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Friday, December 14, 2012 The CSAC Bulletin

Legislature Looks to Change Local Vote Thresholds

Leaders in the Senate and Assembly have made public statements that the new Democratic supermajority in both houses will not lead to an immediate and widespread increase in taxes — leaving the door open for measured and limited changes to California's tax law.

If recently introduced legislation is any indication of what is possible in the coming year, that conversation will start with constitutional amendments to change the rules for imposing local taxes for specific purposes such as school bonds or transportation infrastructure.

Senator Carol Liu has introduced a measure (SCA 4) to decrease the voter threshold from two-thirds to 55 percent for transportation projects and Senator Leno introduced SCA 3 which would provide the same changes but for school parcel taxes. Senator Lois Wolk is also pursuing a reduced voter threshold for library facilities bonds (SCA 7).

A host of other special purposes local sales tax measures could see the same treatment — flood control and public safety are on the top of that list. CSAC anticipates seeing a number of other bills on this topic in the months to come.

CSAC has a historic position of supporting efforts to reduce the voter threshold for local tax measures, but given the range of measures already introduced and the more sure to come, the key will be working with a variety of stakeholders to determine the most productive route forward, keeping in mind voter attitudes.

Is the best approach to support individual measures, or should the Legislature, Governor, CSAC, and other stakeholders contemplate a reduction in the voter threshold for local tax measures that address any specific purpose? That question will likely be answered in 2013. Stay tuned.

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County of Marin

***2013 Federal & State Legislative
Programs & Policy Guidelines***

Adopted December 11, 2012



5. *Next Generation Communications System for the Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA).*

Support efforts to identify approximately \$50 million in federal funds for implementation of a replacement mission critical system for Marin County's emergency response agencies. The current system is 14 years old, and is a 400 MHz T-band spectrum system. The new system is proposed to comply with Project 25 (P25) national interoperable communication standards. Possible funding sources include HR 3630 which requires reallocation of the T-Band spectrum currently in use by MERA by February, 2021, and provides grant funding to recover relocation costs.