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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

April 26, 2017

Mayor Helene Schneider
Santa Barbara City Hall
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Mayor Schneider,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Santa Barbara County Library Advisory Committee to request that the Santa Barbara City Council opt to phase in the proposed administrative fee increase on branch libraries and that you slightly alter the division of County per capita funding.

I understand the need to increase the administrative fee. I respect the fact that the City has to balance its own budget and I am well aware of the significant subsidy the City provides each Zone 1 branch library by providing administration. I was aware of it when I was on the Council and accepted it as a part of providing regional services. That administrative fee has stayed the same while other revenues have gone down so increasing the fee makes sense; however, doubling the fee in one year seems to be an excessive step. At our April 12th meeting, the Library Advisory Committee unanimously voted to request the City of Santa Barbara phase in its administrative fee over three years (going up to 12% this next fiscal year, then up to 15%, and ending up at 18% in FY 19-20) to give our libraries a chance to adjust.

At the same meeting, the LAC voted again unanimously to request that the City slightly alter the division of County per capita funding to increase the population for which Goleta will receive funding to 80,522 from the current proposal of 68,378. Previously, Goleta was receiving funding for 92,666. The current proposal is a decrease of 24,288 people. The LAC felt that was too drastic and suggested we split the difference by giving Goleta 12,144 more people than the current proposal.

I applaud the city staff, particularly Library Director Jessica Cadiente, for working so hard on solutions and how to make library funding more fair. It's a hard job to administer all these different libraries and we appreciate the City's consideration of our requests.

Sincerely,

Das Williams
Chair, Santa Barbara County Library Advisory Committee