Letters of Support for County Funding, FY 2015-16

1. City of Santa Maria – Libraries
2. City of Goleta – Libraries
3. Montecito Association – P&D Work Program
4. County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Advisory Committee – UC Cooperative Extension
5. Families ACT – ADMHS Budget
6. City of Goleta - Libraries
April 3, 2015

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara 93101

Dear Chair Lavagnino and Supervisors Adam, Carbajal, Farr, and Wolf,

Without increased funding for operations and staffing, Santa Barbara County Libraries face significant service level reductions. As community centers for the County’s many cities and unincorporated areas, we are struggling to maintain open hours and popular programs. Increased minimum wages and COLAs negotiated in our jurisdictions have increased the cost of staffing county and city libraries yet our library budgets have decreased since the restoration of a previous 15% reduction (.92 per capita) granted in 2013-14.

In addition to staffing increases, some of our county libraries (Orcutt and Guadalupe) are located in privately owned rented space that continue to increase in cost each year when owners assess a CPI adjustment. Those increases combined with higher costs of goods and materials, utilities and other operational expenses have placed the libraries in a very vulnerable position. We have rich resources for the public, but do not have adequate funds to keep the doors open adequate hours for the public to access them.

The Santa Barbara County per capita allocation has been inadequate for many years and well below comparable benchmark counties for 2012-13 including Sonoma (30.67), Tulare (9.86), Monterey (32.98), Solano (38.70), Placer (30.53), SLO (33.94), Santa Cruz (52.43) and Marin (100.38). In 2012-13, Santa Barbara County (5.98) had the fourth lowest county or district library expenditure per capita after Lassen District ($4.16), Yuba County (4.31), and Madera County (5.92). The average of all benchmark counties for 2012-13 was $41.19 per capita. The average for all libraries in California for 2012-13 was $47.13 per capita and yet our county per capita currently stands at $6.87 for 2014-15. If the library fund is maintained status quo for 2015-16, the per capita will decrease to $6.80.
Please consider making libraries a higher priority and raising our allotment to at least half the amount of the benchmark counties. $20.30 per capita for 2015-16 would be a tremendous help. Even doubling the current allotment would be a move in the right direction for a vital public service that enriches lives, promotes literacy and benefits students, adults, seniors, and our workforce. The current allocation of $6.87 per capita for Santa Barbara County Libraries is not sustainable and will not support adequate service levels.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Mary Housel
City Librarian Zone 3
Santa Maria

Jessica Cadiente
Library Director Zone 2
Lompoc

Irene Macias
Library Director Zone 1
Santa Barbara
April 6, 2015

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara CA 93101

RE: Reduction in County Per Capita Library Funding
    Notice of Opposition

Dear Chair Lavagnino and Supervisors Adam, Carbajal, Farr and Wolf:

The City of Goleta is opposed to the proposed County per capita library funding reduction from $6.87 to $6.80 per capita for Santa Barbara County Libraries unless alternative funding is identified. Without increased funding for operations and staffing, Santa Barbara County Libraries are unable to maintain adequate services levels.

For the Goleta Valley Library, current funding levels are inadequate to support operating costs and service levels and have been insufficient for years. Since 2009, hours of service have been cut from 67 per week to 55 per week. The collection volume is insufficient to meet demand. There is no replacement schedule for computers because there is no money to replace them. Nothing is being annually reserved for technology or capital improvements. The Library’s reserve funds are dwindling because they are being used to fund annual operations. Staffing levels are lean and the number of part time to full-time equivalent staff positions is inherently inefficient. The City is concerned about having to reduce service levels in the future.

The Goleta Valley Library is a popular and well-used facility, serving residents of all ages within the City of Goleta and surrounding areas of the County. Unfortunately, this Library is not sustainable given the County per capita funding that it does receive. Please consider making libraries a higher priority and raising the per capita allocation rather than reducing the amount, or identifying an alternative funding source. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Paula Perotte
Mayor

130 Cremona Drive, Suite B, Goleta, CA 93117  ph 805.961.7500  f 805.685.2635  www.cityofgoleta.org
cc: Renee Bahl, Interim Community Services Dept. Director
Irene Maclas, Library Director
Margaret Esther, Library Services Manager
Jim Farr, Mayor Pro Tempore
Roger S. Aceves, Councilmember
Tony Vallejo, Councilmember
Michael T. Bennett, Councilmember
Michelle Greene, City Manager
Tim Giles, City Attorney
April 6, 2015

Janet Wolf, Chair
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Proposed Planning and Development Work Program for 2015-2016,
Board of Supervisors Agenda of April 8, 2015

Dear Chair Wolf and Supervisors:

We would like to offer several comments as you consider the P&D Work Program for the next fiscal year. We are pleased that work is beginning on the long awaited focused revisions to the Montecito Architectural Guidelines and the Montecito Land Use Development Code to improve hillside development outcomes. We support the inclusion of that project as a high priority ongoing project into the next fiscal year.

We would also like to convey our support for prioritizing a project focused on short-term vacation rentals. This use, though not expressly allowed in residential zone districts, has become very prevalent throughout the Montecito community. A number of years ago the County ceased enforcing ordinance language defining the use of a dwelling to exclude "transient occupancy"; thus when complaints arise, there is no remedy beyond filing a noise complaint with the sheriff. Additionally, the County is collecting transient occupancy tax from many short-term rental operators, further muddying the situation.

