

TO: Legislative Committee, County of Santa Barbara

FROM: Cliff Berg, Legislative Advocate
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RE: October/November 2013 State Update

DATE: November 22, 2013

The Legislature has adjourned for the year; they will be in their districts until January 2014 when they will begin the second year of the two-year session. They moved over 1,000 bills to the Governor's desk during the last few weeks of the session. They were also able to come to agreement on a variety of issues that were outstanding such as what to do with the prisoners that they needed to move as well as the bill to clean-up the Medical expansion. They also attempted to deal with some of the CEQA fixes, but that was specifically targeted at the city of Sacramento's agreement to build a stadium for the Sacramento Kings due to the tight time-line the NBA gave the City in order to be able to keep the team here.

CEQA Reform

They also attempted to deal with some of the CEQA fixes, however the bill that was ultimately successful was specifically targeted at the city of Sacramento's agreement to build a stadium for the Sacramento Kings due to the tight time-line the NBA gave the City in order to be able to keep the team here.

SB 743 by Senator Darrell Steinberg was the only successful CEQA bill this year. The measure was really an attempt at moving the Sacramento Kings Arena along on the schedule that it needs to be. We were told that it was going to also contain a number of other CEQA reforms; however given the lateness of the session it only dealt with a few; mostly related to the Arena. The only other major issue is how CEQA analyzes parking and looking at that a different way which will be conducted by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. We are told that the other issues will be dealt with next year; in particular both the Governor and the Speaker are very interested in seeing this through. We anticipate that a bigger CEQA fix will be addressed next year.

Prison Reform

During the last few weeks of session the legislature also attempted to tackle prison crisis and the requirement for the state to have a plan to move 10,000 inmates by October 1, 2013. After much debate between the Senate Democrats and the Assembly, Senate Republicans and the Governor a compromise was reached. The Governor went to the Supreme Court and was overruled. He has said he would not allow a mass early release of inmates to achieve the reductions and instead would shift inmates to leased private prison cells. Beds identified by the state so far will leave about 4,414 inmates to be dealt

with by the January 27, 2014 deadline, and both the state and inmate attorneys have been ordered to discuss possible ways of settling the issue.

Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg said he hoped the ongoing talks between the state and inmate attorneys will result in a further postponement of the Jan. 27 deadline to give the state time to pursue additional **rehabilitation programs**. In September, legislators passed a compromise bill to allow the state to spend \$315 million on expanded prison-bed space to comply with the court order, if needed, and to focus on long-term drug and mental health treatment programs if the judges grant a further delay.

Affordable Care Act

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) opened for business on October 1, 2013 at the same time the Federal Government shut down. While it was a bit of a rough opening and we really won't know what it looks like for several months, Covered California is doing outreach as well as each county to get the word out and people enrolled. To date, they numbers are good but it is still early. It should also be noted that the Administration did adopt the Medi-Cal optional expansion offered by the federal Government. What this means is that single, childless adults under the age of 65 who were previously ineligible for Medi-Cal are now eligible. The Federal Government will pick up the costs for the first three years 100% and then there will be a 50/50 match which is how Medi-Cal is currently funded.

As we continue to watch the ACA roll out, we will keep you updated and work with your staff to see the impacts on your constituents. We anticipate that this will allow for better access to care earlier in the process but are concerned about the potential for provider shortages in the state. Senator Ed Hernandez (D-24) as chair of the Senate Health Committee did introduce a package of bills that would allow certain providers to practice at the top of their scope, however all but one were unsuccessful. SB 493 which would allow pharmacists to administer vaccines as well as birth control was signed by the Governor. We anticipate the others and possibly more will continue to move or be introduced next year in response to the provider shortages.

Water Bond

As we mentioned in October, the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality held an informational hearing yesterday to open up the discussion on a proposed water bond that they hope will be ready for the November 2014 election. There are currently two measures that are moving through the process, SB 42 by Senator Lois Wolk (D-Yolo and a Delta County) and AB 1331 by Assembly Member Anthony Rendon (D-Los Angeles). They each address some different priorities but have some similarities. The goal is to reach some common ground so one bill can move forward next year. Based on our understanding, SB 42 appears to be more environmental friendly while AB 1331 addresses more structural issues statewide with maintaining our current infrastructure while planning for the future. The goal is to keep the bond between \$7-\$8.2 billion, they agree that this does not address all of our current needs but will go a long ways to getting the state in a good place. They are hopeful that

there will be no opposition, but that may be a bit too optimistic. This was only one in a series of several hearings that we anticipate will take place.

The Assembly Speaker did put together a “working water group” that had regional representatives that could speak to individual regional issues. The Senate did not take this approach; again it was more about the environment and a way to keep the Delta sustainable. Both authors agreed that there would not be any ear marks for specific projects and each will be competitively bid. They also plan to take amendments to allow for Tribes to be eligible as long as they meet the grant criteria.

In Conclusion

When they return in January they will move at a fast clip in an effort to get the two-year bills moved to the second house. They will also be looking at their potential legislative packages for the 2014 year. Additionally, the Governor will release his 2014-15 budget for the legislature to begin to debate. We expect it to be very busy and will work with your staff on any issues that relate to the County. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like any additional details.