

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 6/15/04
Department Name: CAO
Department No.: 012
Agenda Date: 07/20/04
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time:
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Michael F. Brown
County Administrator

STAFF CONTACT: Jim Laponis, Deputy County Administrator
Lori Norton, Analyst

SUBJECT: Legislative Program Committee Recommendations

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors considers the following recommendations from the Legislative Program Committee meeting of June 15, 2004:

- 1. Support S.2170 a federal bill by (Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson, TX) Weather Modification Research and Technology Transfer Authorization Act (Cloud Seeding Research Funding), and authorize the Chair of the Board to sign the attached letters of support to be forwarded to the County's Federal Representatives and to Governor Schwarzenegger.**
- 2. Receive a brief report on other bills of interest to the County which were discussed by the Legislative Program Committee.**

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation is primarily aligned with actions required by law or by routine business necessity. It is also aligned with Goal Number 1: An efficient Government able to anticipate and respond effectively to the needs of the community.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

On June 15th, 2004, the Legislative Program Committee considered, and recommended the Board of Supervisors consider a number of recommendations. The Committee membership is as follows: Second District Supervisor Susan Rose, Third District Supervisor Gail Marshall, County Administrator Michael F. Brown, County Counsel Stephen Shane Stark, and County Auditor Controller Bob Geis. Members Rose and Geis were absent from the meeting. The members present unanimously approved this recommendation.

S.2170 (Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison) Weather Modification Research and Technology Transfer Authorization Act

S.2170 would develop a comprehensive and coordinated national weather modification policy through federal and state research and development programs. Please note: this issue is not one of the County's Federal priorities, thus will not be monitored or advocated by Waterman and Associates. Public Works staff prepared the attached letter for the Board consideration. If approved by the Board, the letters will be sent to our federal representatives and to Governor Schwarzenegger. The Public Works department will work directly with our federal representatives to provide information and advocate as appropriate for passage of the bill.

Due to agenda management issues, additional recommendations from the June 15th Legislative Program Committee were forwarded to the Board under separate letter. In addition to recommended action items, the Committee discussed, but did not recommend Board action on the following issues:

SB 921 (Kuehl) Single Payer Health Care Coverage

The Committee received a brief report on SB 921 (Kuehl) Single payer health care coverage. SB 921 would establish in state government the California Health Care System, to be administered by the Health Care Agency, which would be an independent agency under the control of a newly created Health Care Commissioner. **All** California residents would be eligible for health care benefits under the newly created California Health Care System, which would, on a single payer basis, negotiate for and set fees for health care services provided through the system and pay claims for those services.

The bill would require the California Health Care System to be operational by January 1, 2006, and would enact transition provisions. The bill would require the Health Care Commissioner to seek all necessary waivers, exemptions, agreements, or legislative to allow various existing federal, state, and local health care payments to be paid to the California Health Care System, which would then assume responsibility for all benefits and services previously paid for with those funds. According to SB 921, a quantitative analysis performed by an independent economic consulting firm, Lewin, Inc., indicates that under a single payer health insurance system, California could afford to cover all California residents at no new cost to the State. However, the final "Lewin Report" that is to contain the specifics of how the system could be funded with existing dollars has yet to be released.

Local Government Finances and the State Budget

As the Board is aware, the Governor negotiated an agreement with Cities, Counties, and Special Districts which is incorporated in the May Revise State Budget. The agreement contains many of the same provisions that are included in the LOCAL Constitutional Amendment that has qualified for the November 4th, 2004 ballot. In exchange for the Governor's support of a constitutional amendment, which would protect future local government revenues, local governments agreed to contribute \$1.3 billion dollars per year, for two years, to help resolve the State's fiscal deficit.

During the past couple of weeks, Assembly member Darrell Steinberg has raised concerns about a constitutional amendment that does not include what he believes are essential "local government finance reforms". Specifically, Assembly member Steinberg believes that local government fiscal reform should include the reallocation of sales tax revenues from a site-based to a population-based distribution formula.

County of Santa Barbara would probably benefit from the inclusion of the redistribution of sales tax revenues and may support the effort to pursue this longer term reform; however, Cities which are partners in the local government budget deal will resist any effort to redistribute sales tax. Staff is concerned that the Steinberg proposal will jeopardize the current, fragile budget agreement, which will provide constitutional revenue protection for **all** local governments, and does not preclude further discussion related to the redistribution of sales tax. Additional long-term reforms may be desirable; however, the current agreement appears to be the best "deal" currently available to the County.

At this writing, it appears that Assembly member Steinberg has succeeded in convincing the Democratic controlled legislature that the Governor's local government deal is flawed and should not be approved. Budget negotiations are continuing.... Staff will provide an update on the status of the State Budget, on July 20, as part of this report to the Board.

SB 18 (Burton) Traditional Tribal Cultural Places

Member Stark advised the Committee that SB 18, the Native American Sacred Sites bill was reactivated and moving in the legislature. Governmental Advocates provided a brief overview of the current status of the bill, which was heard in the Assembly Local Governments Committee on June 17, 2004, where it passed (7 ayes, 1 no) and in the Assembly Appropriations Committee on June 23, 2004, where it passed (15 ayes, 1 no).

Santa Barbara County is on record in opposition to the SB 18 due to concerns that it usurps local land use planning authority. In it's current form, it would require that, prior to the adoption or amendment of a city or county's general plan, the city or county conduct consultations with California Native American tribes for the purpose of preserving specified places, features, and objects that are located within the city or county's jurisdiction.

The Committee directed staff to continue to monitor the bill and to analyze amendments to determine if the bill may be amended to be more acceptable to the County, and if appropriate to return to the Committee or Board to request reconsideration of the Board's oppose position.

Mandates and Service Levels:

The Legislative Program is not mandated and its service levels are discretionary.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

If applicable, fiscal and facility impacts are discussed in relationship to individual recommendations.

**C: Cliff Berg, Governmental Advocates
Ron Waterman, Waterman and Associates
Department Directors**