

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

February 25, 2015

FY 2016 APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

Following the release of President Obama's FY 2016 Budget proposal to Congress early in February, the various House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees have begun holding hearings in anticipation of drafting their spending bills later in the spring. The next formal stage in the process will be the Congressional Budget Resolution, which sets the broad, overall parameters for spending and is due by mid-April. Both the House and Senate Budget Committees are also holding hearings in advance of drafting their respective version. As previously discussed, Congress has not completed work on a Budget Resolution in recent years, but with the House and Senate both controlled by the same party, it is more likely to occur this year. The Budget Resolution is *not* sent to the President for his consideration.

While the moratorium continues on Congressionally-directed spending, also known as "earmarks," individual members of Congress can still submit requests in support of programmatic funding levels or language to be included in the committee reports accompanying their bills. In response to a request from Senator Feinstein's Appropriations staff, we are working on a comprehensive list of the County's programmatic priorities in each of the FY 2016 appropriations measures. The list will also be provided to Senator Boxer and Congresswoman Capps, as well as members of the California delegation who serve on the Appropriations Committee.

MAP-21 REAUTHORIZATION

As follow-up to Supervisor Carbajal's meetings during his Washington, DC lobbying trip, we contacted the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction to reiterate the County's support for a multi-year reauthorization of surface transportation legislation. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was an anomaly in that it was only a two year reauthorization, and after one ex-

tension so far, is set to expire in June. We emphasized support for inclusion of a fully-funded Highway Bridge Program that addresses all three categories of bridges – National Highway System, on-system, and off-system. We also advocated increased funding for pavement preservation and resources to maintain existing infrastructure. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee are continuing a series of hearings on MAP-21 reauthorization, with both holding hearings this week. Staff have indicated they are on track to begin drafting a bill later this spring.

LAND-INTO-TRUST

Congresswoman McCollum (D-MN) has introduced H.R. 407, which would amend the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 to clarify the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for Indian Tribes. The bill is intended to be a "simple" fix of the *Carciere v. Salazar* Supreme Court decision of 1959, which called into question the ability of Tribes recognized subsequent to the Act's passage in 1934 to have land taken into trust for them. The bill would make no other changes to the Secretary's authority to take land into trust, nor the process for doing so. We contacted the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indian Affairs to discuss the measure, and were told that the subcommittee has no plans to take up H.R. 407 nor the *Carciere* decision in the near future.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Congress has resumed efforts begun last year to address human trafficking and its impacts. The House has already passed a package of measures on the issue, including the following two bills germane to the County:

- H.R. 469, the *Strengthening Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act*, which would require States to have a program to identify and assess reports in-

volving child sex trafficking victims; and to train child protective services workers about identifying, assessing; and make services referrals for child victims; and,

- H.R. 181, the *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act*, which would increase resources for local law enforcement to investigate and prosecute human trafficking, and enable state and local prosecutors to obtain wiretap warrants for human trafficking.

Both bills have been sent to the Senate, and have been referred to the HELP and Judiciary Committees, respectively.

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