We would like to see a project that looks at the vacation rental issue included in the Short-Term Projects list with the hope it could be funded in the next year or two. As to scope, the project should consider the available range of regulatory options. The Montecito Association has conducted a survey of opinions on the issue and designated a subcommittee to explore options for addressing concerns related to the use. We would be happy to share what we learn with County staff and decision-makers.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Cindy Feinberg, President
April 6, 2015

Ms. Janet Wolf, Chair  
County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors  
123 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Funding for UC Cooperative Extension in 2015-2016 Budget

Dear Ms. Wolf,

At its meeting on April 1, 2015 the members of the County Agriculture Advisory Committee approved a motion to encourage a budget increase to support the work of University of California Cooperative Education (UCCE) and subsequently discussed that this increase should occur through a General Fund allocation and not through a reduction in funding for the Agricultural Commissioner’s Office.

Santa Barbara farmers and ranchers are facing unprecedented challenges demanding further increases in the efficiencies of water, fertilizer, and pest management. UCCE can play an important role in providing this research and education.

According to information provided by UCCE, we understand that Santa Barbara County currently gives less support to UCCE than similar counties. Santa Barbara County most recently budgeted $153,000 to UCCE: that is a third of San Luis Obispo County’s budget ($453,885), half of Ventura’s ($334,000), a quarter of Monterey’s ($532,000), a third of Napa’s ($457,961), and a fifth of Sonoma’s ($757,256).

We encourage Santa Barbara County to support current and future local research and education to preserve our agricultural industry and our resources.

Sincerely,

Claire Wineman, Chair

Committee Members
Bradley Miles  
Ron Caird  
Sharyne Merritt  
A.J. Coney  
Ruth Jensen  
Chrsy Allen  
Claire Wineman  
Paul Van Leer  
June Van Wingerden  
Morgan McLaughlin  
Willy Chamberlin  
Jason Sharrett

Representing
1st District Supervisor, Salud Carbajal  
2nd District Supervisor, Janet Wolf  
3rd District Supervisor, Doreen Farr  
4th District Supervisor, Peter Adam  
5th District Supervisor, Steve Lavagnino  
California Women for Agriculture  
Grower-Shipper Association of SB and SLO Counties  
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau  
Santa Barbara Flower & Nursery Growers’ Association  
Santa Barbara Vintners  
Santa Barbara County Cattlemen’s Assn.  
California Strawberry Commission
April 7, 2015

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
Chair Janet Wolf, Vice-Chair Peter Adam, Salud Carbajal, Doreen Farr, Steve Lavagnino,  
Re: Alcohol Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS) Budget

Chair Wolf and Honorable Supervisors,

Families ACT! urges you to honor Director Gleghorn’s request for increased funding to restore services and meet the current and future crisis, rehabilitation, and long term recovery needs of ADMHS clients.

While directly addressing the current crisis with incompetent to stand trial (IST) and inpatient services, the ADMHS budget also acknowledges the need for more step-down residential units combined with expanded and strengthened support services for long-term recovery.

The ADMHS budget calls for:
1. Developing strategies to expand safe and stable local housing options for complex needs clients and utilizing MHSA housing funds to create permanent housing units,
2. Creating a welcoming environment and enhanced services for clients with complex needs in a behavioral health system that integrates substance abuse and mental health services,
3. Collaborating with community based organizations in partnership with private sector service and housing providers, and
4. Co-responding with law enforcement in the field to collectively address those in crisis.

Families ACT! knows you share Director Gleghorn’s concern that “General Fund support for ADMHS services compared to the majority of other counties in California reduces the department’s ability to engage in responsible long term planning and implementation of cost-effective, high quality evidence-based practices.”

Families ACT! and ADMHS leaders are witnessing how other counties are making investments that result in significantly reduced per-client expenditures, system-wide savings, and multi-million dollar increases in available funds for supportive housing.

With Alice Gleghorn’s capable leadership, improved relations with community partners, and your support, Santa Barbara County can do that, too!

Continued
**Families ACT! Background:**
Families ACT! aids and empowers individuals and families living with mental health and substance use disorders on the path to wellness and full recovery. Families ACT! advocates for effective, compassionate, and affordable treatment options and residential treatment centers as alternatives to incarceration.

Families ACT! has been working diligently with ADMHS staff through the Systems Change process to reveal gaps in the continuum of care, propose more cost-effective treatment alternatives, and end the revolving door of incarceration, hospitalization and homelessness.

Families ACT! will continue to work closely with the ADMHS team to fill serious gaps in the continuum of care, especially the need for supportive housing and licensed residential treatment.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Riordan
Executive Director
April 10, 2015

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara CA 93101

RE: Increase in County Per Capita Library Funding

Dear Chair Wolf and Supervisors Adam, Carbajal, Farr and Lavagnino:

The City of Goleta asks that you consider an increase to $20.30 in County per capita library funding for FY 15-16. This amount represents approximately half of the average $41.19 per capita for the benchmark counties Santa Barbara uses for comparisons, or alternately, doubling the current per capita funding. Without increased funding for operations and staffing, Santa Barbara County Libraries are unable to maintain adequate services levels.

Libraries are an important asset to a community. The Goleta Valley Library serves residents of all ages within the City of Goleta and surrounding areas of the County. An increase in funding would help to maintain current service levels at this popular and well-used facility. Please consider making libraries a higher priority and raising the per capita allocation rather than reducing the amount. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Paula Perotte
Mayor

cc: Renee Bahl, Interim Community Services Dept. Director
Irene Macias, Library Director
Margaret Esther, Library Services Manager
Jim Farr, Mayor Pro Tempore
Roger S. Aceves, Councilmember
Tony Vallejo, Councilmember
Michael T. Bennett, Councilmember
Michelle Greene, City Manager
Tim Giles, City Attorney