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To: **East Contra Costa Fire Protection District**

From: Townsend Public Affairs, Inc.

Date: December 2, 2021

Subject: Legislative Report for ECCFPD – November 2021

State Legislative Update

The month of November was quiet on the legislative front as legislators and their staff prepare for the start of the 2022 session and begin the process of relocating into their temporary office space as the Capitol building undergoes renovations. However, the Legislature's temporary relocation, the uncertainty of new legislative districts as the Redistricting Commission rounds its final stretch of map drafting, and the onset of a new COVID-19 variant is sure to drum up an interesting start of session in January. As of now, no official announcement from the Senate or Assembly leadership has outlined a process for how meetings and committee hearing procedures will function in the new year. Preliminary legislative and budget discussions are currently being held over zoom, but that may change as Legislators and staff settle into their new spaces and assess the urgency of the current COVID-19 climate.

Redistricting Update

The California Redistricting Commission released its official preliminary maps, five days before the self-imposed November 15th deadline to ensure meetings were not scheduled during the Thanksgiving holiday. Commissioners voted unanimously to release preliminary congressional, state Senate, and state Assembly maps for public comment. Following the hearings to receive input on the drafts, the Commission will hold a total of 14 line-drawing sessions to refine the maps before voting on the final districts in late December. While these official draft maps reflect changes incorporated from public comment after the period of map "visualizations", the maps are expected to still change quite a bit. Final maps must be unveiled by December 23rd and sent to the Secretary of State by December 27th.

While the foremost duty of the Commission is to ensure that each district has roughly the same population size, other requirements, such as not diluting the voting power of minority blocks and keeping districts geographically intact, have led to some interesting preliminary drawings, particularly on the congressional front as the state prepares to lose a congressional seat. Currently, Republicans hold 11 of California's 53 U.S. House seats. The draft congressional map creates 39 Democratic-leaning districts, 7 Republican-leaning seats and 6 toss-up districts.

Interestingly, on the state Assembly and Senate front, these preliminary maps reflect a total of 28 members of the Assembly and 16 members of the Senate who are paired up in districts, meaning that those whose districts are reconfigured away from their residence will need to relocate into their new district boundaries. Unlike in 2012 when there were over 30 termed out members of the

Assembly, this year there are no Assembly Members leaving due to term limits. Nevertheless, district boundaries are bound to change once public comment is received and incorporated into future drafts.

2022 State Budget Expectations

Earlier in November, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released its fiscal outlook report for the State's 2022-23 upcoming budget cycle. The LAO's fiscal outlook is the first projection that is provided for the upcoming fiscal year budget and what fiscal issues might impact the decisions made in the budget process.

The most significant takeaway from the LAO's report is that they project the state to have a $31 billion operating surplus in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Despite the economic impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the LAO stated that state revenues are growing at "historic rates," which can be attributed, in part, to 30% rate increase in tax collections in the 12-month period ending in September, representing the fastest rate in roughly 40 years.

While the potential surplus is great news for the state's fiscal stability, it is important to note that the Legislature and Administration would not have complete discretion on how to allocate all of the projected surplus. The LAO report estimates that in order to meet the State Appropriations ("Gann") Limit requirements, which limits state expenditures to the annual growth in population and to growth in average personal income, the state would need to divert roughly $14 billion between statutorily available avenues, which could include personal income tax rebates and additional funding for education. The report noted that there is significant uncertainty in these figures, and that the state could have $12 billion in additional appropriations limit requirements in the current budget year. Ultimately, the report reiterated that the Gann Limit would likely be a key issue this year and implored the Legislature to explore ways to meet past and current appropriations limit requirements prior to the introduction of the May Revision and budget trailer legislation.

While the LAO report serves only as an early projection, it generally bodes well for the state going into next year's budget process. The report estimates that revenues easily could end up tens of billions of dollars above or below the main forecast. If revenues in 2021-22 and 2022-23 are at the lower end of likely alternative outcomes, the surplus could be as low as $10 billion. If revenues are at the higher end, the surplus could be closer to $60 billion.

Looking forward, the Governor has not yet indicated what his draft budget framework proposal might look when he unveils it in early January. The Governor has made a few public comments indicating that he also believes there will be a large surplus, but without identifying a specific figure. The Governor has also noted that he could be in favor of using some of the surplus funds to pay down the state's pension obligations and ramping up infrastructure investments to mirror the federal dollars coming down the pipeline.

