

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

April 3, 2013

FY 2013 & FY 2014 FEDERAL FUNDING

Before leaving on its two week spring recess on March 22, Congress took action on legislation to fund the Federal government through the remainder of FY 2013. The original FY 2013 Continuing Resolution (CR) funded Federal programs and agencies through March 27, and as discussed last month, the House approved H.R. 933, the *Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act* early in March. The measure attempted to soften the impacts of sequestration by combining a CR for the balance of FY 2013 with actual appropriations bill language for military-related programs, giving them some leeway on implementation of the mandatory cuts. The Senate subsequently expanded this approach to include bill language for Agriculture, Commerce, Justice and Science, and Homeland Security programs. After several days of floor debate, the Senate approved its bill on March 20, and the following day the House accepted the Senate version rather than prolong the debate and risk a government shutdown. President Obama signed the FY 2013 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act on March 26.

The prolonged and ultimately unsuccessful attempts to avoid sequestration disrupted the beginning of the FY 2014 appropriations process, but both Congress and the Administration are now moving forward. President Obama will release his FY 2014 Budget Request on April 10 – it is usually released the first week of February – and both the House and Senate have already approved their respective versions of a FY 2014 Budget Resolution. While it is unlikely that they will even attempt to negotiate a Joint Budget Resolution because of the broad disparities between the two documents, it does signal a return to “normal order” in the process, and the various Appropriations Subcommittees in both the House and Senate have begun holding hearings in anticipation of drafting FY 2014 funding bills later in the spring.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

When Senate Environment and Public Works Chair Boxer introduced S. 601, the *Water Resources Development Act of 2013 (WRDA 2013)*, we provided the text of the legislation to the County for review and analysis. Based on feedback provided by Water Resources Deputy Director Fayram, we contacted Senator Boxer and other members of the committee to advocate in support of the legislation, emphasizing elements of the bill that would benefit the County, including standards and a process for the Army Corps of Engineers to authorize or amend projects, review and implementation of the Corps’ Vegetation Management Policy, and development of a non-Federal project implementation pilot program. The committee approved an amended version of S. 601 on March 20, and further action is pending release of the official committee report to accompany the action.

PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES

We attended the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing focusing on options for reauthorizing and reforming the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs. Provisions to extend existing authority through the end of FY 2013 were included in last year’s transportation bill, the *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act*. The County receives about \$1.74 million in PILT funding annually.

FRACKING

We provided County staff with information regarding EPA’s formation of an independent body to peer-review its research for a Congressionally ordered report looking at the potential health impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water. The draft report is due out next year. We also provided Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Wyden’s (D-OR) letter to the Department of Interior regarding a responsible approach to fracking on public lands.

HOMELESS FUNDING

HUD Secretary Donovan recently announced the release of \$1.5 billion in FY 2012 Continuum of Care (CoC) funding. We were informed that stakeholders in Santa Barbara County will receive a total of \$1.42 million under the program, which is used to administer street outreach, client assessment, and direct housing assistance.

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