

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

March 28, 2012

FY 2013 BUDGET PROCESS

In response to a request from Senator Feinstein's Appropriations staff, we drafted a comprehensive list of the County's programmatic priorities in each of the FY 2013 appropriations measures. We provided the list as well to Senator Boxer, Congresswoman Capps and Congressman Gallegly, and requested their support for the programs. We also began contacting the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees directly to advocate for the County's priorities as they continue hearings in preparation for drafting their spending bills later this spring. As an example, after being notified by District Attorney Dudley's office that President Obama's FY 2013 budget proposal would delete funding for Child Advocacy Centers for victims of sexual assault, we contacted the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees of jurisdiction and our local Congressional delegation to advocate for at least level funding for the program when they draft the *FY 2013 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations* bill. In February, the District Attorney's Office was notified that its application for accreditation through the National Children's Alliance was approved, making the County's program eligible for funding to provide services to approximately 200 children and adolescents annually.

TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

As the Senate began floor debate on S. 1813, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act*, we continued to advocate the County's concerns regarding reauthorization of SAFETEA. In particular, we emphasized the importance of retaining dedicated funding for the maintenance and repair of local bridges. After considering several highly contentious, non-germane amendments, the debate moved on to a limited number of substantive amendments. These included a bipartisan proposal by Senators Blunt (R-MO) and Casey (D-PA) to retain dedicated funding for the off-system bridge

program, and we aggressively lobbied in support of the amendments. It was approved by voice vote and the Senate then approved MAP-21 by a bipartisan vote of 74-22.

In the House, Speaker Boehner (R-OH) continues to attempt to have a broad range of concerns addressed that rank-and-file members have with H.R. 7, the *American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act*. While at one point Speaker Boehner suggested that he would scrap H.R. 7 in favor of the Senate bill if he could not find agreement amongst his own caucus, he recently reversed course and indicated that the House would push for another short term extension to enable discussions to continue over the Easter recess.

HOMELESS FUNDING

In August we provided the County with HUD's NOFA for the FY 2011 Continuum of Care (CoC) competitive grants under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance program. HUD recently announced its awards for new homeless assistance programs, and we were informed that \$382,709 is being provided for new CoC activities in Santa Barbara County. The funding is used to provide permanent and transitional housing to homeless persons, as well as services such as job training and substance abuse treatment.

We asked Senators Boxer and Feinstein to co-sign a letter to the Senate Transportation/HUD Appropriations Subcommittee drafted by Senators Reed, (D-RI), Schumer (D-NY), and Snowe (R-MN), urging increased funding for homeless programs, including the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH). Both Senators have agreed to co-sign the letter. This week, HUD announced that Santa Barbara County was awarded 25 HUD-VASH vouchers and \$250,719 in budget authority under the program for FY 2012.

PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES

We contacted the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction to advocate in support of legislation to extend the existing authorization for full funding for the payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which is scheduled to expire this year. Santa Barbara County currently receives \$1.7 million annually in PILT payments. In the House, the Natural Resources Committee has approved H.R. 4019, the *Federal Forest County Revenue, Schools and Jobs Act*. While the Senate has not yet taken action on its bill, Senator Bingaman's (D-NM) S. 1692, the *County Payments Reauthorization Act*, an amendment by Senator Bingaman to extend PILT for one year was approved during debate on MAP 21.

FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION

We worked closely with County Agricultural Commissioner Fisher to develop background information regarding the County's agricultural concerns in anticipation of upcoming action on reauthorization of the Farm Bill. We shared this information with the House and Senate Agriculture Committees, as well as the local Congressional delegation. In particular, we emphasized the need for adequate resources in the areas of pest and disease management, and invasive noxious weed management. Hearings are currently being held in both the House and the Senate.

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