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MEMORANDUM

TO Legislative Committee

FROM Maria C. Tripplaar

DATE September 3, 2024

RE Federal Legislative Update

This memo provides a Federal Legislative Update on the items appearing on the agenda for the September 9, 2024, Legislative Committee meeting.

1. Congressional Update

Both the House and Senate have been in recess for the month of August, and are expected to return to DC on September 9th and will remain in DC for a 3-week DC work session. Notably, given that this is an election year, both chambers will be in recess again for the month of October and until the week after the election in November. Once they return on November 12, 2024, both chambers are only scheduled for eight legislative weeks before the end of the 118th Congress (which will conclude on January 3, 2025). There is a great deal of work to be done this year, including funding the federal government for FY25, with current funding authorization for FY24 set to expire at midnight on September 30, 2024.

2. Budget Update

The House Committee on Appropriations has approved all 12 of the annual appropriations bills for FY25, and the full House has passed five of the 12 so far (Defense, Homeland Security, Interior-Environment, Milcon-VA, and State-Foreign Operations). None of the five bills that have passed the Republican-led House so far are expected to pass in the Democrat-controlled Senate. The Senate Committee on Appropriations has approved all but one of the 12 bills (Homeland Security), but has not yet started floor consideration of any of the bills. Congress is expected to begin working towards a stop-gap funding mechanism called a continuing resolution or CR in September to avoid a government shutdown in October. My working assumption is that Congress will pass a CR that funds the government until after the

election. However, there are rumors that the CR may be scheduled to fund the government until early 2025, and leave the mess to be resolved early in the next Congress.

3. Federal Budget Requests, including Community Project Funding Requests
 Summary

The County submitted a total of nine projects for consideration by the federal delegation for Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed spending – also called earmarks – for FY25. As I presented in August, only the \$1,105,800 earmark requested by Rep. Lofgren for the Pajaro County Sanitation District (PCSD) Sewer System Improvements project is expected to continue moving forward. At this stage, the PCSD project was successfully included in the Interior-Environment bill that passed the House, and currently awaits Senate consideration. I will continue to monitor all developments closely, including independent Senate consideration or any conference negotiations.

Additionally, at the Legislative Committee meeting last month, I was asked to provide a summary of the federal funding in the FY24 cycle that will benefit Monterey county residents, as well as a status update on FY25 earmarks that may potentially benefit residents pending the outcome of FY25 appropriations. I have provided that information below for FY24, and for FY25 based on the House bills that have either passed the chamber or been approved by the House Committee on Appropriations, and/or been approved by the Senate Committee on Appropriations. Projects submitted or awarded to the County of Monterey are designated by the asterisk.

	Project Name	Amount	Description	Location	Requestor	Bill
FY 25 Earmarks	Pajaro County Sanitation District Sewer Improvements*	\$1,105,800	This project would replace existing sewer system pipes in the Pajaro County Sanitation District (PCSD), the dependent special district of the County of Monterey that provides sewer service for the unincorporated community of Pajaro. Funding would be used to replace sewer system pipes that have reached or exceeded their service life.	Pajaro (Recipient: County of Monterey)	Rep. Lofgren	Interior-Environment
	Downtown Soledad Streetscape Enhancement	\$700,000	This revitalization project would include strategic streetscape enhancements and the integration of public art downtown, which are essential for stimulating economic growth and improving community livability.	Soledad (Recipient: City of Soledad)	Rep. Lofgren	THUD

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Gonzalez Fire Department Infrastructure Support	\$500,000	This funding would be used to make necessary safety improvements to the fire station and improve accommodations for firefighters.	Gonzalez (Recipient: City of Gonzalez)	Rep. Lofgren	THUD
Greenfield Fire Station Retrofits	\$850,000	This funding would help make critical infrastructure improvements to the City's single fire station, thereby improving its resiliency against earthquakes and other natural disasters. The funding would enhance community resilience and bolster the safety of Greenfield's firefighters and residents.	Greenfield (Recipient: City of Greenfield)	Rep. Lofgren	THUD
Hartnell College CDC	\$800,000	The funding would be used to make necessary safety improvements to the center and increase accessibility for students with diverse needs. The project would create an improved experience for children, college students, and parents who are pursuing a college degree and/or career.	Salinas (Recipient: Hartnell Community College District)	Rep. Lofgren	THUD
Gonzalez Community Center	\$250,000	This project would transform Gonzales, a rural, predominantly Latino community in California's Salinas Valley. The proposed center will feature a multifunctional Community Hall, a commercial kitchen focusing on nutritional education, a public library, a teen innovation center, and a fitness studio.	Gonzalez (Recipient: City of Gonzalez)	Rep. Lofgren	THUD
Seaside Municipal Well Water Security Project	\$1,105,800	This funding would be used to design and construct a backup potable water well for the Seaside Municipal Water System (SMWS).	Seaside (Recipient: City of Seaside)	Rep. Panetta	Interior-Environment
San Pablo Bridge Project	\$2,000,000	The San Pablo Pedestrian Bridge Demolition and Reconstruction	Seaside	Rep. Panetta	THUD

