

TO: Members, County of Santa Barbara Legislative Committee

FROM: Cliff Berg, Legislative Advocate
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RE: February 2015 State Update

DATE: February 25, 2015

The legislature is starting to get into the full swing; they have successfully gotten through the legislative counsel deadline at the end of January and are now facing the bill introduction deadline of February 27, 2015. We have seen very few bills introduced so far, however we anticipate that will pick up significantly by the deadline. Many of the freshman members have said that they anticipate having a smaller legislative package and are focusing on district issues, but we will see after the deadline if they were able to stick to that thought process.

The budget subcommittees have begun to meet and will be very busy for the next couple of months. Policy committees have begun to meet but at a very slow pace, legislation must sit in print for 30 days and given the late start of bill introductions there are very few bills eligible at this time. This will pick-up significantly over the next several weeks as we begin to come up on various deadlines.

Bills of Interest to the County

AB 3 (Williams) This bill would express the intent of the Legislature to clarify and establish the necessary authority for the creation of the Isla Vista Community Services District within the unincorporated area of Santa Barbara County, and would make legislative findings and declarations relating to that intent. The County has not taken a position, however we continue to work with Assembly Member Williams and his staff on the legislation.

AB 514 (Williams) This bill is the County sponsored bill which was introduced this week by Assembly Member Das Williams. This measure is an attempt to address the inadequacy of the current fines and penalties system for local governments. Under current law the violations are rather insignificant therefore people are not discouraging from violated them, we are hopeful that this will provide additional incentives to work with the locals to provide the best outcomes for our local communities.

SB 13 (Pavley) This bill would provide a local agency or groundwater sustainability agency 90 or 180 days, as prescribed, to remedy certain deficiencies that caused the board to designate the basin as a probationary basin. This bill would authorize the board to develop an interim plan for certain probationary basins one year after the designation of the basin as a probationary basin. The bill also state that if the department determines that all or part of a basin or subbasin is not being monitored, would require the department to determine whether there is sufficient interest in establishing a groundwater sustainability plan. The bill will also serve as a vehicle for any necessary clean-up to the major ground water bill package passed and signed into law in 2014. The County does not have a position on this bill, but we are watching it as it moves through the process.

SB 122 (Jackson, Hill and Roth) This bill is a vehicle for potential CEQA reform. The bill would require the lead agency, at the request of a project applicant and consent of the lead agency, to prepare a record of proceedings concurrently with the preparation of a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, EIR, or other environmental document for projects. The bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation establishing an electronic database clearinghouse of notices and environmental document prepared pursuant to CEQA, establishing a public review period for a final environmental impact report, and relating to the record of proceedings for a project for which an environmental impact report is prepared pursuant to CEQA.

Conclusion

As we move into March we will begin to see bills set for committee hearings, budget sub-communities moving their agenda's forward to full budget and then outstanding issues to budget conference committee. Once we have a chance to review all of the introduced bills we will sit down with your staff to see what is critical for the County and your constituents and begin to gather additional details so we can take positions on those bills that fit into our priorities. As always, if you or your staff has any questions, please don't hesitate to let us know.