



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

Department Name: 1st District Supervisor
Department No.: 011
For Agenda Of: 03/17/15
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Board Member Salud Carbajal, Supervisor, 1st District 568-2186
Contact Info: Jeremy Tittle, Chief of Staff, 1st District 568-2182
SUBJECT: Report on Washington DC Legislative Visits

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

Receive report on Washington DC legislative visits to advocate for Santa Barbara County's 2015 Federal Legislative Platform Priorities

Summary Text:

Supervisor Salud Carbajal, his Chief of Staff Jeremy Tittle, Public Works Director Scott McGolpin, and Deputy Public Works Director Tom Fayram traveled to Washington, D.C. for annual meetings scheduled on January 27-29 to advocate in support of the County's 2014 Federal Legislative Platform and to participate in informational meetings regarding items of interest to the County. Thomas Walters & Associates, Inc., the County's Washington, D.C. representatives, arranged and participated in the meetings with Supervisor Carbajal, Mr. Tittle, Mr. McGolpin, and Mr. Fayram. Meetings were held with the following individuals:

- **Senator Barbara Boxer**
- **Mona Lewandoski**, Legislative Assistant, Senator Barbara Boxer
- **Anne Clement**, Legislative Aide, Senator Barbara Boxer
- **Tom Rivera**, Legislative Research Assistant, Senator Barbara Boxer
- **Fabrice Coles**, Legislative Assistant, Senator Dianne Feinstein
- **Trevor Higgins**, Legislative Assistant, Senator Dianne Feinstein
- **Crystal Martinez**, Legislative Assistant, Senator Dianne Feinstein
- **Congresswoman Lois Capps**
- **Aaron Shapiro**, Legislative Assistant, Congresswoman Lois Capps

- **Roger Cockrell**, Professional Staff, Senate Energy and Water Development Subcommittee on Appropriations
- **Angie Giancarlo**, Professional Staff to Chairman Mike Simpson (R-ID), House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
- **Taunja Berquam**, Professional Staff to Ranking Member Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee
- **Shant Boyajian**, Senior Counsel for Transportation to Chairman James Inhofe (R-OK), Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
- **Chaya Koffman**, Majority DOT Detailee, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
- **David Napoliello**, Democratic Director, Infrastructure and Economic Development, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
- **Tyler Rushforth**, Counsel to Ranking Member Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
- **Mary Phillips**, Senior Professional Staff to Chairman Samuel Graves (R-MO), House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
- **Helena Zyblikewycz**, Professional Staff to Ranking Member Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), House Subcommittee and Highways and Transit
- **Byran Petit**, Senior Professional Staff Member to Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
- **Robert Andres**, Professional Staff to Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR), Senate Committee on Finance
- **Sophie Kasimow**, Staff Director to Ranking Member Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Senate HELP Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging
- **Erica Solway**, Policy Advisor, Senate HELP Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging
- **Cristin Datch Kumar**, Professional Staff to Chairman John Kline (R-MN), House Committee on Education and the Workforce
- **Jenny Prescott**, Legislative Assistant, House Committee on Education and the Workforce
- **Steven Stockton**, Executive Director, Civil Works, Army Corps of Engineers
- **Brad Schwichtenberg**, Civil Deputy, Army Corps of Engineers
- **Henri Langlois**, Assistant for Water Resources Development, Army Corps of Engineers
- **Lowell Pimley**, Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of Interior
- **Bob Wolf**, Program and Budget Office, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of Interior
- **Jeff Rieker**, Regional Office Liaison, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of Interior
- **Jessica Monahan**, Associate Legislative Director, NACo

Meetings with our local Congressional delegation focused on sharing key priorities and other highlights of the County's adopted Legislative Platform. This included exploring opportunities for federal funding for County projects. The County's funding requests which were discussed with each of the offices included the requests for the Lower Mission Creek Flood Control Project, Lake Cachuma facilities, regional, multimodal and rural transportation projects (including Highway 101 widening and Hollister Avenue Corridor Improvements), preservation of the historic County Courthouse, renovation of our Veterans Memorial Buildings, park and open space preservation, and technology, books and materials for libraries. Additionally our delegation was made aware of the County's advocacy for pavement preservation programs and funding for maintenance of On-System bridges to be addressed in the

reauthorization of the MAP-21 transportation bill, support for the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, support for an extension of the Business Energy Investment Tax Credit that could assist with the development of the County's Resource Recovery Project, and the County's support for the continuation of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program. Meetings with committee staff and agency staff focused on similar policy areas and projects, but were limited in scope to the items within their respective purviews.