			project includes 2 phases. Phase 1 includes the demolition of the bridge structure. Phase 2 includes the demolition of the remaining foundation and abutments; the construction of new abutments, foundations, retaining walls, a prefabricated steel truss bridge, and ADA compliant paths of travel on both sides of the bridge.	(Recipient: City of Seaside)		
	Salinas Valley Hydrogen Retrofits	\$1,000,000	This funding would make retrofits to MST's existing King City O&M Facility to safely operate and maintain Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric buses.	King City (Recipient: Monterey-Salinas Transit District)	Sen. Padilla Sen. Butler	THUD
FY 24 Earmarks	Family Justice Center in King City*	\$500,000	Monterey County is establishing a Family Justice Center in King City. The requested funds will be used to improve the County's current building or acquire additional buildings in King City in order to be able to continue to co-locate service providers and perform sexual assault and domestic violence medical examinations.	King City (Recipient: County of Monterey)	Sen. Padilla Rep. Lofgren	Ag, Rural Dev, FDA
	Salinas Wastewater Treatment Facility	\$100,000	The project will expand the wastewater treatment facility and reduce its carbon footprint. Water that is recycled at the facility is used for groundwater restoration that can be important during droughts.	Salinas (Recipient: City of Salinas)	Sen. Padilla Rep. Lofgren	Interior-Environment
	San Lucas Clean Drinking Water Project*	\$959,752	The San Lucas Clean Drinking Water Project will address persistent water quality problems which have occurred since 2006. In 2011, a "do not drink" order was issued, and despite establishing an alternative well to serve the community, a second "do not drink" order was issued	San Lucas (Recipient: County of Monterey)	Sen. Feinstein Sen. Padilla Rep. Lofgren	Interior-Environment

		in 2016. The lack of safe, affordable drinking water for the community has also caused a nearly 20-year delay of a severely needed affordable housing project in San Lucas.			
King City Downtown Electric Vehicle Charging Station Parking Lot	\$600,000	The project will consist of property acquisition of a small blighted property located near the southeast corner of Broadway Street and 3rd Street in the heart of the King City downtown area; grading and resurfacing of the lot; installation of electric service and connections; installation of landscaping improvements and signage; and creation of an artistic mural on the adjacent building.	King City (Recipient: City of King)	Rep. Lofgren	THUD
Drummond Culinary Academy Expansion	\$1,000,000	Rancho Cielo serves primarily Latinx young adults who have been unsuccessful in or aged out of other school settings can achieve a WASC-accredited high school diploma through our partnership with John Muir Charter School and obtain vocational training and certifications. The project would expand the Drummond Culinary Academy, which will soon be a state-of-the-art culinary center. Adding a pastry kitchen, a barbeque pavilion, an outdoor kitchen, and a patio will allow Culinary Students to build new skills that are much needed in the hospitality industry.	Salinas (Recipient: Rancho Cielo Youth Campus)	Rep. Lofgren	THUD
Network Enterprise Center	\$40,000,000	To construct a Network Enterprise Center (NEC) on Fort Hunter Liggett	Jolon (Recipient: Fort Hunter Liggett)	Sen. Feinstein Rep. Lofgren	MilCon-VA

Carmel River FREE*	\$3,000,000	The Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement Project is a multi-benefit, green infrastructure project that will recreate hydrological connectivity, restore habitat, and reduce flood hazards in the Carmel River Watershed.	Carmel (Recipient: County of Monterey)	Sen. Padilla Rep. Panetta	THUD
Pajaro County Sanitation District Sewer Improvements*	\$1,500,000	This project will replace existing sewer system pipes in the Pajaro County Sanitation District (PCSD), the dependent special district of the County of Monterey that provides sewer service for the unincorporated community of Pajaro. Funding would be used to replace sewer system pipes that have reached or exceeded their service life.	Pajaro (Recipient: County of Monterey)	Sen. Padilla	Interior-Environment
Automated Multipurpose Machine Gun Range	\$5,000,000	This project will construct an automated multipurpose machine gun range at Camp Roberts.	Camp Roberts (Recipient: Camp Roberts)	Sen. Feinstein	MilCon-VA
Pajaro to Prunedale G12 Corridor Project, Segment 6	\$1,811,000	Funding to better protect pedestrians and cyclists on the Pajaro to Prunedale G12 corridor, which services is a travel alternative to State Route 1 between Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties.	Pajaro (Recipient: Transportation Agency for Monterey County)	Sen. Padilla	THUD

