

ACTION ITEM 3

TO: Members, County of Santa Barbara Legislative Committee

FROM: Monica Miller, Legislative Advocate
Cliff Berg, Legislative Advocate
County of Santa Barbara

RE: February 2011 Legislative Update

DATE: March 9, 2011

Since we last reported we have worked closely with your delegation in an effort to get our legislative package introduced and have focused on the many budget issues at hand. The bill introduction deadline was February 18, 2011 and there were hundreds of bills introduced. Our office has completed the reading of all of them and now is in the process of getting them out to your staff so we can determine what is crucial to the County. Additionally, we are monitoring the budget situation very closely to ensure we keep you and your staff updated as things progress.

As you may know, the budget special session that Governor Brown called closed on Saturday, March 5, 2011, without a budget in place. The budget conference committee completed its work on Thursday, March 3, 2011. The key now is drafting the necessary trailer bills and budget bill language on the issues that need to be dealt with and then getting the necessary votes to pass the various pieces of legislation. It is important to note that with the passage of Prop. 25 last November, the budget bill is a simple majority but many of the trailer bills are 2/3rd vote, so that will create some challenges.

Some major issues to highlight include the Realignment proposal. This is still being negotiated as we write this report. There was a last and final offer presented late last night, however in working with CSAC and all the counties, there will be one additional push to tighten the language. There are many outstanding concerns such as CalWorks and the AB 900 issues, however at this point the deal is mostly done.

Another key issue is the elimination of Redevelopment Agencies. The League of California League of Cities is pushing back hard on this proposal. The budget conference committee did adopt totally eliminate RDA's and, as we understand it, they are still trying to work through various issues. The reality is the county auditor will take on most of the financial responsibilities once RDA's are eliminated, however these details have yet to be released.

Some other issues are First Five (Prop. 10) money is being used for other purposes without a vote of the people. The Department of Finance determined that their plan to use it for children's healthcare kept with the "mission" of First Five, therefore the vote of the people is unnecessary at this time. This will take a 2/3rd on the floor.

One big surprise was the use of the Maddy Fund for medical. MADDY supports various components of the EMS system in the County. We are working with our delegation and others to educate them on the best way to do this in an effort to keep some parts of our EMS system, but not sure how much they will be able to impact this issue.

On another note, we have introduced five bills on behalf of the county and are co-sponsoring one. The bills are AB 412 by Assembly Member Das Williams, related to the extension of the Maddy Fund. While we understand this fund will be used for other purposes, in meeting with the committee staff and our author we believe it is key to keep this bill moving at this time.

We also introduced AB 537 authored by Assembly Member Das Williams and co-sponsored with SBCAG; this is related to the Highway 154 issue. The bill will not be introduced this year while we continue to work with CHP and others to gather data.

AB 765 was introduced by Assembly Member Katcho Achadjian, on behalf of the County District Attorney. This measure will allow the penal code to catch up with modern day life related to sexually violent crimes and properly prosecute offenders. He also introduced AB 1141 on behalf the County Elections; we are still working out the details with your elections staff and hope to amend this bill soon.

We also introduced AB 1356 by Assembly Member Mike Eng (D-LA); this bill is an attempt to address the local issues related to wine tasting rooms and better regulation of them in our local communities.

Finally, we worked with Senator Sam Blakeslee's office to get SB 106 introduced; this bill seeks to reimburse counties for the cost of special elections.

It has been a busy first part of the year; however we believe this is only the beginning, and we will continue to keep you updated as things progress. In the meantime, should you or your staff have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.