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# REPORT

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TO: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

DATE: November 22, 2021

FROM: Don Gilchrest

Our advocacy of the County of Santa Barbara's federal agenda this year has been extensive, including COVID-19 relief, the economic recovery, new infrastructure funding, expansion of the social safety net, and measures to mitigate climate change. In pursuit of these priorities, we have worked closely with CEO Miyasato and County staff to advocate your Board's 2021 Federal Legislative Platform. We also coordinated our advocacy with NACo, CSAC, and other local government representatives. Representative Carbajal, Senator Feinstein, and Senator Padilla provided crucial support for the County's efforts, and we were in regular contact with the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and federal agencies.

The *American Rescue Plan Act*, which was enacted in March, provided \$1.9 trillion of additional pandemic assistance to follow up the five relief packages enacted in 2020. Federal COVID-19 assistance so far this year includes:

- \$86.6 million in direct payments to the County of Santa Barbara through the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Relief Recovery Fund.
- \$27 million in Emergency Rental Assistance to Santa Barbara County.
- \$5.2 million for County of Santa Barbara Federally Qualified Health Centers.
- \$7.1 million from the Emergency Solutions Grant program for the County's COVID-19 homelessness response efforts (*CARES Act*).
- \$4.6 million through HUD programs such as Community Development Block Grants and the HOME Investment Partnership.
- Assistance to individuals and businesses through direct payments, SBA forgivable loans and enhanced unemployment benefits.

The \$1.2 trillion *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* was enacted in November and culminates several years of advocacy by the County for this increased federal funding. County of Santa Barbara priorities in the legislation include:

- Reauthorization of surface transportation programs for five years with significant increases for the federal-aid highway formulas.
- \$40 billion for a new bridge replacement program and an increase in the set-aside for local bridges in the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program.

- \$65 billion for broadband.
- Numerous provisions for climate change mitigation including \$6.2 billion for a new Transportation Carbon Reduction Formula Program and \$7.5 billion to support charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.
- \$55 billion for water resources projects.

We are continuing to advocate for support for maximum assistance to the County and for climate change mitigation as Congress seeks to finish up H.R. 5376, the *Build Back Better Act*. The House passed the legislation on November 19 and the Senate will be taking it up in December. As passed by the House, H.R. 5376 includes:

- \$555 billion for climate change mitigation and resiliency.
- \$400 billion for universal prekindergarten and childcare subsidies.
- One-year extension of the expanded child tax credit.
- \$150 billion for affordable housing.
- \$40 billion for higher education and workforce development.
- \$150 billion for home health care.
- New Medicare hearing benefits.
- Reduced premiums for the ACA Marketplace.
- Prescription Drug Pricing Provisions.
- Permanent Authorization for the Children's Health Insurance Program.
- SALT Deduction Relief.

We have also worked throughout this year to obtain support for the County's priorities in the annual funding bills. The federal government has been operating under a short-term Continuing Resolution since the start of the new federal fiscal year on October 1 and Congress will be attempting to finalize the 12 FY 2022 appropriations bills in December. Due to Representative Carbajal's efforts, the House appropriations bills included \$900,000 to expand and upgrade the County's Lompoc Health Clinic and \$1.3 million for the Santa Barbara Veterans Memorial Building. Decisions on Community Project funding will ultimately depend on the final versions of the bills that are negotiated between the House and the Senate.

Other federal funding that has come to the County this year includes:

- \$2.2 million in Continuum of Care awards for ongoing projects in the County serving the homeless.
- \$2.7 million in HUD funding to the County Community Development Block Grants and the HOME Investment Partnership.
- \$2 million of Payments in Lieu of Taxes funding to the County.
- \$296,307 through the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP).

The report that follows provides additional details on federal legislation impacting the County of Santa Barbara so far in 2021.

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## **Pandemic Relief**

A major focus of our advocacy this year has been on obtaining COVID-19 relief and recovery funds to follow up the extensive assistance obtained in 2020. In particular, we began the year with aggressive efforts to enact provisions for public health response, fiscal relief to states and local governments, and aid to businesses and individuals. Throughout this process, we worked in coordination with CEO Miyasato and County staff to advocate for federal assistance to the County. As Congress continued to work on these issues in 2021, Representative Carbajal and Senators Padilla and Feinstein worked proactively to support the County's priorities by cosponsoring numerous relief bills and sending letters to the House and Senate leadership.