The following are some highlights and key insights that were taken away from the meetings –

- The atmosphere and opinions regarding the appropriations process and project specific “earmarks” were similar to the feedback received in the previous four years’ visits. Earmarks have not been considered in recent appropriations cycles and there is consensus among all parties that earmarking will not resume in the current appropriations cycle. Despite this reality, our delegation and committee staff still expressed an interest in being kept apprised of the status of critical projects for our County, and we shared with them a list of our priorities. They emphasized the continued importance of ongoing communication with the relevant federal agencies given the increased authority the agencies now have on directing funding to specific projects. Congress is currently near the beginning of the budgeting and appropriations process for the upcoming fiscal year, and the anticipation is that individual appropriations bills will be considered and passed following the standard process and timeframes as opposed to the omnibus bills that were done over the past few years.
- Our delegation, committee and Army Corps staff continue to be very familiar with the Lower Mission Creek Flood Control project. However in the current climate, it remains challenging to secure a new construction start for the project. There is the ongoing challenge that the benefit/cost ratio for the project is significantly lower than the level at which the administration is currently allocating federal funding for Corps projects. We discussed the critical importance of this project to the Santa Barbara community and shared the fact that we have local benefit assessment money to provide the local share of funding. We also shared an update regarding the portions of the project that have already been constructed with other sources of funding. In our conversations there was consensus that new and “outside the box” approaches need to be taken in order to secure federal funding for projects such as this. Army Corps staff discussed examples of public/private partnerships to fund projects such as the LA River restoration project. They also emphasized the importance of County staff continuing to work with the Army Corps staff to attempt to restructure and redefine the federal portion of the project in order to achieve a better benefit/cost ratio. Additionally, we discussed the provisions in last year’s reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) which could lead to deauthorization of previously authorized projects such as Mission Creek. The consensus was that Mission Creek’s authorization should be secure for now, but it is important to continue to monitor the deauthorization process which will occur this summer.
- In the meetings with our delegation and committee staff, the various components of the Lake Cachuma facilities improvements were discussed including sharing the County’s current prioritization of needed improvements. While the Bureau of Reclamation has recently received some higher levels of funding to facilitate drought response, it continues to be a very challenging fiscal environment to secure federal funding for the type of recreation related-infrastructure improvements that Lake Cachuma is in need of. Similar to Mission Creek, we were encouraged

to explore new approaches and partnerships, including a packaged water treatment plant option and local cost sharing on priority projects. We were also encouraged to stay in touch with the Bureau of Reclamation area office in Fresno regarding the projects and to make sure that we keep our cost estimates for the projects updated.

- The federal transportation bill (MAP-21) is up for reauthorization this year, with the short term extension that Congress passed last year scheduled to expire on May 31st. There seems to be bi-partisan consensus on the goal of having it completed this year; however, some committee staff we met with thought that another short term extension might be necessary. Committee staff from both houses and parties are in the early stages of putting together a bill with the key challenge remaining of how to close the funding gap which has resulted from inflation and declining gas tax revenues. There are a series of informational hearings which have been scheduled by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, including one that occurred while we were in DC. There appears to be a bi-partisan approach on this issue and an optimism and similar set of goals that were shared by various committee staff members we met with. During our meetings on this issue with our delegation and committee staff we focused mainly on the policy issues that the County is interested in having addressed in the next bill. These include support for pavement preservation programs and the need for a specific set aside funding stream for On-System Bridges. Both Senate and House committee staff understood our interest in these policy areas and the impacts that such programs have on counties such as ours. NACo, NACE, CSAC and other groups have also been advocating on the On-System Bridge issue, and there are a variety of approaches being explored to address it through a set aside of some sort. We also discussed our support for including some federal funding mechanism to support regional and interregional transportation projects, such as the Highway 101 widening, in the bill. Committee staff was aware of the need and mentioned that they have heard similar feedback from other regions of the county, and that there are currently discussions about adding some type of projects of national and regional significance funding program.
- It seems likely that Older Americans Act reauthorization will occur this year. There has already been a bipartisan bill introduced by the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate HELP Committee (S. 192). It is very similar to a reauthorization bill approved by the Committee in the last session, and addresses many of the items included in our County platform statement. Based on conversations with Senate Committee staff, the current approach appears to be for the Senate to take action on the bill relatively quickly, with the hope that the House would consider a similar bill later this year. The House Education and Workforce Committee has not released a draft bill, but Committee staff indicated that there is support for most of the provisions included in the Senate bill. They were also hopeful that progress could be made later this year. It was also brought to our attention that the discussions regarding this reauthorization coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the Older Americans Act which occurs this July, as well as a conference the White House is hosting a conference on aging and senior issues later this year.
- Based on our meeting with Senate Committee staff, as well as discussions with our local Congressional delegation, there appears to be significant support in Congress for continuation of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Program. However, how the program is funded in both the short and long term has not been resolved. Committee staff mentioned that it is likely the program will continue to be funded on a yearly basis through the appropriations process for the next year or two, as was done for this fiscal year. There are discussions about adopting a long

term funding approach for the program, similar to the authorization for mandatory full payments that expired in 2014. The discussions regarding the PILT program have been somewhat linked to the debate that is currently occurring in Congress about extension of the Secure Rural Schools program.

- Members of our Congressional delegation, as well as Senate Committee staff, were interested to learn about the potential for the County's Resource Recovery Project to take advantage of the 2008 Business Energy Investment Tax Credits, and were understanding of the challenge that the 2016 expiration dates poses given the timing of our project. There is discussion about extending the credits, but it appears that potential action would occur closer to the expiration date and would likely be part of a broader package of tax cut extensions that could result from negotiations between the parties. Committee staff stated that that it was helpful to have real world examples of projects that could take advantage of the credit if it was extended. Another potential remedy suggested by Committee staff was the possible adoption of language allowing the credit to apply if construction was commenced on a project, as opposed to the current requirement that construction needs to be completed. The members of our delegation all expressed that they were supportive of the extension of these tax credits.

Authored by: Jeremy Tittle 568-2182