December 11, 2012

Honorable Board of Supervisors
Marin County Civic Center
San Rafael, CA 94903

Re: 2013 LEGISLATIVE PLAN AND GUIDELINES

Dear Supervisors:

RECOMMENDATION: Approve, with modifications as may be deemed appropriate by your Board, the proposed:

- 2013 Federal Legislative Plan as contained herein;
- 2013 State Legislative Plan as contained herein; and
- 2013 Legislative Policy Guidelines contained in Attachment A

OVERVIEW
We bring to your Board the proposed legislative plan for the coming 2013 calendar year. As always, your Board retains the opportunity to amend the plan as warranted during the year to reflect new or emerging legislative priorities. There are several priority items within our 2013 plan, including:

- Exploring an employee optional hybrid defined benefit (DB)/defined contribution (DC) pension plan for new miscellaneous employees, subject to agreement with collective bargaining units
- Protecting existing revenue sources, particularly in light of ongoing federal and state financial challenges
- Transportation, particularly regarding local roads maintenance and alternatives to commuter reliance upon single-occupancy vehicles
- Climate change, supporting federal and state action to assist the County and the Bay Area in meeting its climate change goals
- Flood protection and prevention, as well as ecosystem restoration
- Improved access to health care, including efforts to implement the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
- Supporting affordable housing opportunities, consistent with local infrastructure limitations and existing development patterns

STATE PLATFORM
The state’s financial position is improving. The estimated $6 billion in additional annual revenues that will be generated by the passage of
Proposition 30 will assist the state in its efforts to achieve a structurally balanced budget in the years ahead. The non-partisan Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) recently projected a $1.9 billion state budget deficit for FY 2013-14. It is therefore possible that some of the same programs that have been threatened in recent years may again face the threat of reduction or elimination. We also expect the State to propose another phase of realigned programs to counties for FY 2013-14. As a result, a continuing focus of the County’s legislative efforts will be to ensure sufficient funding is provided for any newly realigned programs and/or to minimize the local impacts of any additional state budget reductions.

FEDERAL PLATFORM
As pressure builds to address the nation’s growing debt burden, it becomes more likely that significant reductions in federal spending may be enacted by the next Congress, which could impact County programs that receive federal funding. In acknowledgement of its fiscal challenges, Congress instituted a ban on earmarks in Federal Fiscal Year 2011, which has severely constrained the ability of local agencies to receive federal funding for local projects. However, the draft legislative plan continues to indicate our top priorities in case any opportunities should arise over the course of the year. The presentation of these requests has been reoriented in the 2013 draft plan, with funding requests now being organized by project type as detailed in Sections B, C, and D of the attached Federal Platform. Highlights of these priority federal funding requests include:

- Seeking additional funding for non-motorized transportation projects and programs;
- Seeking offsets to local impacts from federal lands;
- Seeking additional funding for the Corte Madera Creek and Santa Venetia Levee/Las Gallinas Creek Flood Control projects to address flood control and levee repair issues;
- Seeking continued funding to support research into the above-average rates of Breast Cancer in Marin County;
- Exploring options to identify additional partnerships or revenue opportunities for transportation management associated with Muir Woods National Monument;
- Seeking federal assistance towards water quality programs around Tomales Bay;
- Seeking funding to offset the costs of the Bolinas Lagoon Ecosystem Restoration locally preferred plan; and
- We also recommend supporting efforts to identify funding opportunities for the Marin Emergency Radio Authority next generation communications system.

Staff will also continue their efforts to work with The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) and the Marin County Transit District (MCTD) regarding legislative advocacy for countywide transportation issues to better ensure
local coordination of priorities among our federal delegation. As always, the County’s federal and state legislative advocacy resources will also remain available to assist in the implementation of your Board’s most critical countywide projects and issues.

In summary, given the fiscal challenges faced at both the state and federal level, our plan includes initiatives that may not be achievable in the short-term. Nevertheless, as opportunities arise, the plan provides policy direction to guide our legislative program in a manner consistent with your Board’s long-term vision for the County.

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or concerns.

Submitted by: 

Eric C. Engelbart
Management & Budget Analyst

Reviewed by: 

Matthew H. Hymel
County Administrator