H.R. 1319, the *American Rescue Plan Act*, was signed into law on March 11, and provided \$1.9 trillion of additional COVID-19 relief that included direct payments to individuals, enhanced unemployment benefits, funding for public health/vaccine distribution, and emergency payments to state and local governments. One of the most important provisions in the legislation set up a Coronavirus Local Fiscal Relief Recovery Fund that is providing direct payments to the County of Santa Barbara totaling \$86.6 million. The legislation also set up a \$10 billion Coronavirus Capital Project Fund for projects such as broadband access. Revenue-sharing counties like Santa Barbara are also eligible for a separate \$1.5 billion fund in the bill that will be allocated in fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2023.

The County also received the following federal assistance this year as a result of COVID-19 relief legislation:

- \$27 million in Emergency Rental Assistance to Santa Barbara County.
- \$5.2 million for County of Santa Barbara Federally Qualified Health Centers for pandemic response.
- \$7.1 million from the Emergency Solutions Grant program for the County's COVID-19 homelessness response efforts (*CARES Act*).
- \$4.6 million from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for pandemic response through programs such as Community Development Block Grants and the HOME Investment Partnership.

## **COVID-19 Relief Flexibility**

We are coordinating with NACo to advocate for S. 3011, the *State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Fiscal Recovery, Infrastructure, and Disaster Relief Flexibility Act*. The Senate passed this bill on October 19 to provide additional flexibility for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund that was authorized by the *American Rescue Plan Act*. S. 3011 would allow the County to direct up to \$10 million of its ARPA Recovery Fund allocation for the provision of government services without being required to calculate revenue loss. It would allow the County to use up to \$10 million (or 30 percent, whichever is greater) of Recovery Fund dollars for a wide range of infrastructure-related purposes, including, but not limited to: road,

bridge, and safety improvement projects; public transit; and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) eligible projects. It also would provide explicit authority to spend ARPA funds for emergency relief from natural disasters and their negative economic impacts. The bill's Senate sponsors, which include Senator Padilla, estimate that enactment of the legislation would result in an additional \$123 billion being available for infrastructure projects. House leaders have not announced if they will be scheduling S. 3011 for a House vote.

### **Bipartisan Infrastructure Package**

President Biden signed H.R. 3684, the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)* into law on November 15, which will provide \$550 billion in new (above baseline) spending for a broad array of infrastructure programs. We worked with our local delegation and Committees in Congress throughout this year to advocate for inclusion of the County's priorities in this effort. Representative Carbajal, who serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, had a significant role in helping to bring the legislation to fruition. In June, the Committee took a key step by drafting the House version of H.R. 3684, which provided significant momentum for the bill. Senator Padilla serves on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, which also played a key role in drafting the portions of the bill related to highway and water projects.

### Surface Transportation Programs

A significant amount of our advocacy on the infrastructure initiative focused on including the County's priorities in surface transportation program reauthorization legislation. The *Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act* expired this year, and we urged the Committees and our local delegation to support a new multi-year highway bill that increased funding for local roads and prioritized replacement/rehabilitation of locally owned bridges. We lobbied these issues in coordination with NACo and also utilized Public Works Director McGolpin's role as President of the National Association of County Engineers to leverage our efforts.

The IIJA provides a \$110 billion increase for highway programs and reauthorizes surface transportation programs for five years with significant increases for the federal-aid highway formulas that allocate funding to the regional/local level through the state. A new formula program is included to provide \$27.5 billion for bridges and a further \$12.5 billion is provided for competitive bridge grants for which local governments are eligible to apply. The off-system bridge set-aside in the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program is increased, which makes available another \$1 billion dedicated to local bridges each year. The IIJA also includes additional competitive grant programs for highway and multi-modal projects, safety initiatives and resiliency improvements.

