

TO: Members, County of Santa Barbara Legislative Committee

FROM: Cliff Berg, Legislative Advocate
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RE: February 2014 State Update

DATE: March 4, 2014

As we move into early spring, the legislature has completed many deadlines, the legislative counsel deadline of January 24, 2014; the two-year bill deadline of January 31, 2014 and the bill introduction deadline of February 21, 2014. There were several hundred bills introduced, most of which were introduced on that final day. While we have done a first read of all the bills, we will now work with staff to do a deeper dive on what many of the bills mean to the county and your constituents. The legislature has also begun to have their budget committees and sub-committees meet to discuss the Governor's budget and what this looks like for that state. Standing committees will also begin to hear bills that have hit their 30 days in print, this will slowly pick-up and then in April will be very busy focusing on the "house of origin" deadline, as is every year, this is when they will move very quickly.

Some highlights are listed below regarding issues that are of concern to the County.

BUDGET

As the legislature begins to focus on the Governor's budget, they also have their own priority as a caucus in each house. The Assembly released their budget "Blue Print" that they will be focusing on as they review the Governor's budget, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) recommendations and meeting with the advocates. There is some discrepancy regarding with the current surplus looks like, many are focused on the \$11 billion number, but the legislature and the Governor don't agree at this time how that should be allocated. There are many pushing to restore many of the social safety net cuts that have been implemented since 2008, but while we are in a surplus today, everyone would like for the state to tread lightly so we don't end up in the same place we have been over the last several years.

Additionally, there continues to be major unrest around the Administration's policy of not allowing IHSS workers to work more than 40 hours a week. The Federal Department of Labor has changed how they handle over-time; Secretary Diana Dooley (HHS) told them in a letter that California would not be able to afford these new requirements. The Administrations resolution was to disallow over-time for all IHSS workers. We anticipate this will be a heated discussion this year as well.

WATER

There will continue to be discussions around potential water bonds this year to replace the current bond slated for November 2014. Assembly Member Anthony Rendon's (D-Lakewood) AB 1331 did move to the second house. Senator Lois Wolk (D-Yolo) introduced a new measure, SB 848, which is identical to her SB 42 which did not get out of the house of origin. There have been some other measures introduced, but are in what we call "spot" form, so while they are intended to be a potential vehicle for a water bond, they have not dropped in specific language as of the writing of this report. Both AB 1331 and SB 848 seek to replace the current water bond.

The Administration and the Democratic Caucus did move quickly to get some immediate relief as it relates to the drought called in January. As you know, the Governor declared a drought in January and as the state continued to languish without serious rain there was a movement to expedite getting some significant funding out the door to locals. As a result, they passed SB 103 and SB 104 which intends to do just that. Both bills were signed on Sunday, March 2, 2014.

In talking with the various agencies who will work to get this money out the door, they are very aware of the situation with Lake Cachuma. We believe that there will be some relief coming soon, the funds will be allocated on a grant basis, they are refining what the criteria will be in order to be eligible. It should be noted that our delegation, both Assembly Member Das Williams and Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson's office, have been extremely helpful and have ensured that the Administration understands the issue as it relates to Lake Cachuma. We will continue to work with your staff and keep you updated as this unfolds. Keep in mind; this is only the beginning of the conversation, not the end.

Bills of Interest to the County

AB 158 (Levine) This bill would prohibit stores from allowing single-use carry-out bags. As you know, many discussions around this issue have taken place by local governments in an attempt to deal with this issue. On the other side of the issue is the potential job loss by closing factories that manufacture these bags, which is why these bills have been unsuccessful over the last couple of years. We understand that positive conversations are happening on both sides, therefore hoping to move AB 158 onto the Assembly floor; however the bill was unsuccessful. The County does not have a formal position on this issue.

SB 270 (Padilla) This bill is the compromise bill prohibiting stores from allowing single-use carry-out bags. This bill would require stores that have gross sales at a specific price point to allow customers to purchase bags, but they will not have them available for free. As mentioned, this is the compromise bill between government and industry as well as the "mom and pop" stores. The bill is currently awaiting a committee assignment, but it is in the Assembly so we anticipate it will not be heard until late spring or early summer. We will keep you updated on its progress.

SB 498 (Lara) This bill is a reintroduction of SB 801 that the county supported last year. Unfortunately, due to last minute amendments the Governor vetoed SB 801. The Senator met with stakeholders over the fall and this is the compromise bill. The bill is sitting in the Assembly

awaiting a committee referral. SB 498 will help to facilitate the development of cleaner and more efficient technologies in California for converting biomass materials into renewable energy by expanding the definition of biomass to include non-combustion conversion technology. The County is supporting the bill.

Conclusion

As we look at all the bills that have been introduced and ascertain the impact on the County and your constituents, we will work with your staff. We will also work closely with your staff and departments to determine the budget impacts and what that will look like this year. As always, please don't hesitate to let us know if you have any questions or would like additional details.