

TO: Members, Legislative Committee
County of Santa Barbara

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

RE: September Update

DATE: September 17, 2010

The Legislature wrapped up an uneventful session at 12:04 am on Tuesday, August 31, 2010. With seconds remaining, one of the most controversial issues was brought up related to Renewable Portfolio Standards and energy companies in California, unfortunately the clock simply ran out. They spent most of the day debating both the Republican and Democratic budget proposals, both failing in each house due to the lack of votes. When they adjourned, the reality is that they will be back soon to consider a budget deal. Keep in mind we are currently 77 days late on the budget and this is the longest we have ever gone with no end in sight. The State Controller issued a statement yesterday saying that at this time there is no need for IOU's, which is good for our programs but bad for the budget debate.

We also wanted to let you know that there was supposed to be a Big-5 (legislative leaders from both houses and the Governor) call after session which was canceled. Apparently the Republicans asked for a list of cuts and Senator Steinberg verbally obliged; it's unclear if Speaker Perez did too. The Republicans were pleasantly surprised, as was the Administration (yes, I know they're Republicans too). The Administration wanted the list in writing and Speaker Perez refused; in fact, he told some of his labor colleagues that he has no intention of making the big cuts suggested by Senator Steinberg. At this time it sounds like Perez is demonizing Steinberg but has no plan of his own. You should know that the August revenues exceeded the Governor's May Revision by \$264.6 million. The better than expected revenues has delayed the potential issuance of registered warrants. However, keep in mind that a continued delay in enacting a budget could result in registered warrants being issued in early October.

There is continued speculation that they will wait until early October to reach a deal or possibly wait until the new Governor is elected and the new legislature is sworn-in, the idea is that this will help with the passage of the simple majority budget vote if there continues to be a stalemate in the budget discussions. While all of this is speculation, we will continue to monitor the situation and keep you posted.

When we last reported we were working with Assembly Member Van Tran (R- Orange County) and our delegation to send a joint letter to the Big Five (Legislative Leaders from both houses and the Governor) asking for all of these affected counties reimbursement to be considered as part of the budget negotiations, all of our delegation has

agreed to sign on to this letter, there are a total of 14 counties and every member affected signed the letter. This letter did in fact go to the Big Five and we are hopeful that they will discuss this as part of their on-going discussions.

AB 50 by Assembly Member Pedro Nava was supported by the County. This bill would have allowed various counties, Santa Barbara being one, to get some property tax relief as a result of the devastating fires the county has experienced in the last few years. Unfortunately the bill was stalled on the Senate floor and ultimately died the last week of session. The Senate Appropriations staff inserted what we call a “poison pill” provision. This essentially means, if the bill were to move forward the Governor would veto it. They were requiring that Counties use specified union fire fighters when a fire breaks out. Our concern is this should not be a labor issue; it is about helping the locals and the constituents. Both CSAC and the Rural Counties came out in opposition. We plan to have a working group this fall to try to work this issue out and will revisit it next year.

AB 1640 by Assembly Member Noreen Evans and Assembly Member Pedro Nava, which seeks to overturn a decision made by the California Department of Public Health in late December 2009 that disenrolled low-income, medi-cal woman ages 40-49 from the breast and cervical cancer screening program under the Every Woman Counts program. The Department cited fiscal constraints as the reason for this new mandate. You may recall that the Governor signed our County sponsored bill, AB 359, last year allowing providers, on a voluntary basis, to provide a digital screening but be reimbursed at the analogue rate. The idea was to allow more women to get their screenings, not less; therefore we are supporting this bill. The measure has received bi-partisan support and is currently sitting on the Governor’s desk awaiting his signature.

The County also supported AB 1919 by Assembly Member Mike Davis; this measure was sponsored by the City of Los Angeles. The bill would have expanded the circumstances under which fees are collected so as to provide additional funds for the survey monument preservation fund. This measure was brought to us by your Public Works Department; the bill is opposed by the Realtors. The bill was totally gutted and amended to be a public employee union bill, while sitting on the Senate Floor Third Reading file. As a result, it was re-referred to Senate Local Government Committee, due to the Senate Rules and deadlines, the bill died in Committee.

The County is also opposing AB 2503 by Speaker John Perez related to the rigs to reefs program. This bill has been attempted in the past and the Governor has repeatedly vetoed the bill. The measure was part of a deal struck by leadership, so it continued to move to the Governor’s desk. It is currently sitting there awaiting his action, we are told to expect a veto, however you never know with the continued Big Five discussions what deals can be struck.

AB 354 by Assembly Juan Arambula from the Central Valley is supported by our Public Health Department. This bill deletes certain age limits for specified childhood immunizations required for admission to specified schools or child care centers, and requires the Department of Public Health to consider the immunization recommendations

of the American Academy of Family Physicians. The bill did move out of the Senate and the Assembly during the last week of session, it is currently sitting on the Governor's desk awaiting his actions.

Another bill of concern to the County is AB 2456 by Assembly Member Alberto Torrico is a bill that we are watching on behalf of the county. This bill requires the Emergency Medical Services Authority to develop and enforce regulations establishing standards for policies and procedures applicable to the functions of emergency medical technicians. This bill did move to the Governor and is awaiting his action.

Another issue that came up during the last few weeks of session related to Assembly Member Mike Davis (D-Los Angeles) asking State Parks to conduct a feasibility study on the possibility of turning the Never Land Ranch into a State Park. This was said to be done as part of a resolution, however the issue never resurfaced, if it does, we will apprise the Board.

Please keep in mind, the Governor has until midnight on September 30, 2010 to act on bills, if he does not act, they become law. We will continue to update the Board on the bills of concern to the County. We will also keep the Board apprised of any new budget developments as they arise in Sacramento as well. As always, should you or your staff have questions, please don't hesitate to let us know.