

# Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

September 2, 2014

## FY 2015 APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Congress returns from its month-long summer recess next week, and addressing funding for the rapidly approaching start of the new Federal Fiscal Year will be one of its highest priorities. But once Congress reconvenes, it will have only two weeks and two days of legislative time in September before it leaves again, not coming back until after the November elections. At this point Congressional leaders are indicating that finishing the FY 2015 Defense Appropriations bill will be the highest priority, and there is not general optimism that even that can be accomplished. This means that the now all-too-common Continuing Resolution (CR) must be enacted by October 1 to keep the government operating. Much of the debate will center on how long the CR will, as well as whether any extraneous riders or provisions will be included in the omnibus legislation. One likely candidate is reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank, which is scheduled to expire on October 1. While controversial, the Ex-Im Bank is expected to be reauthorized in some form, but it's not yet clear for how long and what strings would be attached, and may pave the way for other riders and so-called anomalies in "spend-as-you-are-now" standard for CRs.

## LAKE CACHUMA

During Supervisor Carbajal's advocacy trip to Washington, DC last winter, we arranged and participated in meetings for him, Public Works Director McGolpin, and Deputy Director Fayram to initiate discussions regarding the impacts of the drought on Lake Cachuma, and the need for emergency relief. This included a meeting with Acting Commissioner Lowell Pimley of the Bureau of Reclamation. In the ensuing months the County has continued to pursue resources from the Bureau and on August 17, Acting Commissioner Pimley announced that the agency was providing \$300,000 for emergency operations to maintain water flows from Cachuma.

## OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF

At the direction of the County Executive Office, we contacted Interior Secretary Sally Jewel to urge her to assure the continued exclusion of California's Outer Continental Shelf from any proposed oil and gas leases as the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) undertakes the process for drafting the Proposed 2017-2022 OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program. The action was in concert with Congressional efforts led by Senators Boxer and Feinstein and Congresswoman Capps to protect the California coastline from new drilling sites. BOEM had published a Request for Information (RFI) in the Federal Register on June 16, 2014, which was the first step in what Secretary Jewell described as "a robust public engagement process, and comments were due from interested parties by August 15. There will be multiple additional opportunities for the County to comment, including during the draft EIR and EIR processes.

## MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS

We urged Senate Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) to expedite full Senate consideration of Senator Franken's (D-MN) S. 162, the *Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act*. The measure would reauthorize and improve the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) of 2004, including providing grants for improved mental health treatment services for mentally ill offenders, and giving local officials greater control over program participation eligibility. In the House, we contacted Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime Chairman Sensenbrenner (R-WI) and Ranking Minority Member Scott (D-VA) to advocate in support of companion legislation introduced as H.R. 401 by Congressman Nugent (R-FL). We also asked the local Congressional delegation to support the bill. While H.R. 401 has bipartisan support, neither subcommittee nor full committee action has been scheduled as of yet.

**JUSTICE FOR ALL ACT**

We contacted Senate Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) and Senators Boxer and Feinstein in support of Committee Chairman Leahy's (D-VT) S. 822, the *Justice For All Reauthorization Act*. The measure would extend the authorization of a variety of programs implemented in the original Justice For All Act, including the Crime Victims' Rights Act, the Debbie Smith Act, the Coverdell Forensics Science Improvement Grant Program, and the Innocence Protection Act. It would also improve support services for crime victims, enhance state and local governments' use of DNA evidence, and make units of local government eligible for grants under the Capital Representation Improvement Grants and the Capital Prosecution Improvement Grants programs. S. 822 has been approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee and is currently awaiting full Senate consideration. In the House, Congressman Franks (R-AZ) recently introduced companion legislation as H.R. 4165, and we have asked the House Judiciary Committee to take action on it.

**SECOND CHANCE ACT**

We contacted the Senate and House Judiciary Committees to reiterate support for legislation to reauthorize the Second Chance Act. The previous authorization of the Act expired on September 30, 2010, and while Congress has continued to fund its programs through the annual appropriations process, we argued the importance of reauthorizing and improving Second Chance to ensure the availability of needed re-entry resources to local governments such as the County. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Leahy (D-VT) introduced S. 1690, the *Second Chance Act Reauthorization Act*, and House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime Chairman Sensenbrenner (R-WI) has introduced companion legislation as H.R. 3465. While both bills have bipartisan support, hearings have not yet been held on the proposal.

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