



Memorandum

Date: September 12, 2011
To: Legislative Program Committee Members
From: Terri Nisich, Assistant CEO
Subject: Development of 2012 Legislative Platform

Summary

This item is on the Legislative Committee agenda to provide an overview of platforms and priorities for the County of Santa Barbara's partnering associations, the California Association of Counties (CSAC), and the National Association of Counties (NACo) in order to facilitate a review of the County's adopted 2011 Legislative Principles. This information is provided to make any potential refinements to the principles for the upcoming session. The Legislative principles adopted by the County Board of Supervisors for 2011 included the following:

- Efficient Service Delivery/Operations
- Fiscal Stability
- Inter-Agency Collaboration
- Local Control
- Protection of Safety Net Services
- Community Sustainability/Economic Stability

As the committee may recall the protection of safety net and the community sustainability legislative principles were included in the platform for the first time in 2011.

The California Association of Counties is presently in the process of preparing their legislative priorities and platform for 2012. However, initial discussions seem to indicate that CSAC 2011 adopted principles will extensively inform that process. CSAC recognized that while there were many pressing legislative priorities, the most serious was addressing the states fiscal crisis. The principles outlined below guided their advocacy efforts during the 2011 session. These included:

CSAC State Advocacy

- Encourage healthy, safe and sustainable communities
- Seek Budget Solutions that address the structural deficit
- Promote Programs and services that stimulate the economy and protect jobs
- Engage in long term reform conversations
- Federal advocacy

CSAC Federal Advocacy

- New Authorization of the Nation's Surface Transportation Law
- State Criminal Assistance Program (SCAAP)

- Federal Climate Change/Renewable energy policy
- Native American Affairs
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization
- Clean Water Act
- Levee Vegetation Management

The National Association of Counties focused on methods to hold counties harmless from state and federal mandates, while continuing to promote job retention and creation. Specifically the following key issues were spearheaded by NACo, and their board of directors and steering committees:

Promote county fiscal relief and save jobs: Support for a commitment to maintaining federal financial assistance to counties to at least 2010 levels for county programs such as PILT/SRS/CDBG/HOME/EDA/Justice & Public Safety programs/investments in local workforce development systems/rural development/transportation/water infrastructure, FMAP/Medicaid/social services and other domestic programs that are essential in creating and maintaining jobs while providing assistance for our citizens.

Save jobs by repealing the three percent tax withholding requirement. Requiring local government to collect a three percent withholding tax for goods and services contracts in order for us to send to the IRS. Support job creation by enacting aviation and surface transportation program reauthorizations. Reauthorization of the federal airport and aviation programs needs to be completed. Enactment of these programs will help build our nation's infrastructure and create additional employment opportunities.

Opposition to job killing unfunded mandates and preemptions: NACo is constantly vigilant against legislative or regulatory initiatives that undermine local government decision making and contributes to reductions in our workforce.

Support county health priorities. NACo will continue to work with Congress and the Administration to improve and implement the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act that help counties build healthy communities and ensure affordable access to health care for all Americans.

Support Job Creation by Making Rural Development a Priority within Farm Bill Reauthorization. NACo supports reauthorization of the Farm Bill and funding for key provisions such as rural development, agriculture, nutrition, research and conservation which are critical to the economic well being of all Americans, especially rural Americans.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Legislative Committee affirm the legislative principles set forth in 2011. These principles provide a guide to the County in developing positions on future state and federal legislation. Further, they address many of the key policy issues reflected in both NACo and CSAC principle priorities while simultaneously representing items unique to Santa Barbara County.