

# PRESS ADVISORY

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Rutherford Seeks Nearly 20% Reduction in Elected Supervisors' Compensation

**SAN BERNARDINO – Nov 15, 2011** – On Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors unanimously supported Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford's proposal to create an ordinance that will reduce Supervisors' benefits by nearly 20 percent.

"San Bernardino County Supervisors must lead by example, and agreeing to impose more than \$50,000 in benefit reductions on ourselves is a good place to start," Rutherford said.

The proposed ordinance would eliminate all County pick-ups of Supervisors' retirement contributions, County retirement medical trust fund contributions, County salary savings plans matches and supplemental contributions, County-paid life insurance or variable group universal life insurance, long term disability insurance, medical expense flexible spending account matches, and portable communication device allowances. Eliminating the benefits would reduce the total annual compensation for individual Board members by about \$54,000.

Rutherford requested the benefits reduction ordinance after this year's Grand Jury report criticized the Supervisorial benefits package as "very generous." Follow-up research showed that San Bernardino County Supervisors are eligible to receive the second highest total compensation among Southern California supervisors — about \$273,000 — while Los Angeles County Supervisors receive the highest at about \$320,000. The proposed reductions would bring the total compensation package for individual San Bernardino County Supervisors to approximately \$218,000. That compares to \$227,000 in Riverside County; \$237,000 in Orange County; and \$215,000 in San Diego County.

"In this economic climate when our taxpayers are suffering and our budget is strapped, we cannot continue to accept benefits that are so egregiously out of line with the private sector," said Rutherford.

In addition to their annual \$151,971 salary, San Bernardino County Supervisors are each eligible for a benefits package with an annual cost of approximately \$121,000. Benefits include health insurance, car and cellphone allowances, and retirement fund contributions. The combination brings the total annual compensation to approximately \$273,000.

According to the San Bernardino County Charter, only voters have the authority to establish Supervisors' base salaries, which are currently set by a measure voters approved in November 2006. However, Supervisors have the authority to create and approve their own benefits package.

The County Administrative Office will draft an ordinance to eliminate the benefits and will bring the ordinance back to the Board for approval early next year.

"This is one step forward on the path of letting our residents know that we are serious about changing the political culture of our County and restoring our region's reputation. It also signals our understanding that times are tough and we have to lead our organization in making tough cuts when we are asking employees to cut back as well," Rutherford said.

State law prohibits reducing an elected official's compensation while he/she is still in office, so the proposed ordinance would not impact current Supervisors. However, Supervisors can individually agree to impose reductions on themselves prior to the end of their terms. If the proposed benefits reduction ordinance is adopted, Supervisor Rutherford stated she would agree to the reductions immediately.

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