We also worked with Representative Carbajal in support of the County's efforts to obtain funding for transportation improvements through Congressionally directed spending in the House highway bill. Although the House proposed to include funding

designated for specific projects in their version of the infrastructure package, the Senate did not implement a similar process, with the result that no project earmarks were included in the final bill.

### Climate Change

Throughout our advocacy for the infrastructure legislation, we urged Congress to include provisions to mitigate climate change and increase resiliency, emphasizing the impacts on the County from unprecedented extreme weather episodes. As part of these efforts, we lobbied in coordination with the Transportation Electrification Partnership for investments to transition to zero-emissions transportation to provide greenhouse gas emission reductions and transform the economy. The final version of the IIJA includes several important provisions to address climate change and resilience, including:

- \$6.2 billion for a new Transportation Carbon Reduction Formula Program.
- \$7.5 billion to support charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.
- Transit increases to support zero-emission vehicles for public transportation including a \$5.25 billion program dedicated to no- and low-emission buses.
- \$8.7 billion for a new PROTECT Grant Program to improve the resiliency of transportation infrastructure.
- \$4.7 billion for capping “orphaned” oil/gas wells to reduce GHG emissions.

### Broadband

We also advocated for investments in high-speed Internet and the IIJA includes \$65 billion for broadband programs, as follows:

- \$42.45 billion would be distributed through states for a Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program that would prioritize unserved and underserved areas.
- \$2.75 billion will be provided for Digital Equity Grants. Funding will be allocated to states via formula, while local governments and various community organizations will be eligible to compete for discretionary grants.
- \$5 billion is included grants to state for “middle mile” broadband projects that would connect networks operated by major providers and smaller, rural networks operated by smaller providers.
- The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, which was established to help low-income families during the COVID-19 pandemic, would be extended beyond the end of the public health emergency but the monthly stipend would be lowered from \$50 to \$30.

### Water Resources

The infrastructure package includes \$55 billion targeted towards clean water and safe drinking water projects. This funding will be allocated primarily through the EPA’s State Revolving Fund programs, which provide funding to state agencies such as the California Water Resources Control Board for project loans and grants. In

addition to existing SRF programs, \$15 billion is available for lead pipe replacement and \$10 billion for per/polyfluoroalkyl cleanup. The IIJA also provides \$15.75 billion for Flood Control/Navigation/Ecosystem Restoration programs at the Army Corps of Engineers.

### **FY 2022 Appropriations Bills**

Throughout this year, we have advocated for the County's funding priorities in the drafting of the 12 annual appropriations bills that provide discretionary funding for federal government operations. We contacted the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, our local House delegation, and Senators Padilla and Feinstein to advocate for programs of significance to the County. This advocacy is undertaken in coordination with other local government stakeholders such as NACo and representatives for other counties. As part of these efforts, we provided funding justifications to members of the local delegation for them to use in supporting key programs with the Appropriations Committees.

The federal government is operating under interim funding authority provided by a short-term Continuing Resolution because none of the 12 appropriations bills for FY 2022 were signed into law prior to the start of the new fiscal year on October 1. The House Appropriations Committee has reported out all 12 bills and 7 have been passed by the full House. In contrast, the Senate Appropriations Committee has only passed 3 of the bills, though Chair Leahy (D-VT) released his drafts of the measures on October 18. One of the primary obstacles to progress is a disagreement over the split between defense and non-defense programs. An additional extension of short-term funding is likely to be necessary when the current CR expires on December 3 in order to give Congress more time to resolve the dispute.

### Community Project Funding

We worked with Representative Carbajal and Senator Feinstein and Senator Padilla to request support for the community projects that your Board identified in your April 12 budget workshop. For the first time in over a decade, the Appropriations Committees allowed members to request funding for specific projects for inclusion in the annual funding bills. However, House members were limited to a total of ten project requests to the Committee, so we worked with County staff to ensure that proposals matched with federal program eligibilities and priorities and demonstrated the broad community support needed to be competitive.