COVID-19 Updates

New Variant

The new COVID-19 variant "Omicron," which has demonstrated a massive increase in transmissibility and potential to result in serious illness, is currently being assessed by the

California Department of Public Health. In late November, State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health Dr. Tomás J. Aragón issued a statement expressing the department's close monitoring of the rapidly evolving situation related to the new variant of concern. The State has established a public-private partnership through the California SARS-CoV-2 Whole Genome Sequencing Initiative called "COVIDNet" to provide the state with genomic sequencing to help understand and control the spread of COVID-19. This effort will help detect the variant early in California.

OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards

In early November, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued the Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) that implements the Biden Administration's COVID-19 vaccine mandate for large employers: employers with 100 or more employees. The OSHA ETS was to be published November 5th, with employer obligations beginning on December 5, 2021; however, the federal ETS has been subject to legal challenges, with the requirements likely to make their way to the Supreme Court following the issuance of a stay from the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. In response, federal OSHA announced that it plans to suspend implementation and enforcement of the ETS pending further developments in the federal litigation.

With regard to Cal/OSHA's actions on the matter, the agency's consideration of adoption of a standard substantially similar to the federal ETS was delayed pending additional information in connection with the federal litigation referenced above. Therefore, the Standards Board removed consideration of the matter from its November 18th meeting agenda. While adoption and enforcement of the federal ETS in substantially similar or more stringent form remains unclear at this time, California employers may wish to begin gathering required information and planning for compliance now. Notably, many of the ETS's requirements require compliance by December 6, which include establishing workplace vaccination policies, determining employee vaccination status, providing specific information to employees about the ETS, and establishing reporting requirements for sickness and/or COVID-related fatalities, among other things.

Although it appears unlikely, it is possible that Cal/OSHA will adopt its version of the ETS prior to resolution of the challenges to the federal ETS. It is also possible that later adoption, implementation, and enforcement of the ETS will not alter current compliance deadlines.

Federal Legislative Update

Most of the focus in Washington DC during October and November was on securing the passage of the bipartisan infrastructure package, as well as advancing the President's Build Back Better proposal. The President, and Democratic leadership, spent much of the month negotiating with not only their Republican counterparts, but also with moderate Senate Democrats who represent key votes to securing the President's priorities.

District Earmark Funding Request

TPA continues to work closely with ECCFPD to secure funding for the Fire Station project through the Congressional Community Project Funding, or earmark, process. TPA worked with ECCFPD to submit a request for $3 million in funding for a new fire station. Congressmember McNerney selected the Fire Station project as one of his top projects to be submitted to the House

Appropriations Committee for consideration. The Fire Station project was included in the Six-Bill Appropriations Minibus that passed the House on July 31, to be funded for $1,500,000.

Congress is currently operating under a continuing resolution agreement to fund the federal government. That agreement is set to expire on December 3. On December 2, Congressional leaders announced an agreement to extend that funding until February 18, 2022. This temporary extension extends current funding levels from the previous fiscal year (FY21) until February 18. However, besides supplemental funding for Afghanistan-related issues, this agreement does not enact any new spending, nor does it contain any of the earmarks included in House and Senate appropriations bills. In order for those earmarks to become law, Congress must pass the appropriations bills in which they are contained.

House and Senate appropriators will use the next two months to negotiate a final agreement on FY22 spending with the goal of passing an omnibus spending bill before the new February deadline. Disagreements remain between congressional Democrats and Republicans over topline spending amounts, the ratio between defense and non-defense spending, and controversial policy riders. Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama, the top Republican on the Senate Appropriations Committee has said discussion on topline spending figures can't begin until Democrats agree to keep legacy policy riders out and not add any poison pills. Democrats counter that they should begin discussions and work out those differences at the negotiating table.

Our $1.5 million in funding is dependent on an agreement being reached by the House and the Senate and an FY22 spending bill being approved. TPA continues to advocate on behalf of ECCFPD and will continue to advocate to secure this funding in the final budget agreement.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill – H.R. 3684, the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*

On November 15th, President Biden signed into law the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The bill, which passed the Senate in August, and the House in early November, authorized approximately $1.2 trillion in infrastructure spending over the next eight years, which includes $550 billion in new funding.

