

TO: Legislative Committee, County of Santa Barbara

FROM: Cliff Berg, Legislative Advocate
Monica Miller, Legislative Advocate

RE: February 2013 State Update

DATE: March 4, 2013

Now that we are into March, the legislature is beginning to get into the full swing of things. Committees have been assigned and they are beginning to meet, we have passed both the legislative counsel and the bill introduction deadline, so now the legislature plans to get down work. Additionally, the budget committee and their subcommittees have begun to meet to start the review of the Governor's budget.

With the bill introduction deadline having passed, we have had a chance to review the newly introduced bills and can begin to get them through the review process so we can start to take positions, seek amendments, parcel out what is important and gather additional information on bills that have a potential impact on the County. There were not as many bills introduced this year as there have been in the past; however there were many themes which will be extremely difficult issues to tackle, so we anticipate that there will be some contentious hearings in the next few months. Also, keep in mind that there are some significant learning curves as the 39 new members try to wrap their brains around many issues that the state has dealt with in some manner over the last few years.

Some issues that we believe will be significant to watch include potential changes to the water bond or an entirely new bond may be on the horizon as well. CEQA reform was slated to be a big deal, however with the sudden resignation of Senator Michael Rubio (D- Bakersfield) that is unlikely to happen this year, he really had the vision and ability to bring opposing sides together and it is unlikely that there is anyone at this point to fill that vacancy. We will also be dealing with the special session on health care reform and the mandatory expansion of the Medi-Cal program under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). While the County has not taken a position on any of these issues, as they evolve, we will be watching and reporting back on any new developments to ensure that you have the best information available.

Overall, we anticipate that this should be a very interesting year ahead. Keep in mind that with all the new members, many of them have the opportunity to hold their current office for 12 years, so we believe that this will be a big "wait and see" year as many try to understand procedurally how the state works and what is the best approach they should take to address their constituents issues in a broad manner.

Many of the freshman are also waiting for a possible leadership changes as all of the current leaders are termed out in 2014, so while some speculate that there will be "place holders" elected, others have stated that they are all watching each other to see which one

naturally rises to the top. Again, all speculation, but this will impact how successful our delegation will be and the overall function of the legislature in general.

With all of these moving parts, we will continue to watch them and keep you posted. Keep in mind, committees will start to heat up in the next few weeks and so will budget discussions. All of which are of interested to the County, so stay tuned for more updates.