As a result of these efforts, Representative Carbajal was able to obtain funding for two County of Santa Barbara projects in the FY 2022 Community Project funding process. The House approved a nine-bill appropriations package on July 29, which included \$900,000 to expand and upgrade the County's Lompoc Health Clinic and \$1.3 million for seismic, health, and safety improvements at the Santa Barbara Veterans Memorial Building. Senator Padilla and Senator Feinstein requested support for the County of Santa Barbara projects in the Senate versions of the bills, but the Senate Appropriations Committee did not include specific funding for the

projects. Decisions on Community Project funding will ultimately depend on the final versions of the bills that are negotiated between the House and the Senate.

### **Build Back Better Plan**

In August, the Senate and the House of Representatives began the process of using budget reconciliation procedures to implement key aspects of President Biden's Build Back Better Plan. Following passage of S. Con. Res. 14, the *FY 2022 Budget Resolution*, thirteen House Committees drafted their portions of a \$3.6 trillion package of domestic policy initiatives, which were then packaged together by the Budget Committee for possible action by the full House. However, it soon became clear that disagreements within the Democratic Caucus would prevent the legislation from obtaining the support needed to be passed by party-line votes in the House and the Senate. Following extensive negotiations with House and Senate Democrats, President Biden unveiled a revised version of the Build Back Better plan on October 28 that was reduced in size to approximately \$2 trillion. After further modification, this package was passed by the House of Representatives on November 19 as H.R. 5376.

Throughout the budget reconciliation process, we have urged Congress to prioritize measures to mitigate climate change and to support the role of local governments in the economic recovery through new investment in public health, affordable housing, immigration reform, workforce development, and community development. As passed by the House, H.R. 5376 includes:

- \$555 billion for climate change mitigation and resiliency.
- \$400 billion for universal prekindergarten and childcare subsidies.
- One-year extension of the expanded child tax credit.
- \$150 billion for affordable housing.
- \$40 billion for higher education and workforce development.
- \$150 billion for home health care.
- New Medicare hearing benefits.
- Reduced premiums for the ACA Marketplace.
- Prescription Drug Pricing Provisions.
- Permanent Authorization for the Children's Health Insurance Program.
- SALT Deduction Relief.
- Four Weeks Paid Family Leave.

### **Agricultural Funding**

Following enactment of a five-year Farm Bill in 2018, we have continued to work with our local delegation to support implementation of programs authorized in the legislation, including the highest possible levels of funding for Department of Agriculture programs of importance to the County's agriculture-related responsibilities. The pending versions of the *FY 2022 Agriculture Appropriations Act* include this funding for programs of importance to the County:



- Pest Detection - \$28.2 million (both House and Senate)
- Specialty Crop Pests funding – H: \$212.8 million; S: \$210.3 million
- Agricultural Quarantine Inspection - \$33.8 million (both House and Senate)
- Food Safety and Inspection - \$1.153 billion (both House and Senate)

## **Disaster Preparedness and Response**

### Wildfire Prevention

We have worked in coordination with Senator Feinstein’s staff in support of her S. 1855, the *Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act*. This legislation proposes additional funding and policy authorizations to help reduce wildfire dangers, including provisions to create more resilient communities and energy grids and to allow FEMA hazard mitigation funding to be used for the installation of fire-resistant wires and infrastructure. Senator Padilla is a cosponsor of S. 1855 and Representative Carbajal has cosponsored the House companion bill, H.R. 3534.

The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, which was signed into law on November 15, includes \$3.3 billion for wildfire risk reduction efforts such as hazardous fuels reduction, controlled burns, and community wildfire defense grants. The legislation also provides \$5 billion for utilities to bury power lines and install fire-resistant technologies and \$3.5 billion to help homeowners make energy-efficient improvements that will help fireproof dwellings.

### Disaster Mitigation Grants

The recently enacted *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, includes several provisions to strengthen disaster mitigation programs at FEMA. The Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program is provided \$1 billion in supplemental funding, which is roughly equivalent to the current annual funding for the program. BRIC is a pre-disaster mitigation program that counties can access to reduce the risks from disasters and natural hazards. In addition, \$3.5 billion is added to the Flood Mitigation Program for actions to reduce flood damage to homes and businesses. Several other mitigation programs are provided with additional funds, including \$500 million for the new *STORM Act*, for loans and grants to local communities facing rising water levels, coastal erosion, and flooding that have put homes and property at risk.