The final hurdle for the bill was passage in the House, which came after days of last-minute negotiations and delays resulting from friction between progressive and moderate Democrats. The progressives abandoned attempts to secure guarantees from the Senate on what they could pass in the larger tax and spending plan, which will rely solely on Democratic votes. This plan, being advanced through the budget reconciliation process, is expected to continue to move through the legislative process when Congress returns to Washington, DC. The reconciliation bill includes additional proposed investments in housing, education, childcare, and family leave.

Topline provisions in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act include:

Roads, Bridges
The bill spends $110 billion on roads, bridges and other major projects. This includes $40 billion for bridge repairs and replacement, as well as about $16 billion for major projects. It also would reauthorize the surface transportation program for the next five years.

Public Transit
The plan includes an extra $39 billion to modernize transit and improve accessibility. In addition, the deal continues existing transit programs for five years as part of the surface transportation reauthorization.

Railways
The bill allocates $66 billion to Amtrak for maintenance, to upgrade tracks in the Northeast Corridor and bring rail service -- including high-speed rail -- to other areas of the country.

Power Grids
The bill includes about $65 billion for power grid upgrades, including building thousands of miles of new transmission lines for renewable energy as well as research for new technologies like nuclear reactors and carbon capture.

Electric Vehicles
The bill spends $7.5 billion to build a nationwide network of charging stations for electric vehicles to help accelerate the adoption of non-fossil fuel cars.

Electric Buses
The plan includes $5 billion for new school buses, although the program would allow half of that to go toward buses that run on natural gas or diesel. The plan also includes $2.5 billion for ferries.

Airports, Waterways
The plan provides $25 billion for airport repairs and efforts to reduce congestion and emissions. That includes encouraging the use of electric and other low-carbon technologies. It also invests $17 billion in port infrastructure.

Resilience, Climate Change
The legislation includes $50 billion to help communities mitigate climate change and ward off cyber-attacks. The funds include money to protect against droughts and floods.

Drinking Water
The package spends $55 billion to improve drinking water, including dedicated funding to replace lead pipes and remove dangerous chemicals.

Broadband Internet
The plan invests $65 billion in high-speed internet to ensure that every household can access reliable broadband service.

Environmental Spending
The bill has $21 billion dedicated for environmental remediation to address past pollution that harms public health.

The plan also includes $1 billion to reconnect communities that have been divided by past infrastructure projects, such as highways splicing through established areas.

Transportation Safety
The plan spends $11 billion on transportation safety, including programs to reduce crashes and fatalities, especially for cyclists and pedestrians.

Budget Reconciliation Package – the *Build Back Better Act*

On November 19th, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 5376, the Build Back Better Act by a vote of 220-213. The bill contains the remaining provisions of President Biden and Congressional Democrats' economic agenda not included in the bipartisan infrastructure bill – the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – which was signed into law on November 15th.

This bill provides funding, establishes programs, and otherwise modifies provisions relating to a broad array of areas, including education, labor, childcare, health care, taxes, immigration, and the environment. For example, according to a Congressional Research Service summary, the bill provides funding for:

- Management of the National Forest System;
- Job placement and career services;
- Safe drinking water, energy-efficiency, and weatherization projects;
- Electric vehicles and zero-emission, heavy-duty vehicles;
- Public health infrastructure and supply chain resiliency;
- Housing, rental, and homeowner assistance programs;
- Cybersecurity programs;
- Tribal infrastructure, housing, environmental, and health programs;
- Wildfire prevention, drought relief, conservation efforts, and climate change research;
- Small business assistance and development;
- Transit services and clean energy projects in low-income communities;
- Funding for high speed rail; and
- Infrastructure and administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The bill also includes provisions that

- Provide certain aliens with a legal status (e.g., those who entered the United States as minors);
- Establish a methane fee for certain petroleum and natural gas facilities;
- Expand Medicare to cover hearing, and vision care;
- Provide up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave;
- Restructure and increase the tax rates for certain corporations and high-income individuals (e.g., individuals with income over $400,000); and
- Require the Department of Health and Human Services to negotiate maximum prices for certain brand-name drugs under Medicare.

