and the Senate Indian Affairs Committee in the 115th Congress, it was one of many bills that the full Senate did not take up before the end of last year.

HEALTH CARE

The current authorization for the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) program will expire on October 1 and we recently contacted the House Energy and Commerce Committee in support of efforts to extend the program. The FQHC Program funds services that are a critical component of the health care safety net and is used to provide care to low-income individuals or individuals located in areas with few health care providers.

House Majority Whip Clyburn (D-SC) has introduced H.R. 1943, the *Community Health Center and Primary Care Workforce Expansion Act of 2019*, to extend and increase funding for FQHCs. We urged the Energy and Commerce Committee to support legislation such as H.R. 1943 to continue this cost-effective way to provide health care, with cost savings accruing to both the individuals served and the government programs they access. We also contacted our local delegation to urge them to continue to work with the Committee in support of the program.

LOS PADRES WILDERNESS

Representative Carbajal recently re-introduced H.R. 2199, the *Central Coast Heritage Protection Act*, to expand Wilderness and Wild

and Scenic River designations in the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument and designate the Condor National Recreation Trail. Senator Harris has re-introduced the Senate version of the legislation as S. 1111, with Senator Feinstein's support. We contacted the House Natural Resources and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committees to express the County's support for the bills, noting the critical watershed, recreation areas, cultural resource protection, and habitat reserves that are vitally important to Santa Barbara County residents. We also thanked our local Delegation for their leadership on this issue.

CHILD NUTRITION

We contacted the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction and our local delegation in support of reauthorization and full funding of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program and other child nutrition programs. Child nutrition programs were last reauthorized in 2010 and Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Roberts (R-KS) recently announced that he would be drafting legislation on this topic this year. The Committee held a hearing on April 10 to kick off the reauthorization process and Chair Roberts used the opportunity to announce that his priorities for the reauthorization are to draft a bipartisan bill that provides certainty for the programs, reduces administrative redundancies, and allows flexibility at the local level.

OCS HEARING

The House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources (Committee on Natural Resources) held a hearing in early April to receive testimony on legislation related to *Protecting Coastal Communities from Offshore Drilling*. Among the bills on the hearing agenda was Representative Cunningham's (D-SC) H.R. 1941, the *Coastal and Marine Economies Protection Act*, which would protect the areas off the Coast that were included in the Draft Proposed Program Outer Continental Shelf Oil

and Gas Leasing Program 2019–2024. Representative Carbajal is a cosponsor of H.R. 1941 and we discussed the legislation with his staff in light of the similar legislation that he proposed in H.R. 279, the *California Clean Coast Act*. The hearing indicates that the Subcommittee hopes to move H.R. 1941 to restrict offshore drilling but no schedule for a vote has been announced yet.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The House is scheduled to vote on legislation this week to counter President Trump's decision to withdraw from the December 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change. House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Chair Castor (D-FL) introduced H.R. 9, the *Climate Action Now Act*, and Representative Carbajal is one of 224 members of the House who have cosponsored the measure. H.R. 9 would require the President to develop and update annually a plan for the United States to meet its nationally determined contribution under the Paris Agreement and prohibit federal funds from being used to withdraw from the agreement. Companion legislation has not yet been introduced in the Senate.

*Don Gilcrest
Thomas Walters & Associates, Inc.*