

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

May 2, 2012

FY 2013 BUDGET PROCESS

Congress returned from its spring recess in mid-April and we reiterated the County's programmatic funding priorities as the subcommittees of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees began work in earnest on drafting the various FY 2013 spending bills. To date, the House has held markups of the *Commerce, Justice and Science* and *Energy and Water* bills, and the Senate has marked up the *Agriculture, Commerce, Justice and Science, Energy and Water, and Transportation/HUD* appropriations measures. Both the House and Senate were on hiatus the week of April 30, and we anticipate that the reports to accompany the markups – with detailed funding levels included – will be available when they return on May 7. While the House and Senate leaders are looking for ways to move the bills more quickly this year, they are hampered by different spending caps. The House will work under a \$1.028 trillion cap in discretionary spending set by its FY 2013 Budget Resolution, aiming for a 1% cut in spending. The Senate will forego a Budget Resolution, instead utilizing the \$1.047 trillion cap set by the Budget Control Act of 2011. Neither cap takes into consideration \$98 billion in across-the-board sequestration cuts mandated by the Budget Control Act to take effect on January 1, 2013.

The House FY 2013 Budget Resolution calls for a broad range of programmatic reductions intended to avoid the January, 2013 sequestration cuts. To accomplish this, authorizing committees are tasked with drafting legislation to address programs under their jurisdiction. In Mid-April we were alerted by NACo that the Ways and Means Committee was going to mark up legislation that would cut or eliminate the Title XX Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funding, and we immediately contacted the committee and our local Congressional delegation to oppose the proposal, emphasizing the importance of SSBG funding to a variety of the County's social services

programs. Unfortunately, the proposal to eliminate SSBG was approved by the committee on a strict party-line vote. We are anticipating that more programs of significance to the County will be in jeopardy as other authorizing committees take up "budget reconciliation" legislation, which the House Leadership is expected to eventually role into a single, omnibus bill. However, Senate Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) has adamantly stated that the Senate has no intention of following the House reconciliation strategy.

TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

After months of political maneuvering, the House and Senate are finally set to convene a joint conference committee on reauthorization of highway and surface transportation programs. The Senate approved its reauthorization measure in March as S. 1813, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act*. In the House, Speaker Boehner (R-OH) was unable to reach consensus amongst the Republican Conference on H.R. 7, the *American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act*, so he employed the strategy of using legislation that would ostensibly extend existing authorization of the programs through the end of the fiscal year as a vehicle to go to conference with the Senate. The House approved H.R. 4348, the *Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2012, Part II*, and the Senate subsequently amended its MAP-21 into the measure and requested a conference. House and Senate conferees have now been named, and negotiations are scheduled to begin on May 8. While H.R. 7 was never approved, House Republican conferees are expected to use it as the basis for their negotiations.

CLEAN AIR AND COASTAL IMPACTS

After being alerted to the Administration's proposal to rescind \$200 million from the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP), we worked with County staff to determine the local impact of this rescission. Since 2008,

the County has received \$2.85 million in CIAP funding that has paid for restoration, engineering, and improvements to a variety of projects in the County. We discussed CIAP with Senate Appropriations Committee staff to get better clarity on the proposal, and urged both the Senate and House committees to oppose it in the *FY 2013 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations* bill. We also shared the local impact data with Senator Feinstein - who is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee – as well as Congresswoman Capps and Congressman Gallegly. The FY 2013 Interior spending bill has not yet been drafted.

We urged the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to provide the highest possible level of funding for EPA's State and Local Air Quality programs citing the critical importance of the Section 103 & 105 programs in providing resources to the County to perform basic air pollution control activities. We also reiterated the County's opposition to any legislative effort to open up the California coast to new offshore energy exploration.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

We reiterated support for legislation to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) as the Senate began floor debate on S. 1925, the *Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act*. The measure would expand the law's focus on sexual assault and help ensure access to services for all victims of domestic and sexual violence. It was approved on April 26 by a bipartisan vote of 68-31. While there is broad bipartisan support for VAWA in the House, there are concerns with some provisions of the Senate-passed bill, including those that would grant more visas to illegal immigrants that are victims of domestic abuse, and that would prevent shelters from discriminating against victims who are gay or transgender. Nevertheless, the House Judiciary Committee is scheduled to begin action on VAWA reauthorization the week of May 7.

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