

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

404



**FROM:** Executive Office

**SUBMITTAL DATE:**  
March 10, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Re-Evaluation of Legislative Advocacy Needs by Riverside County; All Districts; [\$0]

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive and file the attached report on legislative advocacy; and
2. Continue utilization of Nielsen-Merksamer as Sacramento based advocate and Tom Walters as Washington D.C based advocate; and
3. Discontinue utilization of Michael Y. Corbett and Cline-Duplissea as legislative consultants.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Summary**

On January 6, 2015, the Board directed the Executive Office to re-evaluate the need for outside lobbying contracts. The attached report provides an overview of the issues for the Board to consider. Staff recommends the continued utilization of outside lobbyists in both Sacramento and Washington D.C.

Departmental Concurrence

Brian Nestande  
Deputy County Executive Officer

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost:	POLICY/CONSENT (per Exec. Office)
COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NET COUNTY COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	
SOURCE OF FUNDS: N/A				Budget Adjustment: N/A	
				For Fiscal Year: 14/15	

**C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION:**

APPROVE

BY:

George A. Johnson

County Executive Office Signature

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

- A-30
- 4/5 Vote
- Positions Added
- Change Order

Prev. Agn. Ref.: 3.51 1/06/15

District: All

Agenda Number:

3-3

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
FORM 11: Re-evaluation of Legislative Advocacy Needs by Riverside County; All Districts; [\$0]**

**DATE: March 10, 2015**

**PAGE: 2 of 2**

**BACKGROUND:**

**Summary (continued)**

Advocacy services were reduced after the last Executive Office review of lobbyists in 2012. Following the recession the state underwent significant fiscal and policy changes (e.g., AB 109, Coordinated Care Initiative and the Affordable Care Act), requiring specific expertise. Going forward, we see less structural changes in state policy; therefore, we believe one firm is sufficient. The Executive Office believes periodic analysis of the advocacy program is warranted in order to effectively and efficiently promote the Board's vision in both Sacramento and Washington D.C. A coordinated approach on those topics and other – using staff, lobbyists, legislators and other partners – is the preferred way to effectively advocate for funding and legislation on issues that affect our residents and county services. Other large counties do the same and we are competing with them for funding and influence on legislation. Lobbying does not guarantee you always get what you want or need, but it might make a difference and can help you receive at least a portion of what you sought. Lobbying efforts will become even more important as the county grows and seeks continued funding for the integrated habitat plan, restoring the Salton Sea and emerging new demands.

**Impact on Residents and Businesses**

The proposed state lobbying structure will improve efficiency, consolidate costs and provide better service for the county.

**SUPPLEMENTAL:**

**Additional Fiscal Information**

The proposed state lobby structure will reduce county cost from \$400,000 to \$290,000 per legislative term.

**Contract History and Price Reasonableness**

N/A

## **Legislative Advocacy Services**

The Executive Office conducted a comprehensive evaluation of Riverside County's lobbying efforts as the Board of Supervisors directed on January 6, 2015. For reference, Sacramento-based advocacy services were reduced after the last Executive Office review of lobbyists in 2012. The Executive Office believes periodic analysis of the advocacy program is warranted in order to effectively and efficiently promote the Board's vision in both Sacramento and Washington D.C.

### **Importance of Advocacy**

Riverside County, with over 2.3 million residents, is California's fourth largest county and quickly is approaching the rank of tenth largest in the nation. As such, the county needs to have a focused and coordinated approach to prioritize its needs and have a direct effect on decisions made in Washington, D.C. and Sacramento. As an urban county, our priorities and interests are different from many other counties.

Realignment and Prop. 47. are examples of the differences. The shortage of jail beds and the effective use of alternatives to incarceration are particularly burdensome to Riverside County. A coordinated approach on those topics and others – using staff, lobbyists, legislators and other partners – is the preferred way to effectively advocate for funding and legislation on issues that affect our residents and county services.

