

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

January 30, 2014

FY 2014 & FY 2015 FEDERAL FUNDING

The *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013* approved by Congress in December provided the parameters for the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to finally negotiate FY 2014 funding levels for Federal agencies and programs. Discretionary spending for both FY 2014 & FY 2015 was set at \$1.012 trillion, a decrease from the estimated \$1.258 trillion in FY 2013. Anxious to avoid the fallout of another shutdown, both the House and Senate overwhelmingly supported the *FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act*, and President Obama signed it into law on January 17. Since the *Bipartisan Budget Act* also addressed FY 2015 discretionary funding, the appropriations process should flow much more smoothly this year than in recent years. The Administration has announced that President Obama will release his Budget request on March 4, and the respective House and Senate Appropriations Committees will begin hearings shortly thereafter.

PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING

Significant differences in the House and Senate proposals for Department of Justice state and local funding were also for the most part ameliorated in the conference agreement on the *FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act*. For example, while the House did not include funding for Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Grants, the final bill provides \$214 million, a slight increase over FY 2013. Other public safety funding levels include: \$376 million for the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG); level funding of \$417 million for Violence Against Women Act programs; \$125 million for DNA and forensic-related programs; \$68 million for re-entry programs authorized under the Second Chance Act; \$40.5 million for drug courts; \$8.25 million for mental health courts; and, \$4 million for veterans treatment courts. Unfortunately, the bill reduces funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) by \$62 million to \$180 million. We have begun work-

ing with CSAC and other stakeholders to urge the California Congressional delegation to make SCAAP one of its highest priorities in the FY 2015 appropriations process. We have also begun providing the County with notices issued by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance regarding FY

HOUSING/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Before work began on the *FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act*, there were significantly different amounts proposed for a variety of housing and community development programs. The most egregious of these differences related to CDBG, with the Senate proposing \$3.15 billion while the House measure would have slashed the program to \$1.64 billion. The final conference agreement provided \$3.03 billion for CDBG, a 1.6% decrease from FY 2013. Other funding levels in the measure included: \$1 billion for the HOME program, an increase from \$948 million; \$2.105 billion for homeless grants, up from \$1.92 billion; \$330 million for Housing for People with AIDS (HOPWA), a \$30 million increase; level funding of \$75 million for the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH), and \$384 million for elderly housing.

FARM BILL

We continued to advocate the County's priorities as House and Senate conferees negotiated the final version of the 2014 Farm Bill, reiterating the importance of the legislation to local farmers, residents and the County's \$1.3 billion agricultural industry. In particular, we emphasized the need for adequate resources in the areas of pest and disease management and invasive noxious weed management, support for Specialty Crop priorities. One of the most contentious points of the negotiations related to reductions in the level of authorized funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and we reminded conferees that over 30,000 low-income households in the County benefit

from the program. Conferees concluded their negotiations last Monday, and the conference report includes language to reauthorize the Section 10210 Pest Detection program. It also includes various provisions relevant to specialty crops, including an adjustment to the Specialty Crops Block Grant that recognizes crop value as well as acreage. The agreement reduces funding for SNAP by \$8 billion over ten years, far less than the \$40 billion reduction proposed by the House. The House approved the conference agreement on January 29, and the Senate should take it up by the end of the week.

PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 authorized full funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program thru FY 2012, and MAP 21 extended the authorization by an additional year. However, last year was so dysfunctional that another extension

was not enacted, and attempts to fund PILT as a discretionary program in the *FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act* were unsuccessful because the \$425 million full funding price tag was too large to be absorbed. The focus subsequently shifted to the conference agreement on the Farm Bill, and we worked with NACo and other stakeholders to urge conferees to include full funding for FY 2014. Last week, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Lucas (R-OK) indicated that the funding would be included, and when the final conference report on the Farm Bill was released, Section 12312 extended that authorization for full funding through FY 2014. Last year, the County received \$1.7 million under PILT.

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