

AGENDA ITEM 2

TO: Members, County of Santa Barbara Legislative Committee

FROM: Monica Miller, Legislative Advocate
Cliff Berg, Legislative Advocate
County of Santa Barbara

RE: January 2011 Legislative Update

DATE: February 7, 2011

As you are aware, the legislature has started their 2011-12 Legislative Session as of January 3, 2011. The first order of business was to have the constitutional officers sworn-in, once that occurred, the work began. The New Administration under newly elected Governor Jerry Brown submitted their balanced budget as constitutionally required on January 10, 2011. With a \$25 billion deficit, this was not an easy task. The Governor looked at a variety of different methods to solve this budget deficit, both in the current year as well as the 2011-2012 budget. The goal is to get as much done so many items that will need to go to the voters can go by a June 2011 special election.

Once the budget was submitted to the legislature he then called for a special session requiring the legislature to only focus on budget issues for the next 45 days. The subcommittees have immediately gone to work scheduling hearings daily. The plan is to be done with the trailer bills by March 1, 2011 allowing the legislature to send an extension of the temporary taxes enacted in 2009 to the voters for an additional five year extension. The Governor is relying on the voters to pass this extension or he will need to further reduce programs. To date, he is proposing cuts of about \$12.5 billion and the rest would be made up through the elimination of Redevelopment Agencies, Realigning various programs to counties coupled with these tax extensions. Keep in mind, he is only asking for a five year extension leaving many to wonder what will happen after five years.

The programs that are hardest hit by these proposed cuts are the social service programs under the health and welfare umbrella in the State. Many constituents who depend on these services will be faced with difficult challenges with the elimination of aging programs that keep the elderly out of nursing homes, hard caps on doctor's visits and prescription medication regardless of the their health condition, reduced In-Home Supportive Services, redirection of your Prop. 10 (First five) Dollars) and Prop. 63 (mental health funds) funds to supplant current state programs, changes to CalWorks time limits and child care reductions, just to name a few. As the budget committees continue to meet and discuss these very critical issues we will keep the Board updated. Additionally, we are working with your various Departments to see the "on the ground" program hits in an effort to be able to asses how this will look for the county.

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On another front we are faced with the bill introduction deadline which is February 18, 2011. We have submitted all of the Counties legislative priorities to the office of legislative counsel while we work to find potential authors for these bills. We have met with your legislative delegation to share with them the Counties platform as well as “shop” our proposed bill for them to consider introducing. With the introduction deadline still a couple of weeks away, we still don’t have firm commitments however we continue to work with the various offices in an effort to secure that commitment.

We will continue to talk with the offices that we have met with and coordinate efforts with their staff on our proposed bill package. We will also continue to keep you and your staff updated as things progress. Should you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to let us know.