After passing the House, the bill now heads to the Senate where it will almost certainly be modified to meet the demands of moderate Democratic Senators. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer has previously stated his intent to bring it up for a vote in the Senate before Christmas. This timing is contingent on reaching an agreement with the Senate's moderate holdouts. The bill is being considered through the budget reconciliation process, which provides a privileged status to the bill allowing it to circumvent the Senate's 60-vote supermajority threshold under the filibuster rule. Democrats only have 50 votes in the Senate with Vice President Harris breaking a tie. Because of this they need unanimous agreement among their members to pass the bill. Republicans have shown united opposition to the bill in both the House and Senate.

The key Senate holdouts to watch will be Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Senator Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona. Senator Manchin has expressed concerns about the way the bill is paid for, inflationary pressures, and the bill's paid family leave provision. Kyrsten Sinema has been less forthcoming with what she would change, other than to note that the House-passed bill differs from the framework agreed to by the White House in late October, indicating she may work to steer the bill closer to that agreement.

This bill will continue to dominate Washing for at least the next four or five weeks while Congress simultaneously must deal with annual government funding, the debt ceiling, and the National Defense Authorization Act. It is shaping up to be a very busy December in in our nation's capital.

District Legislative Priorities

TPA works to further the mission of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District in Sacramento and Washington DC. In addition to providing feedback on the priorities of the State and Federal government, the District has its own priorities that we continue to advance.

Legislative Priority 1 – Chapter 13 EMS System Modifications

California operates on a two-tiered emergency medical services (EMS) system. EMSA is the lead agency and centralized resource to oversee emergency and disaster medical services. The California Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) is charged with providing leadership in developing and implementing local EMS systems throughout California, and in setting standards for the training and scope of practice of various levels of EMS personnel. California has 33 local EMS systems that provide EMS for California's 58 counties.

Local EMS agencies are responsible for planning, implementing, and managing local trauma care systems, including assessing needs, developing the system design, designating trauma care centers, collecting trauma care data, and providing quality assurance.

In late 2019, EMSA issued proposed Chapter 13 regulations that would have aimed to define the standards, policies, and procedures for all local EMS systems. Additionally, the proposed regulations would have clarified and made specific criteria for determining whether a city or fire district that has contracted for, or provided prehospital EMS as of June 1, 1980, has consistently provided that service without any reduction in the level of service since that time. The regulations would have also made specific criteria for the determining when an exclusive operating area may be created without a competitive process and the process to be used when awarding an exclusive operating area via a competitive process.

The EMSA proposed regulations garnered opposition from numerous entities. Additionally, CFCA's legal counsel requested that EMSA withdraw the proposed Chapter 13 regulations for failure to comply with certain substantive and procedural requirements for rulemaking under the

Administrative Procedures Act. Ultimately, in August 2020, EMSA gave notice that it decided not to proceed with the rule making action related to Chapter 13.

While EMSA has withdrawn its previous regulatory proposal, it is possible that they could re-initiate the rule-making process or pursue statutory changes through the Legislature. TPA is coordinating efforts with the District to be prepared in the event of future legislative or regulatory action. TPA has provided the District with more detailed background information on this subject and possible avenues for action. Additionally, TPA has working to coordinate with industry partners to educate legislators and staff on this issue, as well as to prepare for any potential legislative or regulatory action.

There is one bill introduced in the current legislative session directly related to local EMS agencies, AB 389 (Grayson). AB 389 would authorize a county to contract for emergency services with a fire agency that is governed by the county's board of supervisors and provides those services through a written subcontract with a private ambulance provider. This bill was also recently amended to prohibit, after January 1, 2022, a county from entering into, or renewing, these contracts unless the county board of supervisors has adopted a written policy setting forth issues to be considered for inclusion in the county contract for emergency services and requires the contract to be awarded through a competitive bidding process. AB 389 is sponsored by Contra Costa County. AB 389 was ultimately approved by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Newsom on October 4th.

<u>Legislative Priority 2 – Job Order Contracting</u>

Job order contracting is a procedure that allows for the awarding of contracts based on prices for specific construction tasks, rather than bids, for a specific project. A catalog or book identifies all work that could be performed, typically maintenance or modernization, and the unit prices for each of those tasks. The tasks are based on accepted industry standards and process include the cost of materials, labor, and equipment for performing the work, but exclude overhead and profit. A contractor, who has been prequalified, rather than bid a total price for the project, will bid an adjustment factor, which reflects specified costs, to the preset unit prices.

