PRESS ADVISORY

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Board Seeks to Modernize 101-year-old County Charter

SAN BERNARDINO—August 20, 2013—Today, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors directed the County Administrative Office and County Counsel to research ways to modernize the County Charter and to recommend amendments that may be presented to voters for approval.

"It's time to give San Bernardino County voters the opportunity to bring their County Charter into the 21st Century," Board of Supervisors Chair Janice Rutherford said.

The County Charter was adopted in April 1913 and has been amended 40 times. However, it still contains language and provisions that are outdated or no longer applicable. For example, Charter Article III outlines how the Board of Supervisors establishes compensation for judges. But legislation has since transferred responsibility for court functions from the counties to the State, so county supervisors no longer have a role in establishing compensation for judges.

"We want to take a comprehensive look at the Charter to see what's working, what isn't, and what can be done to make County government work better," Rutherford said. "We should maintain Charter provisions like term limits and compensation caps for elected officials, and we also should consider including new provisions such as campaign contribution limits, ethics rules and other measures that make the County more accountable to voters."

The Board of Supervisors will discuss Charter modernization at an upcoming meeting of the San Bernardino Associated Governments Board of Directors, which includes representatives from all 24 cities in the County. The Board will also hold additional public meetings to gather input on how to update the County Charter.

County voters will ultimately decide whether to approve any Charter modifications the Board of Supervisors may decide to place on the ballot.

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