The County has received a request to consider a statement of interest to participate in a viability study for the establishment of a Central Coast public bank. What is the budgetary impact for the County to participate in the viability study that is proposed to encompass the counties of Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara?

The County received a letter dated March 26, 2021 from County of Santa Cruz Second District Supervisor, Zach Friend requesting that Santa Barbara County consider participating in a viability study for the establishment of a Central Coast Public Bank. Santa Cruz County is taking the lead on this initiative and has also extended the request for interest to Monterey, San Benito and San Luis Obispo counties. The concept was initiated by People for Public Banking Central Coast (PPBCC) as a result of the passage of AB 857 in 2019.

The request from the County of Santa Cruz is not a commitment to fund the study, but rather an inquiry as to whether or not Santa Barbara County would like to participate in the process to develop a viability study proposal. If interested, Santa Barbara County may submit a statement of interest to participate. After statements of interest are collected, the County of Santa Cruz will develop a funding proposal which will include contributions from agencies involved. Supervisor Friend’s Office indicated that a Request for Proposal would be prepared if enough agencies are interested. The cost would be based on how many agencies participate.

A similar study procured by the City of Oakland a few years ago cost $75,000. If all five counties participate, it is estimated that the cost could be in the range of approximately $20,000 - $25,000 each.