4. Federal Advocacy

a. Department of Transportation's Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Project (NSFLTP) Program for the Palo Colorado Road Storm Damage Repair Project

I'd like to take this opportunity to provide an update on federal advocacy efforts relating to the Palo Colorado Road Storm Damage Repair Project. Since we last addressed this topic during the June Legislative Committee meeting, the Director of Public Works, Facilities, and

Parks (PWFP) and I have continued to engage with the Department of Transportation, the National Park Service and Rep. Panetta's office. The Director of PWFP has determined that it is prudent for the County to move forward with applying for a federal grant under the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects (NSFLTP) Program. As we discussed in June, this is a program that the County has not previously utilized, and more recently, Rep. Panetta's staff has encouraged the County to pursue this competitive grant opportunity.

According to PWFP, this project is essential for the rehabilitation and improvement of Palo Colorado Road, a crucial access route to the Los Padres National Forest containing several key recreational facilities. Monterey County PWFP is currently preparing an application to submit to the U.S. Department of Transportation's NSFLTP Program to request grant funding for this project. I have also requested letters in support of the County's application from Sen. Padilla, Sen. Butler, and Rep. Panetta.

As you know, Palo Colorado Road is approximately 8 miles in length serving as the *only* access road from the scenic Big Sur Coastline along Highway 1 to the pristine Los Padres National Forest in the Santa Lucia Mountains of Monterey County, California. Unfortunately, Palo Colorado Road has been battered by the impacts of climate change beginning in 2016 when the Soberanes Fire burned over 132,000 acres in Monterey County resulting in a Federal Disaster declaration. The fire left damage to Palo Colorado Road and burn scars in the surrounding hillsides. Winter storms in 2016 and 2017 exacerbated the roadway damage as large amounts of water inundated the burn scarred hillsides and canyons causing mudslides, slip outs, fallen trees and debris flows created a safety risk for the traveling public and resulted in road closures, emergency repairs and a second declaration of Federal Disaster. While Monterey County PWFP worked diligently with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to repair and rehabilitate much of the roadway, approximately 3.8 miles (from milepost 4.0 to 7.8) remain severely damaged and closed. The road is unusable to the public due to landslides, large road slip outs (1/4 lane-1 1/2 lane in width), and damaged and washed out culverts; local residents and visitors remain without access to vital recreational facilities and homes. Current roadway conditions also hinder emergency response.

The Palo Colorado Road Storm Damage Repair Project will rehabilitate and significantly improve safety and resilience of this key regional roadway providing access to Los Padres National Forest and regional recreation facilities. The Project will improve drainage systems, and stabilize the surrounding hillsides in effort to bolster the roadway against the escalating threats of climate change and prevent future closures. The Project will include the installation of soldier-pile walls and soil nail walls, slope stabilization, construction of drainage improvements and addition of guardrails for safety.

The closure of this portion of the road has eliminated access to important recreational areas, including the Bottchers Gap Trailhead and Campground, Skinner Ridge Trail, Little Sur Trail, Camp Pico Blanco, and Mill Creek Redwood Preserve. Investing in the repair and restoration of Palo Colorado Road will bring numerous benefits to our community. Restoring access to key recreational facilities and unimpeded access for emergency response is crucial for both local residents and visitors.

I will continue to keep the Legislative Committee apprised of any significant developments related to the NSFLTP grant application or engagement with the federal Congressional delegation.

5. Legislation

a. ***H.R. 8575, the Michelle Alyssa Go Act (Goldman) – Recommend Support***

This bill would increase the number of federal Medicaid-eligible in-patient psychiatric beds for individuals who are seeking treatment for both mental health and substance use disorders.

Under current federal law, Medicaid is prohibited from covering long-term stays for patients between the ages of 21 and 64 who are receiving mental health or substance abuse treatment in a facility with more than 16 beds, known as an Institution for Mental Diseases (IMD). The Michelle Alyssa Go Act would raise the limit for a facility to be eligible for Medicaid coverage, from 16 in-patient psychiatric beds to 36. This would more than double the beds eligible to be funded by federal Medicaid in statute. The bill also ensures these facilities meet nationally recognized, evidence-based standards of care.

H.R. 8575 seeks to ease the prohibition on Medicaid coverage, also known as the IMD exclusion that has been in effect since Medicaid was created in 1965 and has resulted in people being unable to access mental health care, as many do not have the funds to cover these services out of pocket and many institutions have downsized their capacity.

This legislation was introduced by Rep. Goldman in the House; there is not yet an identical companion bill in the Senate.

6. Federal Bill/Issues Track

Attachment(s):

Federal Bill/Issues Track