



NEWS

From County Supervisor Paul Biane

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State Cuts Threaten County's \$3.8 Billion Budget

SAN BERNARDINO – San Bernardino County administrators presented the Board of Supervisors with a balanced \$3.8 billion budget plan on Tuesday, but they warned State cuts and cost shifting could siphon millions of dollars from County coffers, forcing dramatic cuts in programs and services.

“Local government is going to be the one to bear the brunt of this assault by the State,” said County Chief Administrative Officer Mark Uffer, noting the County took steps to prepare for an economic downturn, including placing strict controls on staffing and estimating lower property and sales tax revenue.

In addition, unions and employee groups agreed to defer contractual salary increases to help balance the budget. The groups include the San Bernardino Safety Employees Benefit Association (SBEBA), the San Bernardino County Public Employees Association, San Bernardino County Public Attorney's Association, and Exempt Employee Unit. The California Nurses Association chose to furlough staff under the terms of their contract with the County. Budget mitigation measures totaled \$80.2 million. The total includes nearly \$1 million from early retirements, \$18 million through salary reductions, and \$1.2 million from deferred raises.

“San Bernardino County employees made substantial sacrifices to help balance this budget in the midst of an economic crisis,” Second District Supervisor Paul Biane said. “We are doing our best to tighten our belts, and I think the budget that we were presented today shows that.”

Biane said the County has taken prudent steps over the past several years to balance its budget and to prepare for the economic challenges.

“Those actions put us in the position as one of the top five best managed counties in the State of California in terms of budget reserves and right-sized departments and employees,” Biane said.

Biane said the County must continue to engage Gov. Schwarzenegger and State lawmakers to urge them not to balance their budget on the backs of local governments.

“We need that open and direct dialogue so we can find positive solutions in light of the budget disaster we find ourselves in,” Biane said.

After hearing public testimony, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to put the 2009-2010 budget on the June 23 agenda for final adoption.

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