

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

January 6, 2020

2020 OUTLOOK

The House of Representatives returns this week to begin the second session of the 116th Congress. House and Senate leaders are eager to move legislation that will position the parties for the upcoming election. However, the impeachment process has the potential to overshadow all other activity in Washington, DC, as the House has voted to impeach President Trump and the Senate is waiting to receive the articles so that a trial can begin.

BUDGET

The enactment in December of two consolidated appropriations packages for FY 2020 means that for the first time in several years Congress begins its work in January without having unfinished appropriations hanging over its head. The FY 2021 appropriations cycle will begin when President Trump gives his State of the Union Address to Congress on February 4 and his budget proposals are submitted to Congress on February 10. This will allow the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to begin their hearings on funding proposals. As these details become available, we will be working with our delegation and other local government stakeholders to advocate for the County's funding priorities.

ARMY CORPS LEGISLATION

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has scheduled a hearing on January 9 to begin examining proposals for a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020. WRDA sets the policies and funding authorizations for Army Corps of Engineers programs and projects. Speaker Pelosi announced late last year that she would be seeking to use the WRDA reauthorization process to jump-start development of an infrastructure package. We are continuing to work with our local delegation and the Army Corps of Engineers regarding

opportunities or any potential impacts on County projects.

HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS

Several health care programs that we are lobbying in coordination with NACo and other stakeholders will need to be authorized in the first half of 2020. The authorization for Federally Qualified Health Centers was extended to May 2020 in the appropriations legislation that was enacted in December. In addition, cuts in Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital payments have been further delayed until May as well. The health care committees are expected to try to pair action on these "must-pass" program authorizations with other efforts such as a prescription drug pricing initiative to enact a health care package by Memorial Day.

VAPING REGULATIONS

The FDA announced a limited ban on vaping on January 2. The new regulations are targeting nicotine-filled pods or cartridges, rather than liquids that are used in devices that are manually refilled. Congressional opponents of vaping are criticizing the restrictions as a step back from a more aggressive ban that was discussed in September. They will be pressing for legislative restrictions such as H.R. 2339, which would require e-cigarette manufacturers to prove that they do not increase the use of flavored products by young people.

SCAAP

The Bureau of Justice Assistance released the FY 2018 awards for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program late last year and the County was awarded \$463,195 for costs for incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens.

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