The same is true, generally, regarding CSAC. It represents 58 counties but interests vary greatly from county to county. As an example, working to keep some form of redevelopment in California was not an issue for CSAC or for most counties because cities, typically, had the large redevelopment agencies. But it was an important issue for Riverside County, where redevelopment built libraries, fire houses, roads and all kinds of infrastructure. That is an example of why the county must lobby beyond CSAC's efforts.

In addition, political power in places like Los Angeles and San Francisco counties often has superseded Riverside County's influence in the past. We must be focused and coordinated to overcome that history. The county needs representatives in the capitals who track legislation and who understand Riverside County's specific interests.

Other large counties do the same and we are competing with them for funding and influence on legislation. Without advocates and a coordinated effort, the county is at a severe disadvantage. We cannot effectively advocate for the resources our residents deserve without clearly articulating our needs and positions to state and federal officials regarding the millions of dollars that should come to Riverside County each year. Another important point is that our efforts affect not only the resources we try to secure in any given year. We must remember what is at stake every year, and, based on what we already expect to receive, what we stand to lose.

Riverside County also is among the few counties nationwide that is developing its own clinically integrated medical system with an essential hospital. Any changes to the Affordable Care Act will directly affect the county healthcare system. A related issue is the state medical reimbursement rate. Riverside County's rate is lower than in other areas, such as the Bay area, because of decades old formulas. Therefore we need to aggressively lobby for a more equitable formula to ensure that Riverside County is not at a disadvantage.

The continuing possibility of military base realignments and closures is another issue of concern. The county must be prepared in advance of any action by Congress that would threaten local installations, work that is being done by the county, elected officials, community partners and lobbyists.

### **Advocacy Effectiveness**

It would be inaccurate to indicate that lobbyists are completely responsible for any outcome. Results are achieved through the efforts of staff, lobbyists, community leaders, elected officials, and others. That said, there probably would not be a medical school at the University of California, Riverside, if the county had not lobbied as hard as it did in Sacramento.

In the last three years some of the greatest legislative achievements have involved transportation. Advocacy efforts brought in about \$500 million in loan and grant funding just for the massive Highway 91 improvement project and the Perris Valley Line. The county, the Riverside County Transportation Commission, and other partners needed the federal funding to accelerate construction of these critical regional transportation projects. It is under way only because of the advocacy work by our local, state and federal partners and lobbyist.

There would not be a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan, one of the largest habitat plans in the nation, without the efforts of staff, elected officials and lobbyists who met constantly with state and federal environmental officials. That benefit continues, with Riverside County receiving \$1.5 million in habitat conservation plan funds for the western county, \$893,000 in the eastern county for the Coachella Valley habitat plan, and \$675,000 for the Upper Santa Ana River habitat plan under Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund in 2014.

There has been much reported in the press and local governments regarding several attempts to help the four cities with their VLF loss shortly after incorporation. The four cities, local legislators and the county all have tried to make their cities whole through a legislative fix. The fix made it through the legislature more than once. Lobbyists helped dramatically. Efforts continue with our lobbyists, elected officials and other partners pursuing the matter this session in the legislature.

Lobbying does not guarantee you always get what you want or need, but it might make a difference and can help you receive at least a portion of what you sought. Lobbyists can help the county succeed by defining the best approach on an issue and how to solicit and gain support from those who will best help your cause. Otherwise, you have relinquished the chance to affect vital state and federal decisions that affect the county.

**Status of Contracts**

The legislative advocacy review in 2012 and the resulting Board’s action reduced state advocacy costs by 43 percent (\$171,000), shifting advocacy efforts primarily under one firm. The Board retained Michael Corbett and Cline-Duplissea as legislative consultants, but under much smaller contracts (\$36,000 and \$50,000, respectively).

In 2014, the County of Riverside had contracts for legislative affairs with four entities.

