

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

FEBRUARY 19, 2010

FY 2011 BUDGET PROPOSAL

After President Obama released his FY 2011 Budget Proposal on February 1, we reviewed materials provided at various Federal agency briefings of importance to the County's responsibilities to determine potential impacts on the County, including Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, and Justice. In general, most programs of significance to the County were proposed to be funded at either the FY 2010 level or with slight increases. This included the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), which both the Obama and Bush Administration had proposed eliminating in recent years. Nevertheless, downward budgetary pressures will mandate ongoing advocacy efforts to protect those programs through the appropriations process.

The release of the President's Budget Proposal is merely the first step in the annual Federal budgetary process. The House and Senate Budget Committees must next begin work on the *FY 2011 Budget Resolution*, which sets the broad parameters for the 12 separate appropriations bills that fund the various Federal agencies.

FY 2011 APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

We have begun work with our local House delegation and Senators Feinstein and Boxer regarding support for the County's specific funding proposals through the FY 2011 appropriations measures. In preparation for the process, we arranged and participated in meetings for Supervisor Carbajal with the County's delegation and appropriate committee staff to advocate the requests during his January trip to Washington. Senator Feinstein once again established an early deadline of February 5 for receipt of proposals by her office, and we worked closely with County staff to submit the proposals timely and ensure that they were complete and accurate. We have subsequently submitted

the County's requests to Senator Boxer, Congresswoman Capps, and Congressman Gallegly. The County's requests this year include:

- Lower Mission Creek
- Lake Cachuma
- Historic Santa Barbara Courthouse
- Santa Claus Lane Beach Access
- Hollister Avenue Widening
- Purisima Road Widening
- Lompoc Veterans Memorial Building
- Goleta Beach

The respective House and Senate Appropriations Committees will begin hearings on the FY 2011 spending bills shortly, but will not begin drafting them until later in the spring, after the *FY 2011 Budget Resolution* has been approved by both Houses.

JOBS LEGISLATION

Just before adjourning in December, the House approved H.R. 2847, the *Jobs for Main Street Act*. The proposal would use funding from the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) to stabilize and create jobs, primarily through infrastructure investments and funding for public service jobs such as teachers, police officers, and fire fighters. The measure would also provide \$23.5 billion to extend the higher Federal match for Medicaid and other programs under the Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) by an additional six months, and extend the existing authorization for transportation programs under SAFETEA-LU through September 30, 2010. President Obama made the passage of jobs creation legislation one of the centerpieces of his State of the Union Address, and Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) is expected to release the details of the Senate version for debate when Congress returns from the President's Day recess the week of February 22.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

As the House and Senate returned for the second session of the 111th Congress, we have continued to closely monitor Congressional activity on health care reform, and to coordinate with NACo and other local government advocacy groups to determine potential impacts on the County. The Senate approved its version in December before adjourning for the holidays, setting the stage for conference negotiations with the House on a final bill this year. However, their plans were thrown into chaos when Republican Scott Brown won the January 19 special election to replace Senator Kennedy in Massachusetts, depriving the Democrats of the 60 vote “super majority” needed to close debate on the bill in the Senate. Health care reform was also dropped to a second priority level behind jobs creation legislation, and Democrats are scrambling for a strategy to get it back on track. President Obama intends to release his own draft of reform legislation in advance of his February 25 White House Summit on the issue.

SITING OF CELL TOWERS

During his January advocacy trip to Washington, D.C., Supervisor Carbajal discussed the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) November ruling regarding the placement of cell towers with White House Deputy Associate Director for Intergovernmental Affairs Michael Blake. The decision significantly shortened the time period that local governments have to review requests for placements of the towers, further impinging upon local land use authority. As a follow-up to the meeting, we discussed with NACo its efforts with other local government advocacy groups on this issue, and shared that information with Mr. Blake. NACo and its partners have submitted a petition for reconsideration that could be heard as early as March.

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