

# Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

December 3, 2019

## BUDGET

In late November, President Trump signed into law an additional short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) to provide interim funding through December 20. Congressional negotiators agreed to extend the previous CR, which expired on November 21, to allow more time to finish up the FY 2020 appropriations bills. The budget deal agreed to in August set the overall spending limits for FY 2020, but Congress must still enact the bills that allocate the funding to specific programs and agencies. There are significant obstacles to completing the FY 2020 appropriations process, notably the President's proposal to include funding for a border wall. In addition to funding issues, both parties are seeking to use the funding bills as vehicles for enacting various policy riders.

## HOUSING/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Senate has lagged far behind the House in work on the annual appropriations bills, only passing their first funding package on October 31. That package included the *FY 2020 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations Act* and three other measures. Among the programs that would be funded by the bill are several housing and community development programs that we advocate for in coordination with NACo and other stakeholders. These include \$3.3 billion for Community Development Block Grants (level with last year); \$1.3 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership Program (level with last year); and an increase of \$164 million for Homeless Assistance Grants to a total of \$2.8 billion. With only three weeks left until the current CR lapses, the focus is now on negotiation between House and Senate Appropriations Committee members on how to allocate funding for these and other programs in the final FY 2020 legislation.

## HEALTH CENTERS

We are continuing to work with NACo and other health stakeholders on several public health funding issues, including reauthorization of the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) program. The enactment of H.R. 3055, the FY 2020 Further Continuing Appropriations Act, included provisions to extend this program through December 20, ensuring funding for this County priority through the length of the CR. Longer-term authorizations have been approved at the committee level and we are urging inclusion of those proposals in the omnibus bills that we expect to be drafted before Congress adjourns for the year.

## CAMP FOUR

The Senate Indian Affairs Committee approved Representative LaMalfa's H.R. 317, the *Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Land Affirmation Act of 2019*, on November 6. This action helps demonstrate the considerable support for the legislation and clears away one possible obstacle to consideration of the bill by the full Senate. The legislation was also added to the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act earlier in the year and is pending in the deliberations over a final version of that bill. The Defense bill conference committee negotiations have been unusually contentious and Senate Armed Services Committee Chair Inhofe (R-OK) has indicated his unwillingness to compromise by introducing S. 2840, the *Essential National Security Authorities Act for Fiscal Year 2020*, on November 12. S. 2840 proposes to re-authorize core defense programs but none of the additional provisions such as the Camp Four legislation that were added during previous consideration by the House and the Senate.

### **LOS PADRES WILDERNESS**

During its November 20 mark-up, the House Natural Resources Committee approved Representative Carbajal's H.R. 2199, the *Central Coast Heritage Protection Act*, to expand Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River designations in the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument and designate the Condor National Recreation Trail. Senator Harris has re-introduced the Senate version of the legislation as S. 1111, with Senator Feinstein's support. We contacted the House Natural Resources and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committees in support of the bills and thanked our local Delegation for their leadership on this issue.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE BANK**

On October 22, Representative Carbajal introduced H.R. 4780, which would establish a government corporation to provide loans and loan guarantees for infrastructure projects. *The National Infrastructure Investment Corporation (NIIC) Act of 2019*, would set up a national infrastructure bank to help leverage private dollars for local government projects. The legislation has been referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, on which Representative Carbajal serves as Vice Chair, which places him in an excellent position to include the proposal in infrastructure legislation considered by the Committee.

### **DISASTER RECOVERY**

The House passed H.R. 3702, the *Reforming Disaster Recovery Act of 2019*, on November 18 to help get Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery grants spent faster. H.R. 3702 was introduced in response to reports that there have been extensive delays in the allocation of CDBG-DR funds after disasters. The legislation would set deadlines for the allocation of funds by HUD and standardize the regulations for the program in order to simplify administration. The bill would also set up a process for units of local government to pre-certify as eligible grantees to further expedite the program.

### **GREEN ENERGY**

House Ways and Means Committee Democrats, led by Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures Chairman Thompson (D-CA), recently released a discussion draft of the *Growing Renewable Energy and Efficiency Now (GREEN) Act*. The GREEN Act would extend current renewable energy tax incentives and create new models to increase the use of green energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Full Committee Chair Neal (D-MA) has indicated that he would like to see the GREEN Act passed by the Committee this year and possibly included in end-of-year negotiations on other tax and budget matters.

### **CHILD WELFARE**

The *Family First Transition Act* was recently introduced in the Senate as S. 2777 and in the House as H.R. 4980. The bill includes several provisions intended to help with implementation of the *Family First Prevention Services Act*, which was enacted over the objections of CWDA and CSAC. This includes additional funding for transition to the new requirements and a more gradual phasing in of some provisions. Because the legislation has bicameral and bipartisan support, it is an excellent candidate for inclusion in wrap-up legislation before the end of the year.

### **HEMP REGULATIONS**

On October 31, the Department of Agriculture published a long-awaited interim final rule that establishes the regulations for producing hemp. The 2018 Farm Bill removed hemp from the list of controlled substances and gave USDA the task of developing rules that would allow hemp production to be regulated at the State level. The recently published interim final rule provides the way for USDA to approve plans submitted by States for the domestic production of hemp and establishes a Federal plan for producers in States that do not have their own USDA-approved plan.

*Don Gilchrest  
Thomas Walters & Associates, Inc.*