1. Tom Walters – Washington DC (contract is current for 2015)
2. Neilsen, Merksamer, Parrinello & Gross – Sacramento (contract is current for 2015)
3. Michael Corbett – Sacramento (contract expired December 31, 2014)
4. Cline Duplissea – Sacramento (contract expired December 31, 2014)

As the Board directed on January 6, 2015, contracts for Michael Corbett and Cline-Duplissea were not renewed for 2015, while this report was developed. In addition, county Flood Control District retains the Carmen Group at a cost of \$320,000 per two-year cycle.

**Cost for calendar years 2013 and 2014**

As a comparison, the following are lobbying costs for similar counties in 2013 and 2014. (Information collected from the Secretary of State’s website.)

	Two-Year Cost Riverside	Two-Year Cost (proposed)	Two-Year Cost San Bernardino	Two-Year Cost Orange	Two-Year Cost San Diego	Two-Year Cost Alameda
Sacramento	460,000	290,000	418,000	574,000	672,000	670,000
Washington	<u>400,000</u>	<u>400,000</u>	<u>290,000</u>	<u>480,000</u>	<u>720,000</u>	<u>400,000</u>
Totals	860,000	690,000	708,000	1,054,000	1,392,000	1,070,000

**Evaluation Criteria**

Each of the county’s current lobbying firms was evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Dissemination of information – is it timely and useful?
2. Specific goals or projects – were they completed on time?
3. Expertise – is the firm hired for a specific subject or project, is their expertise proven, and is it still needed?
4. Effectiveness – measured by the County and perceived by legislators.

The evaluation included a review of contracts and discussions with staff in the Executive Office and the supervisorial offices.

Department heads and county elected officials were interviewed to conduct a comprehensive evaluation.

Understandably, county departments have unique perspectives and concerns. They also have significant interaction regarding legislation with professional associations that represent them. Most department administrators are familiar with the county's contract lobbyists but their reliance on those lobbyists differs significantly. The issue with departments relying on representation from professional associations is potential conflicts between the Board's and the association's priorities.

In conclusion, the Executive Office recommends that the county:

- 1) Not renew contracts for Cline-Duplissea and Michael Corbett. This will reduce county cost for state advocacy from \$460,000 to \$290,000 per state legislative cycle.
- 2) Enhance outreach to departments to better coordinate advocacy efforts.
- 3) Consistent with the length of the contract, conduct periodic evaluation of county lobbyists similar to this review.

Adopting these recommendations would save resources, improve coordination, and enhance services.

Some departments requested more information about how to influence legislation or push their own legislative ideas. The Executive Office will address those requests by hosting regular meetings with departments, and having a special meeting in the fall to discuss legislative development with our contract lobbyists. The best time to initiate ideas about state legislation is during the last quarter of the year. This ensures there is enough time to review proposals before presenting bills for introduction. Furthermore, meetings with departments, lobbyists and legislative staff might alleviate potential conflicts between professional associations and Riverside County.

As the county grows it will soon become the nation's 10<sup>th</sup> largest county, more unique, and its interest and those of other counties will continue to diverge. And as the county creates and implements its clinically integrated medical system, there undoubtedly will be specific legislative and administrative needs. While Riverside County is not alone in facing a potential loss of military bases, it would be prudent to continue efforts to ensure that March Air Force Reserve Base and the Naval Surface Warfare Center in Corona are preserved.

Lobbying efforts will become even more important as the county grows and seeks continued funding for the integrated habitat plan, restoring the Salton Sea and emerging new demands.

Currently, the county receives close to 50 percent of its funding from the state and federal governments. Programs and priorities evolve, and counties nationwide will continue competing for revenue and favorable funding formulas. Therefore, we believe a constant review of legislative efforts is necessary for good governance and responsible public policy.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



**3-2**

On motion of Supervisor Benoit, seconded by Supervisor Ashley and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the recommendation from Supervisor Jeffries regarding Re-Evaluation of Legislative Advocacy Needs by Riverside County is continued to Tuesday, March 24, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call:

Ayes: Jeffries, Tavaglione, Washington, Benoit and Ashley  
Nays: None  
Absent: None

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full true, and correct copy of an order made and entered on March 10, 2015 of Supervisors Minutes.