The State Legislature first authorized job order contracting on a pilot basis at Los Angeles Unified School District from 2004 through 2007. The Legislature later extended and modified the pilot program. Based on the results of the pilot program, legislation was approved in 2015 that authorized all school districts that have entered into a project labor agreement to utilize job order contracting. Additional legislation was approved in 2017, which further authorized community college districts that have entered into a project labor agreement to utilize job order contracting.

Current law does not provide special districts with the ability to utilize job order contracting and legislation would be needed to grant this permission. Since job order contracting is utilizes accepted industry standards to form the basis of the preset unit prices for work to be performed, it is likely that legislation would need to apply to a class of special districts, such as fire protection districts, to make practical sense.

As noted above, previously approved bills related to job order contracting has limited its use to those to those that have entered into a project labor agreement that applies to all public works in excess of $25,000. Given the politics surrounding the previous legislative efforts, it is unlikely that future job order contracting legislation will be successful unless it contains the existing provisions related to project labor agreements. As such, the District may wish to consider the potential benefits of job order contracting, in conjunction with other actions it that may be required to take in order to utilize job order contracting.

Earlier this year, Assembly Member Low introduced AB 846, related to job order contracting. This bill would extend the current December 31, 2021, sunset date that allows school districts and community colleges to utilize job order contracting until January 1, 2027. Additionally, the bill modifies the job order contracting provisions to specify that any entity awarded a contract in excess of $25,000 shall provide an enforceable commitment that the entity and its subcontractors at every tier will use a skilled and trained workforce to perform all work on the job order contract that falls within an apprenticeable occupation in the building and construction trades. AB 846 was ultimately approved by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Newsom on September 24th.

Legislative Priority 3 – Mitigation Fee Act

Under existing law, the Mitigation Fee Act authorizes local agencies to impose fees to offset the impacts of new development in the form of new services and/or facilities required. The Mitigation Fee Act also imposes a variety of administrative requirements on the fees collected. No voter approval is required to impose impact fees. The same does not apply to a District board, who is prohibited from charging a few on new construction or development.

Last year, numerous bills were introduced that attempted to modify the Act in ways that would have resulted in a decreased ability for public agencies to collect impact fees. The aim of these legislative efforts has been to reduce the overall cost of housing in California and provide more opportunities for home ownership or for people to be able to afford to rent housing near employment centers.

This year there have not been nearly as many bills introduced dealing with mitigation fees as there were last year. Building on the roundtable discussions that were held early last year, Assembly Member Grayson has introduced two measures, AB 602, and AB 678, to continue the conversation around mitigation fees.

AB 602 includes provisions related to nexus studies, including best practices and standards for transparency, assessment based on proportional square footage, and cleanup on posting fee schedules. AB 602 was ultimately approved by the Legislature and signed into law, as part of a 31 bill housing package, by Governor Newsom on September 28th.

Legislative Priority 4 – Professional Services

Under existing law, the Public Contract Code provides that contracts over $25,000 must be awarded to the lowest bidder. In addition to be a low threshold, Section 20812 is inconsistent with the requirements for many public agencies, and inconsistent with other laws pertaining to Professional and Special Services.

This session legislation has been introduced by Assembly Member Gallagher, AB 577, which would establish a $50,000 threshold amount for county drainage districts, levee districts, and reclamation districts for the requirement to award to the lowest bidder. AB 577 was referred to the Assembly Local Government Committee for consideration, but was not set for hearing by the committee, and as such, the measure is now a two-year bill.

Legislative Priority 5 – Parcel Tax

Currently, a parcel tax requires a two-thirds vote to pass and must be applied to all parcels equally. This means that a residential property, a commercial property, and an undeveloped property would have to be assessed the same amount for fire service even though they place different levels of demand for service on the Fire District.

On December 7th, Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry reintroduced ACA 1 which would create an exception to the 1% limit that would authorize a city, county, or special district to levy an ad valorem tax to fund the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or replacement of public infrastructure, affordable housing, or permanent supportive housing, if the proposed tax measure is approved by 55% of voters. For purposes of the bill, "public infrastructure" includes public safety buildings or facilities, equipment related to fire suppression, emergency response equipment, or interoperable communications equipment for direct and exclusive use by fire, emergency response, police, or sheriff personnel.

