

Memorandum

TO: Legislative Committee, County of Santa Barbara

FROM: Cliff Berg, Legislative Advocate
Monica Miller, Legislative Advocate

DATE: February 6, 2009

RE: Monthly update on Sacramento

Budget

With the February 1, 2009 budget deadline having come and gone Sacramento will begin to furlough all of their state employees and has stopped paying their bills. We have met with your legislative delegation in an effort to share with them the impacts on our programs locally if/when we do not get paid by the State. Specifically, we were successful at educating Senator Tony Strickland as to the merits of the First Five program in the county and the good works that are done locally with those dollars. We have also spent time educating our members on the Williamson Act so they understand that while this isn't a huge program for the State (\$34.7 Million) with only be seven counties that participate, this is a big issue for the County. It is rumored that a budget vote is expected the week of February 9th, however no details have been released and Senator Steinberg has not said that there is a deal at this point. We will continue to keep you posted as this discussion unfolds.

Legislative Deadlines

As the month of January closed we successfully met a major deadline on behalf of the county related by ensuring that any potential legislation went into the Legislative Counsel so it could be considered by a potential author. By meeting this deadline we have allowed the County to introduce potential bills; the Legislative Counsel is charged with ensuring that the bill language is in the proper draft form and code section. We submitted multiple versions of potential bills to ensure that we had the most appropriate draft to introduce once we identified our bill authors.

Legislative Platform

At the January 13th board meeting the 2009 legislative platform was adopted by the Board. Once approved, we began to meet with the legislative delegation to share with them the priorities of the County. In doing so we have secured Assembly Member Nava as the author on the digital cancer screening bill; and Senator Strickland has expressed interest on a possible Regional Housing Numbers/Foreclosure bill.

We have also discussed the issue related to the AB 32 implementation and the ships that come through the Channel Islands. While the state may not have a direct role in this issue, there are some unintended consequences that need to be addressed for the affected local governments. We are working on a potential meeting with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, who is charged with drafting the AB 32 guidelines by 2010 to see if there is a way to address our issues. Once we have secured that meeting we will advise you.

We also attempted to get the extension of the time frame on the declaration of the disaster for counties from 14 days to 30 days into the local government omnibus bill for this year. We were told that particular bill would not be the most appropriate place for this language; therefore we are shopping the language as a possible stand alone bill or looking at the possibility of dropping the language into an existing bill on the same subject. In any event, we will continue to update you on the progress of this issue as it moves forward.

Wrap-up

On February 27, 2009 we hit our next big deadline for the legislature; all bills must be introduced by 5 pm on this day. With the budget deficit that has yet to be addressed and a self-imposed reduced bill limit, we still anticipate there will be over 1000 bills introduced. To date there are only just over 200 bills that have been introduced, but it is still early in the year. The legislatures' only focus right now seems to be on the budget, however we will continue to update you and your staff as these issues and others unfolds over the next coming weeks.