### Flood Insurance

On November 2, Senators Cassidy (R-LA), Menendez (D-NJ), and six other Senators introduced S. 3128, the *National Flood Insurance Program Reauthorization and Reform Act*, to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for five years. The NFIP is currently operating under a short-term extension of the program’s authorization that will expire on December 3. A longer-term authorization is needed to provide stability to the program, but disagreements over how to reform the program and keep it on a financially sound footing have prevented Congress from acting. An additional short-term extension for the program is likely in December in order to provide additional time to consider proposals like S. 3128.

### Funding for Homeland Security Programs

The House Appropriations Committee approved H.R. 4431, the *FY 2022 Homeland Security Appropriations Act*, on July 13, which includes funding for programs that support state and local preparedness efforts. The Senate Appropriations Committee has not passed its version of the bill yet, but Committee Chair Leahy (D-VT) released a draft of the legislation on October 18 to serve as a starting point for negotiations. Final funding is still to be determined but the pending bills include the following funding for key HUD programs:

	<b>Final FY21</b>	<b>House FY22</b>	<b>Senate FY22</b>
<b>Urban Area Security Initiative</b>	\$705 million	\$705 million	\$705 million
<b>State and Local Homeland Security Grants</b>	\$560 million	\$610 million	\$610 million
<b>Firefighter Assistance Grants/SAFER</b>	\$710 million	\$740 million	\$740 million
<b>Emergency Management Performance Grants</b>	\$355 million	\$365 million	\$355 million

### **Environment and Land Use**

#### Payments in Lieu of Taxes

The Department of Interior released the FY 2021 Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) amounts in June, and the County received \$2 million for its annual allocation, which is slightly more than the previous year. PILT provides funding to counties to offset lost property tax revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt federal lands within their jurisdictions.

We have urged the House Natural Resources and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committees to expedite legislation to provide a long-term authorization for PILT in order to ensure stability for the program. We also provided our local delegation with additional budget justifications for their use in advocating for the program with the Appropriations Committees. Both the House and Senate versions of the *FY 2022 Interior Appropriations* bill propose full funding for PILT.

#### Outer Continental Shelf

We urged the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to include provisions in the *FY 2022 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* to continue the annual moratorium on additional offshore oil and gas leasing activities. We also advocated for permanent OCS protection such as would be provided by Representative Carbajal's H.R. 455, the *California Clean Coast Act*. Provisions similar to H.R. 455 were included in the version of the Build Back Better Plan that

was passed by the House on November 19, which would prohibit new offshore oil and gas leasing along the entire Atlantic and Pacific coasts and in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico.

### Los Padres Wilderness

When Representative Carbajal reintroduced H.R. 973, the *Central Coast Heritage Protection Act*, in February, we contacted the House Natural Resources Committee to reiterate the County's support and to urge expeditious consideration of the bill. H.R. 973 would expand wilderness and wild and scenic river designations in the Los Padres National Forest, the Carrizo Plain National Monument, and designate the Condor National Recreation Trail. We also contacted the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in support of Senator Padilla's S. 1459, the *Protecting Unique and Beautiful Landscapes by Investing in California (PUBLIC) Lands Act*, which was introduced with Senator Feinstein as the primary cosponsor and includes the provisions of H.R. 973.

Representative Carbajal was able to achieve House approval of his legislation by including it in H.R. 803, a multi-bill package of wilderness and public lands that the House passed in February and was also able to add it to H.R. 4350, the *2022 National Defense Authorization Act*, which the House passed on September 23. We recently contacted the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to again request action on the bill and emphasized that the House has already passed the legislation twice.

### Clean Air

We urged the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to provide the highest possible level of funding for EPA's State and Local Air Quality programs, citing the importance of the Section 103 & 105 programs in providing resources to the County to perform basic air pollution control activities. Early in the year, the *American Rescue Plan Act* provided \$43 million in supplemental funding for these programs. Subsequently, the House version of the *FY 2022 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* proposed \$320 million for these programs, which would be an increase of \$90.5 million compared to last year. The Senate version would increase the funding for the programs slightly more, to a total of \$321.5 million. The final funding level will be decided in year-end budget negotiations.