Last year, ACA 1 was supported by a coalition of individual public agencies and associations, including: California Special Districts Association, League of California Cities, California State Association of Counties, East Bay MUD, and East Bay Parks. The measure also received significant support from labor, including from California Professional Firefighters.

ACA 1 has been referred to the Assembly Local Government Committee, which is chaired by the bill's author, Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry. Since constitutional amendments are not subject to the same legislative timelines as regular bills, so the measure may still be considered by the Assembly Local Government Committee despite being past the deadline for policy committees to consider bills in their House of Origin. Last session, ACA 1 was approved by the committee on a 5-2 vote.

Legislative Priority 6 – Proposition 218

Proposition 218 restrict local governments' ability to impose assessments and property-related fees, as well as requires elections to approve many local government revenue raising methods. Over time, the responsibilities expected of local fire districts have grown, however, their share of local tax revenue has not grown to meet the increased demand.

Every few years, efforts have failed to modify the State Constitution to reduce the vote threshold for parcel tax measures to 55%. That included an effort earlier in the 2019-20 legislative session, ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry). While that measure was unsuccessful, the Legislature was able to approve a measure, ACA 11 (Mullin), for the November ballot, which appear on the ballot as Proposition 19. Proposition 19 was approved at the November 2020 General Election and allows homeowners who are over 55, disabled, or victims of wildfire or natural disaster to transfer their primary residence's property tax base value to a replacement residence of any value, anywhere in the state. An individual could use these rules up to three times in their lifetime. The measure would also limit the ability of new homeowners who inherit properties to keep their parents' or grandparents' low property tax payments. The measure would allocate most resulting state revenue to fire protection services and reimbursement to local governments for taxation-related changes.

SB 539 (Hertzberg) has been introduced this year to assist with the implementation of Proposition 19. SB 539, which is co-sponsored by the California Professional Firefighters and the California Association of Realtors, provides many of the needed details and clarifications of how the provisions of Proposition 19 are to be carried out. The bill makes a number of changes including providing the statutory detail for taxpayers to claim base year value transfers under Prop 19, as well as implements the propositions limitations on parent-child/grandparent-grandchild change in ownership exclusions. The provisions that are contained within SB 539 will ensure that the Board of Equalization (BOE) and local assessors have the guidance, needed to implement Proposition 19 uniformly across the state. SB 539 was ultimately approved by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Newsom on September 30th.

Legislative Priority 7 – Building a Coalition

TPA continues to work with the California Special Districts Association in efforts to further strengthen the relationship between CSDA and the District, as well as to ensure alignment on issues of importance to fire districts. To that end, CSDA has included the District on their "Secondary List" for the CSDA Legislative Committee. This list provides the District with access to all of the materials that are prepared for the CSDA Legislative Committee and will also allow the District to participate in the Legislative Committee meetings as a non-voting participant. Additionally, CSDA has encouraged the District to consider applying for a full voting position on the CSDA Legislative Committee for 2022. TPA has worked with CSDA and the District to complete the CSDA process for applying for a position on the Legislative Committee. CSDA staff will be making recommendations for membership on the Legislative Committee, which will then need to be approved by the CSDA Board in November. The new Legislative Committee will meet in January 2022 for orientation.

In addition to participation in the CSDA Legislative Committee, TPA and ECCFPD staff have been working closely with CSDA to generate support for the inclusion of funding, within the state budget, to reimburse special districts for costs incurred in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ultimately, $100 million was included in the state budget to aid independent special districts with impact due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Department of Finance accepted COVID-19 funding requests from special districts, pursuant to the provisions that were contained in the state budget, until October 29th. The District was able to successfully submit a funding application prior to the original filing deadline. The Department has been reviewing the funding applications that were submitted to ensure that the funds that are being requested are in line with federal and state guidelines.

Once the Department has reviewed the funding applications, they will determine the level of funding that each special district is entitled to; assuming that over $100 million in funding is requested, each special district will get a proportional share of the funding requested. The Department of Finance will work with the State Controller's Office to allocate funding to Districts; the Department of Finance will provide the individual funding amounts to the State Controller who will disperse the funding to county auditor-controllers. The county auditor-controller will be required to disperse payments within 30 days of receipt of funding. Based on estimated timelines provided by the Department of Finance, ECCFPD should receive the funding from the COVID-19 Fiscal Relief for Special Districts program by in early- to mid-January.