



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER**

**Agenda Number:**

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

**Submitted on:**  
**(COB Stamp)**

**Department Name:** Human Resources  
**Department No.:** 064  
**Agenda Date:** November 18, 2025  
**Placement:** Administrative Agenda  
**Estimated Time:**  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:** <Insert Date>  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Director(s): Kristine Schmidt, Human Resources Director  
Contact: Carlos Silvas, Employee Relations Division Chief  
**SUBJECT:** Side Letter Agreement with Service Employees International Union Local 620

DocuSigned by:  
*Kristine Schmidt*  
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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:**

As to form: No

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Authorize the County Human Resources Department (“Human Resources”) to enter a side letter agreement between the County of Santa Barbara (“County”) and the Service Employees International Union Local 620 (“Union”) (“Parties”, collectively) creating a special assignment pay for specified classifications in the Information Technology Department applicable to overnight offshore stays for equipment installation and maintenance, as set forth in Attachment A; and
- b) Determine that the proposed actions are exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, as they involve the maintenance of existing public structures that will result in no or negligible expansion of existing use and approve the filing of the attached Notice of Exemption on that basis.

**Summary Text:**

Human Resources and the Union have met and conferred in good faith and have come to a tentative agreement on this matter. As a cost-savings and operational efficiency measure, Human Resources requests that your Board authorize Human Resources to enter a side letter agreement between the Parties establishing special assignment pay of \$500 per night for specified

classifications within the Information Technology Department (“ITD”). This special assignment pay would be applied to employees within the specified classifications that are assigned to remain overnight on Santa Cruz Island and the Heritage Oil Platform for the purpose of performing installation and maintenance of new and existing Public Safety Radio Network communication equipment.

**Background/Discussion:**

The Public Safety Radio Network equipment on Santa Cruz Island (also known as the Valley Peak Public Safety Microwave Installation) was first installed between December 2019 and May 2020 using Homeland Security Grant funds. During that project, the Parties agreed to provide overnight special assignment pay of \$500 per night to employees assigned to the work. This arrangement maximized available daylight hours, minimized travel time and associated costs, significantly reduced the overall cost and duration of the project, and ensured work was completed prior to the expiration of available Homeland Security Grant funds. The agreement at that time, however, was expressly limited to that specific installation project.

Currently, ITD staff performing ongoing maintenance on the Santa Cruz Island equipment face substantial logistical and financial challenges. Employees must travel up to three hours each day (depending on normal work location) to and from Ventura Harbor to access boat transportation, followed by up to an additional five hours of paid travel time by boat via Island Packers (depending on assigned site). Once on the Island, further time is required to reach the work site by utility vehicle while transporting equipment. These requirements leave staff with only two to three hours per trip—depending on season and daylight availability—to perform necessary work. Multiple trips are often required to complete even a single project, resulting in considerable expense to the County for paid travel time, boat fares, and overtime. This approach also creates inefficiencies in project completion and disruption to daily onshore ITD work assignments.

Reestablishing the overnight special assignment pay for the duration of the current labor contract between the Parties (through July 4, 2027), with possibility to extend within future successor contract negotiations, will allow ITD to assign eligible employees to remain overnight on Santa Cruz Island and the Heritage Oil Platform. This approach is expected to significantly reduce travel and overtime costs, improve efficiency, and accelerate project completion timelines. It will also provide greater continuity in maintenance efforts, minimize disruption to onshore operations, and ensure the timely installation and upkeep of mission-critical Public Safety Radio Network equipment. With new installation projects scheduled to begin as early as November/December 2025 and continue into Fiscal Year 2025–2026, this agreement provides a proactive and cost-effective solution that supports public safety operations and strengthens the reliability of the County’s communications infrastructure.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Yes

The Public Safety Radio Network (PSRN) project is a multi-departmental, multi-year, multi-phased, and multi-funded initiative. Funding sources include a combination of Communication Reserves, Fire Budget, Certificate of Participation, General Fund, Capital Improvement, and an apportionment of the American Rescue Plan Act.

The current travel model for ongoing maintenance work on Santa Cruz Island and the Heritage Oil Platform is projected to cost approximately \$119,000 annually in overtime and boat transportation alone, while providing staff with an average of only 2.5 hours of productive on-site work per trip. By authorizing overnight special assignment pay, the average daily on-site work time will increase to 10 hours per day. This change is also projected to reduce overtime and boat transportation costs by

approximately \$82,000 annually. After accounting for the cost of overnight special assignment pay and meal per diem (together estimated at approximately \$39,000 annually), the County is expected to realize net annual savings of approximately \$43,000 for ongoing maintenance. Approximately \$6,000 of savings should be realized in the current fiscal year (25/26) based on ongoing maintenance work to existing equipment on Santa Cruz Island. Further savings could be realized in the current fiscal year, but that is wholly dependent on when the ITD starts and completes installation of new equipment on Santa Cruz Island and Heritage Oil Platform.

For new equipment installation projects on Santa Cruz Island and the Heritage Oil Platform, costs under the current travel model are projected at approximately \$74,000 in overtime and boat transportation alone, again with staff averaging only 2.5 hours per day at the worksite. Implementation of overnight special assignment pay will increase productive work time to 10 hours per day and reduce one-time overtime and boat transportation costs by approximately \$51,000. After factoring in overnight special assignment pay and meal per diem (together estimated at approximately \$28,000 for installation projects), the County is expected to achieve an additional one-time savings of approximately \$23,000.

Overall, the proposed side letter agreement is projected to reduce both ongoing and one-time project costs, increase productive work time, improve the efficiency and timeliness of Public Safety Radio Network maintenance and installation efforts, and reduce impacts to daily onshore operations.

#### Potential Impact of Increases on Pension Plan

The Santa Barbara County Employees' Retirement System (SBCERS) bases retirement plan funding on long-term salary growth assumptions of 3% annual wage inflation plus additional longevity and promotion increases. While actual year-to-year growth may vary, these assumptions are designed to balance out over 20–30 years. If actual growth falls below assumptions, plan funding can be negatively affected; if it exceeds them, actuarial losses may occur. SBCERS reviews and adjusts its assumptions every three years through an actuarial experience study to ensure alignment with real trends. Recent actions included a 3.0% general salary increase for the Union on June 23, 2025, which aligned with SBCERS assumptions. The current proposal impacts County cost to items unrelated to pension base building (overtime, boat travel, meal per diem and overnight stipend) and therefore will have no further impact on pension plan growth projections.

#### Attachments:

**Attachment A** – Side Letter Agreement Between the County of Santa Barbara and SEIU Local 620 – Overnight Special Pay

#### Contact Information:

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cc: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
Rachel Van Mullem, County Counsel  
Betsy Schaffer, Auditor-Controller  
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Assistant CEO's