(seal) WITNESS my hand and the seal of the Board of Supervisors  
Dated: March 10, 2015  
Kecia Harper-Ihem, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, in  
and for the County of Riverside, State of California.

By: [Signature] Deputy

AGENDA NO.  
3-2

xc: Supvr. Jeffries, COB



**JAY E. ORR**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**MEMORANDUM**  
**COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE**  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

**GEORGE A. JOHNSON**  
CHIEF ASSISTANT COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**ROB FIELD**  
ASSISTANT COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

**MICHAEL T. STOCK**  
ASSISTANT COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
HUMAN RESOURCES

**ED CORSER**  
COUNTY FINANCE DIRECTOR

**CHRISTOPHER HANS**  
CHIEF DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**TO:** Kecia Harper-Ihem, COB  
**FROM:** George A. Johnson, Chief Assistant CEO  
**DATE:** March 3, 2015  
**RE:** CONTINUANCE

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Please continue the following item to March 24, 2015:

Report back on Re-Evaluation of Legislative Advocacy Needs (3-51 - 01/06/2015).



SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



FROM: Supervisor Kevin Jeffries

SUBMITTAL DATE:  
December 31, 2014

SUBJECT: Re-Evaluation of Legislative Advocacy Needs by Riverside County

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the new Director of Legislative Affairs to do a comprehensive evaluation of Riverside County's lobbyist contracts, including legislative successes and failures; and
2. Postpone the renewals or new contracts with any lobbying firms until such report has been reviewed by the Board of Supervisors.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Riverside County Executive Office has recently created the new position of Director of Legislative Affairs to coordinate our state and federal legislative needs. Riverside County currently contracts with three state legislative lobbying firms at a cost of \$224,000 per year and a federal lobbyist at \$188,000 per year. The Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District also contracts separately with a federal lobbyist for \$175,000 per year.

Kevin Jeffries, First District Supervisor

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Jeffries, seconded by Supervisor Ashley and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended with report back on March 10, 2015.

Ayes: Jeffries, Tavaglione, Benoit and Ashley  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Date: January 6, 2015  
xc: Supvr. Jeffries, E.O., CQB

Kecia Harper-Ihem  
Clerk of the Board

By   
Deputy

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**FORM 11: Re-Evaluation of Legislative Advocacy Needs by Riverside County**

**DATE:** December 31, 2014

**PAGE:** 2 of 2

**BACKGROUND**

**Summary (continued)**

When Riverside was represented legislatively almost entirely by members of the minority party at both the state and federal level, it was important to have outside lobbying firms available to develop relationships and assist in gaining access with representatives of the State Legislative and Congressional leadership. At a time when Riverside County is represented by a strong, bi-partisan delegation in both Sacramento and Washington DC that stay in regular contact with members of the Board of Supervisors and County Staff, and who are sensitive to Riverside County's needs, it is time to re-evaluate the need for outside lobbying contracts, especially now that legislative expertise has been brought within the Executive Office in the new position of Director of Legislative Affairs.

This proposal instructs the Executive Office to postpone any extension or renewal of our current lobbying contracts or creation of any new contracts until such time as a comprehensive presentation is made to the Board by the Director of Legislative Affairs as to the past accomplishments of our current lobbyists, accompanied with a report as to a recommended legislative agenda and the utilization and justification to employ Sacramento lobbyists going forward.

**Impact on Citizens and Businesses**

Citizens and Businesses benefit from strong legislative advocacy that is done as cost effectively as possible. This proposal would evaluate the level of success from the county's current lobbyist team and consider whether future legislative advocacy could be done with fewer taxpayer dollars.