

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

September 26, 2012

FY 2013 FEDERAL FUNDING

As anticipated, Congress has approved a six month Continuing Resolution that funds Federal agencies and programs at approximately the FY 2012 level through March, 2013. The CR approved by the House on September 13 and by the Senate on September 22 is considered "clean;" that is, free of riders that implement policy or funding changes with the exception of a limited number of provisions related to national security and public safety. Support for the CR was bipartisan, with each side banking on gains in the November elections that will enable them to be in a better bargaining position in the new Congress next year. Congress went into recess last week to campaign, and will not return until the post-election Lame Duck session.

FIREFIGHTING

Earlier this year we provided information to the County regarding the Department of Homeland Security's FY 2012 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG). Funding under this competitive grant program can be used to address a variety of firefighting-related needs. Two weeks ago, we were notified by Congresswoman Capps' office that the Santa Barbara County Fire Department has been awarded \$599,870 under Round 1 of the FY 2012 AFG Program for Operations and Safety activities, which include professional training, wellness and fitness programs, equipment, personal protective equipment, and modifications to facilities. The award is one of only two made in the State of California under Round 1.

During floor consideration of the FY 2013 Defense Authorization bill, Congressman Gallegly successfully added an amendment to provide \$8 million to the Air National Guard to make existing Guard wings capable of operating 2 legacy MAFFS (Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems) and \$16 million for the purchase of 2 new aerial dispersal units. In a related action, the FY 2013 CR provides an

additional \$800 million to the Interior Department and USDA's Forest Service for wildfire suppression activities.

DRUG COURT FUNDING

Last winter we also provided the County with the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) announcement of funding opportunities under the FY 2012 Adult Drug Court Discretionary Competitive Grant Program. In March, the Probation Department submitted an application to BJA for funding under the program to implement a post-plea Veterans Treatment Court in the Santa Maria Valley for military veterans who have become involved in the criminal justice system. We contacted Congresswoman Capps to solicit her support for the proposal, and worked with her staff in drafting a letter of support to BJA Director Denise O'Donnell. When BJA announced its awards under the program earlier this month, it included \$350,000 for the County to implement its Veterans Treatment Court.

EARTHQUAKE INSURANCE

As a follow-up to last month's Legislative Program Committee meeting, we worked with the CEO's office to communicate the County's support for the *Earthquake Insurance Affordability Act*, sending letters to the respective House and Senate committees of jurisdiction and the County's Congressional delegation. The measure was introduced in the Senate by Senator Feinstein as S. 637, and in the House by Congressman Campbell (R-CA) as H.R. 3125. Senator Boxer is an original cosponsor of the Senate bill, while Congresswoman Capps and Congressman Gallegly are included in the 23 cosponsors of the House bill, all from California. Neither the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs nor the House Financial Services committee has scheduled hearings on the proposal, and it is unlikely there will be action in the remainder of the 112th Congress.