### **Homelessness, Housing and Community Development**

As work began on FY 2022 appropriations, we contacted the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, our local Congressional delegation, and Senators Harris and Feinstein to advocate for homeless assistance and other housing and community development programs of significance to the County in the *FY 2022 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Related Agencies Appropriations* bill. As part of these efforts, members of the local delegation agreed to sign on to "Dear Colleague" letters to the appropriators in support of the programs. We also provided funding justifications to our delegation for their use in supporting the programs.

During 2021, Santa Barbara County was allocated the following funding through HUD programs:

- \$1,316,757 in formula CDBG funding,
- \$1,282,323 under the HOME Program,
- \$4,647,509 from HUD pandemic relief awards, and
- \$2.28 million for projects in the County serving the homeless.

The *FY 2022 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act* was passed by the House on July 29. The Senate Appropriations Committee has not passed its version of the bill yet, but Committee Chair Leahy (D-VT) released a draft of the bill on October 18 to serve as a starting point for negotiations. Final funding is still to be determined but the pending bills include the following funding for key HUD programs:

	Final FY21	House FY22	Senate FY22
<b>CDBG</b>	\$3.47 billion	\$3.7 billion	\$3.55 billion
<b>HOME Investment Partnership</b>	\$1.35 billion	\$1.85 billion	\$1.45 billion
<b>Homeless Assistance</b>	\$3 billion	\$3.42 billion	\$3.26 billion
<b>Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS</b>	\$430 million	\$600 million	\$450 million
<b>HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing</b>	\$40 million	\$20 million	\$50 million
<b>Housing for the Elderly</b>	\$855 million	\$1.033 billion	\$956 million

We have also urged support for public housing and homeless assistance as Congress has been drafting the *Build Back Better Plan*. As passed by the House on November 19, H.R. 5376 includes \$65 billion for public housing capital grants, \$25 billion for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, \$24 billion for Housing Choice Vouchers, and \$3 billion for Community Development Block Grants.

We are also working with Senator Feinstein's staff to support two bills that she introduced to increase housing resources and improve the delivery of services to homeless individuals. S. 580, the *Affordable Housing Redevelopment Act*, proposes to reauthorize the Neighborhood Stabilization Program and provide \$1.5 billion in competitive grants to help state and local governments purchase blighted, vacant, abandoned, foreclosed, or surplus properties, and convert them into affordable housing. S. 2357, the *Fighting Homelessness Through Services and Housing Act*, proposes a new grant program for supportive housing models that pair comprehensive services and intensive case management with stable housing. It would authorize \$1 billion per year for grants for services and housing. The bill would require a 25 percent match from non-federal funds and grants may be used for any combination of operations and capital building costs, as long as the housing and services requirements are fulfilled. Eligible entities include cities, counties, regions, and tribal organizations that provide supportive housing with services.

## **Health Care Programs**

### Funding for County Health Care Programs

Throughout this year we have continued to advocate for public health programs in the annual appropriations bills, pandemic relief legislation, and economic recovery packages. Enactment of the *American Rescue Plan Act* in March provided significant additional resources for the County's public health responsibilities. These include:

- \$7.5 billion to the CDC for vaccine preparation and distribution/administration;
- \$5.2 billion for vaccine supply chain activities including production, purchase, and medical supplies;
- \$47.8 billion for testing/contact tracing and personal protective equipment or other supplies;
- \$7.6 billion to support the public health workforce;
- Medicaid program changes to improve coverage of COVID-19 vaccines and treatment;
- \$1.75 billion for the Community Mental Health Block Grant program; and
- \$1.75 billion for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant program.

In addition, the FEMA disaster relief fund was given an additional \$50 billion, which is available to local governments through the public assistance program for pandemic response actions such as vaccination efforts, deployment of the National Guard, medical and support staff and providing personal protective equipment.

