



## Government Relations & Public Affairs Committee

## Item #13-3-10 Information

March 4, 2013

### Federal Advocacy Update

**Issue:** Report on federal advocacy efforts.

**Recommendation:** None; this is for information only.

**Discussion:** SACOG staff will visit Washington, D.C., during the week of March 11 for a series of advocacy meetings with Members of Congress and key federal agencies. SACOG Chief Executive Officer Mike McKeever, Board Chair Mary Jane Griego, and staff member Erik Johnson will utilize the recently amended federal advocacy principles in their appointments and share the outcomes of this trip at the SACOG Board meeting on March 21.

Additionally, SACOG staff will participate in the Metro Chamber's annual Cap-to-Cap program during the week of April 15. SACOG staff is currently working with the Chamber's volunteer policy teams to provide input on the issue papers and advocacy positions associated with SACOG's federal advocacy principles and agency programs and activities including: air quality, land use and natural resources, flood protection, water resources, transportation, food and agriculture, and community development. Staff will attend Cap-to-Cap and be available to support SACOG Board members in policy teams and advocacy meetings. Staff will provide an update on the Cap-to-Cap Advocacy Program at the April committee meetings.

Attached is an advocacy update from Mike Miller with The Ferguson Group reflecting recent activity on sequestration; new Senate and House committee leadership appointments; an update on new appointments to leadership positions at U.S. Department of Transportation, Department of Energy, and the Environmental Protection Agency; the administration's Fix-it-First Program; and reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever  
Chief Executive Officer

MM:RS:ef

Attachment

Key Staff: Kirk Trost, Chief Operating Officer/General Counsel, (916) 340-6210  
Rebecca Sloan, Director of External Affairs & Member Services, (916) 340-6224  
Erik Johnson, Government & Media Affairs Coordinator, (916) 340-6247



1130 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
202.331.8500  
202.331.1598 fax

Attachment

To: Sacramento Area Council of Governments  
From: Mike Miller  
Re: Capitol Hill Update  
Date: March 4, 2013

---

*Sequester Update.* Sequestration was triggered today due to the inability of Congress and the Administration to reach an agreement on deficit reduction. The following outlines the impacts of sequester:

- Total sequester package: \$1.2 trillion spending reductions over 10 years, with \$984 billion in program cuts and \$216 billion in reduced interest payments on national debt.
- Annual program cuts at \$98.4 billion - \$8.2 billion per month.
- 2013 program cuts at \$9.8 billion per month (only 10 months remain in 2013).
- Cuts are divided evenly between defense and non-defense accounts.
- Non-defense accounts are split between Medicare (flat 2% reduction in reimbursements) and all other programs not exempt from sequester (there are 158 exempt agency accounts).
- Non-exempt non-defense accounts face across-the-board spending cuts in 2013. Beginning in 2014 appropriators may have more control regarding allocation of spending cuts.

There is currently no indication of any ongoing negotiations to alter sequester.

*Status of FY 2013 Appropriations Bills.* Since filing our last report Congress has taken virtually no action on FY 2013 appropriations legislation. Two scenarios remain for completing action on appropriations bills for FY 2013: Congress could pass an omnibus bill or a continuing resolution to fund Congress for the remainder of 2013. It is unclear how sequester will impact either scenario.

*Senate EPW Committee Leadership Change.* Sen. David Vitter (R-LA) was recently named as Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works, replacing Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) who held the position for many years. The following is Sen. Vitter's vision statement taken from the EPW Minority website:

*Senator David Vitter will work with his colleagues to promote a common-sense and balanced approach to a fact-based energy and infrastructure policy that harnesses the power of America's job creators to grow and maintain a strong economy.*

*Transportation Secretary Nomination Status.* The Administration has not formally announced its nominee to replace retiring Secretary Ray LaHood. Sec. LaHood remains at the helm of DOT for now; many observers continue to believe the nominee will be Deborah Hersman who is the current National Transportation Safety Board Chairman.

*Fix it First.* In his State of the Union address President Obama indicated his Department of Transportation FY 2014 budget request would include funding for “Fix It First,” a program aimed at addressing transportation infrastructure deferred maintenance. The budget request is likely to target approximately \$50 billion for FY 2014 funding – the President has previously requested similar funding levels for this type of program. Observers anticipate the President will propose \$40 billion for “most urgent upgrades” to highways, bridges, public transit systems, and airports. The remaining \$10 billion would be used to establish a national infrastructure bank. As previously reported, the President’s FY 2014 budget request has not been delivered to Congress and is later than usual this year. We will continue to monitor this program.

#### *Obama Administration Announces Nominees for EPA and Energy*

On March 4 President Obama nominated Gina McCarthy to be the next EPA Administrator and Ernest Moniz as the new Energy Secretary. Both nominations require Senate approval. Gina McCarthy is currently the Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation and has worked for Republicans and Democrats previously. During remarks to the press this morning President Obama said of McCarthy:

*As a top environmental official in Massachusetts and Connecticut, she helped design programs to expand energy efficiency and promote renewable energy. As Assistant EPA Administrator, Gina has focused on practical, cost-effective ways to keep our air clean and our economy growing. She’s earned a reputation as a straight shooter. She welcomes different points of views. I’m confident that she’s going to do an outstanding job leading the EPA.*

Regarding Ernest Moniz, President Obama said:

*(Ernest) is a physicist by training, but he also served as Under Secretary of Energy under President Clinton. Since then, he’s directed MIT’s Energy Initiative, which brings together prominent thinkers and energy companies to develop the technologies that can lead us to more energy independence and also new jobs. Most importantly, Ernie knows that we can produce more energy and grow our economy while still taking care of our air, our water, and our climate. And so I could not be more pleased to have Ernie join us. And he will be joined in that effort by my nominee to lead the Environmental Protection Agency.*