

## Agenda Item #4: HR 7

“American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act of 2012”: This bill is to authorize funds for Federal-aid highway, public transportation, and highway and motor carrier safety programs, and for other purposes.

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### **BACKGROUND**

This week, the House is expected to debate H.R. 7, the *American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act of 2012*, which is to serve as a 5-year authorization of Federal transportation programs. It has been seven years since Congress passed a transportation authorization bill. The Senate has its own bill, S. 1813, that reauthorizes transportation programs for only two years.

### **COUNTY IMPACT**

Section 17304 of H.R. 7 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to offer lease sales tracts in the Southern California Planning Area in the Santa Maria and Santa Barbara/Ventura Basins. The language stipulates that existing equipment (i.e. platforms) or onshore-based drilling are allowed. H.R. 7 also strips the California Coastal Commission of its jurisdiction over these lease sales, and includes provisions that would allot 37 percent of revenues generated by these lease sales to States that allow offshore exploration.

Congresswoman Capps has submitted two amendments to H.R. 7 that would 1) strike Section 17304 allowing the lease sale to occur and 2) strike language revoking the power of the Coastal Commission. Because of House budget requirements, the Capps amendments also strip the language concerning revenue sharing with States. It is unclear at this point, whether either Capps amendment will make it to the floor for a vote or debate. **Congresswoman Capps has specifically approached the County to request support for her amendments.**

### **OUTLOOK**

The House Republicans included this and numerous other provisions opening up areas of the United States to energy exploration to be used as a revenue source for the transportation programs to supplement Federal gas taxes. Additionally they argue this new energy exploration will create jobs.

The process of drafting the House bill has been bitter, partisan, and H.R. 7, in its current form, would have difficulty passing the Senate and would likely be vetoed by the President. Transportation Secretary LaHood, a former longtime Republican Congressman, has been an outspoken critic of the House bill. However, there is strong interest from all parties in seeing a bill get passed and signed into law.