The *Build Back Better Act*, which has been passed by the House and is pending in the Senate, also includes additional public health investments. Under the bill, the CDC would be given \$7 billion for public health infrastructure to be allocated to state and local governments. Eligibility would include health equity activities, workforce

capacity, all hazards public health and preparedness, testing capacity, health information systems, epidemiology and disease surveillance, and contact tracing. Several other smaller programs are proposed for workforce development, laboratory activities and other CDC and FDA activities. We are continuing to advocate on the *Build Back Better Act* as the Senate takes up the bill in December.

#### Federally Qualified Health Centers

We have continued to advocate for the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) program to follow-up the enactment of legislation in December to provide three years of mandatory funding for the program. FQHCs are a critical component of the health care safety net and are eligible for funds through several Health Resources and Services Administration programs. H.R. 1319, the *American Rescue Plan*, included \$7.6 billion in supplemental funding for Community Health Centers, which resulted in \$5.2 million being awarded to the County of Santa Barbara this year for pandemic response through local Federally Qualified Health Centers. In addition, the version of H.R. 5376, the *Build Back Better Act*, that the House passed on November 19 includes \$2 billion for capital projects at FQHCs. That legislation is pending further action in the Senate during December.

#### Medicare Anti-Obesity Coverage

We contacted our local delegation in support of S. 596, the *Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2021*, and the House companion legislation, H.R. 1577. This legislation would allow Medicare Part D to cover Food & Drug Administration-approved obesity drugs. It would also expand Medicare coverage for those suffering from obesity to include intensive behavioral therapy, allowing coverage provided by a physician who is not a primary care physician or other health care providers. Currently, such therapy is covered only if provided by a primary care practitioner.

#### Affordable Care Act

We worked with county and other stakeholders to closely monitor any activity that could impact the Affordable Care Act. The revised framework for the *Build Back Better Plan* that was released on October 28 includes several provisions designed to strengthen the ACA insurance marketplace. Under the bill, additional premium and cost-sharing support will be given to individuals who access their insurance through the ACA marketplace and additional federal funding will be provided to states that expanded Medicaid. In addition, some individuals in the 12 non-expansion states will be given the opportunity to enroll in no-cost premium plans. The House passed H.R. 5376, the *Build Back Better Act* on November 19 and the Senate will be taking it up in December.

#### **Immigration Reform**

We have continued to advocate the County's support for bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform that includes an earned path to citizenship and continuation of protections provided under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The House of Representatives passed H.R. 6, the *American Dream and*

*Promise Act of 2021*, on March 18 to create a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. The House also passed H.R. 1603, the *Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2021*, which would allow undocumented farmworkers to earn legal status and would also increase requirements for the electronic system to check employee work authorizations. Senator Durbin (D-IL) has reintroduced his S. 264, the *Dream Act of 2021*, with Senator Graham (R-SC) as the principal co-sponsor, but the Senate Judiciary Committee has not yet released a schedule for considering immigration legislation.

We have also been urging support for immigration reform as part of the *Build Back Better Plan*. House Democrats initially proposed to include extensive immigration reform in the budget reconciliation package, but those provisions were scaled back once it became clear that Senate rules would be an obstacle. The version of H.R. 5376, the *Build Back Better Act*, that the House passed on November 19 does not include a pathway to citizenship but does propose to use parole authorities to provide five-year protection from deportation. This revised approach could also be subject to a point-of-order when the Senate takes up the bill in December and it is not yet known if the parliamentary ruling would allow it to be retained.

## **Public Safety**

### Local Law Enforcement Funding

We urged our local delegation's support for the County's public safety funding priorities such as the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) and provided them briefing information for their use in working with the Appropriations Committees. Santa Barbara County received \$296,307 under the most recent SCAAP awards and \$103,100 through this year's Byrne Justice Assistance Grants awards. The House version of the *FY 2022 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations Act* would increase funding for State and Local Law Enforcement grants by 50 percent to a total of \$3 billion. The Senate bill proposes a much smaller increase to \$1.9 billion. The final funding level will be decided in year-end budget negotiations.

### Violence Against Women Act

We are continuing to work with our House and Senate Delegation to support legislation to reauthorize the *Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)*. Grants through this legislation have helped local prosecutors and other law enforcement officials improve services and protections for victims of crime and helped change the way that the criminal justice system responds to domestic violence. VAWA expired in 2018 and the House passed H.R. 1620, the *Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021*, in March to extend and improve these programs. However, the Senate Judiciary Committee did not schedule action on the legislation. VAWA program are likely to be extended on a one-year basis through the FY 2022 appropriations process.

## **Public Works/Lower Mission Creek**

We have worked throughout this year in support of Water Resources Deputy Director Fayram's efforts to obtain Army Corps of Engineers support for the Lower Mission

Creek Flood Control Project. We have discussed the project with the USACE and arranged and participated in briefings for our House and Senate delegation. An economic review of the project is necessary to improve the benefit-cost ratio in order to better compete for federal support. Representative Carbajal is directly advocating for the project with the Corps Headquarters, and we are considering the possibility of drafting supportive language for inclusion in the *Water Resources Development Act of 2022* that House and Senate Committees will begin drafting next year.

## **Social Services**

### Foster Care Medicaid Funding

We are working with other impacted child welfare and health advocacy organizations to advocate the County's support for legislation to exempt foster care Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs) from the Institution for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusionary rule. Under the IMD exclusion, children in foster care with behavioral and mental health needs are at risk of losing their federal Medicaid coverage if placed in a QRTP larger than 16 beds. S. 2689, the *Ensuring Medicaid Continuity for Children in Foster Care Act of 2021*, was introduced by Senator Burr (R-NC), and cosponsored by Senators Feinstein and Padilla, to provide this exemption and we are also advocating for the House companion legislation, H.R. 5414.

### TANF Reauthorization

We are continuing to advocate for a multi-year reauthorization for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program that would increase funding for childcare, job training and other aspects of the program and provide California more flexibility in the administration of the program. We are coordinating our advocacy with NACo and the County Welfare Directors Association of California to address the overly rigid Work Participation Rate requirements that were put into place by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. This is an issue that has carried over from the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, with several short-term extensions enacted to keep the program operational. The most recent extension runs through December 3, and we are requesting action this year on a longer-term authorization that addresses County priorities.

### Nutrition/Food Assistance Programs

Congress provided significant supplemental funding for food assistance in 2020 to respond to the increased need for these programs in the pandemic. In addition, the benefit level through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program was temporarily increased by 15 percent. When the *American Rescue Plan* was enacted in March, the 15 percent emergency increase was extended through September 31. In addition, \$880 million in emergency funds was included for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC).

### Adult Services and Elder Abuse

A five-year reauthorization for *Older Americans Act* program was enacted in 2020 and the Appropriations Committees are including increased funding in the annual appropriations bills to implement the new legislation. The House Appropriations



Committee has proposed to increase funding at the Administration for Community Living for these programs by \$748.8 million, to a total of \$2.53 billion. The Senate version of the bill proposes a smaller increase to \$2.26 billion. Final funding will be determined by negotiations between the House and the Senate.

The *American Rescue Plan Act*, which was enacted in March, provided an additional \$1.7 billion for OAA programs. The *Build Back Better Act*, which has passed the House and is pending in the Senate, proposes \$1.4 billion to support state and local Adult Protective Services functions and grant programs and \$1.6 billion for grants to states to invest in post-acute and long-term care worker recruitment.

### Workforce Development

We worked with the National Association of Workforce Boards to support legislation to aid the local workforce and career and technical education systems in response to the COVID-19 national emergency. As part of this effort, we urged our local delegation to support H.R. 602 the *Relaunching America's Workforce Act* in the House and the Senate companion bill, S. 200. Although H.R. 602/S. 200 did not move as a stand-alone bill this year, H.R. 5376, the *Build Back Better Act*, would provide \$20 billion to expand workforce programs. This includes:

- \$2 billion for Dislocated Worker State Grants authorized under the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA),
- \$1 billion for Adult Employment and Training Activities,
- \$1.5 billion for WIOA state grants for Youth Employment and Training Activities
- \$500 million for Reentry Employment Opportunities,
- \$1 billion for apprenticeship programs, and
- \$5 billion for grants to industry or sector partnerships

The House passed H.R. 5376 on November 19 and the Senate will be taking up the bill in December.