



County of Santa Cruz

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SHERIFF - CORONER

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MARK TRACY
SHERIFF - CORONER

March 29, 1999

AGENDA: April 13, 1999

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: 1999-00 GOVERNOR'S BUDGET - FORENSIC LAB FEES AND SB 627

Dear Members of the Board:

The 1999-00 Governor's Budget includes a proposal to require local agencies to pay for the cost of forensic services provided by the Department of Justice (DOJ) through the implementation of a fee based system. The proposed \$16 million in fees from local agencies would replace most of the state General Fund support for DOJ crime labs.

Currently, the DOJ provides a full spectrum of forensic services through a regional crime lab system that serves over 550 law enforcement agencies in 46 counties including Santa Cruz County. The accredited DOJ labs provide dependable, state-of-the-art, and efficient services that are a critical component of the criminal justice system. Implementing a 100% fee-based lab system could seriously erode and undermine the quality and accessibility of these services, as well as imposing a financial burden on local agencies. A fee-based state crime lab would essentially be funded from smaller jurisdictions that are least able to afford it. There is also the fear and concern that crime lab fees could escalate in future years as state revenue needs increased.

DOJ estimated costs for the Sheriffs Department for forensic lab fees, based on services received in the past year, are \$98,695 (including \$3,659 in services provided to Cabrillo College). Estimated costs for the District Attorney's Office are \$13,646. The total estimated costs to law enforcement agencies in Santa Cruz County is \$350,014 annually.

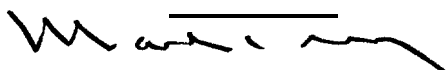
The State of California Attorney General is opposed to this fund shift, calling it serious and negative, and has sponsored related legislation, Senate Bill 627 (attached), which would

establish a statewide task force to assess the current system of delivering forensic services. The task force would make comprehensive recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature to ensure the efficiency and integrity of forensic services.

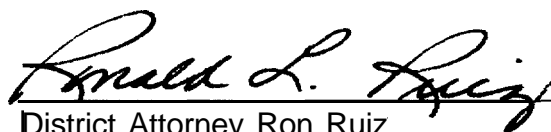
At its meeting of March 18, 1999, the Criminal Justice Council voted to send letters of opposition to the Governor, the legislative leadership, and our local delegation in Sacramento.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board adopt the attached resolution opposing this fund shift and supporting SB 627 and direct the Clerk of the Board to distribute the resolution as indicated.

Sincerely,

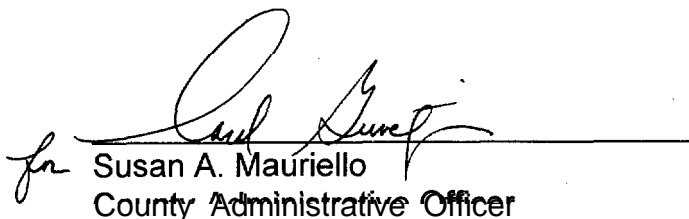


Sheriff Mark Tracy



District Attorney Ron Ruiz

RECOMMENDED:



Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

Attachments

cc: Governor Davis
 Senator Bruce McPherson
 Assembly Member Fred Keeley
 Assembly Member Peter Frusetta
 County Supervisors Association of California
 Criminal Justice Council of Santa Cruz County

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO. _____

On the motion of Supervisor _____
duly seconded by Supervisor _____
the following resolution is adopted:

RESOLUTION OPPOSING FUND SHIFT OF STATE FORENSIC LAB FEES
AND SUPPORTING SB 627

WHEREAS, the 1999-00 Governor's Budget includes a proposal to require local agencies to pay for the costs of forensic services currently provided by the State Department of Justice; and

WHEREAS, a fee-based lab system could seriously undermine the quality and accessibility of these services: and

WHEREAS, this fund shift would place a significant financial burden on the County of Santa Cruz and other local jurisdictions and agencies;

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 627 would establish a state task force to assess the current system of delivering forensic services to local agencies; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 627 would make comprehensive recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on forensic services.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz hereby oppose the fund shift of state forensic lab services to local agencies, and support the passage of SB 627.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this d a y o f _____, 1999, by the following vote:

AYES: SUPERVISORS
NOES: SUPERVISORS
ABSENT: SUPERVISORS

Chairperson of said Board

ATTEST: _____
Clerk of said Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

County Counsel

DISTRIBUTION: Governor Davis
Senator Bruce McPherson
Assembly Member Fred Keeley
Assembly Member Peter Frusetta
County Supervisors Association of California
Criminal Justice Council of Santa Cruz County

SB 627 Forensic services.
BILL NUMBER: SB 627

INTRODUCED 02/24/99

BILL TEXT

INTRODUCED BY Senator Johnston

FEBRUARY 24, 1999

An act relating to forensic services, making an appropriation therefor, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 627, as introduced, Johnston. Forensic services. Existing law provides for various criminal justice agencies and boards.

This bill would provide for a Task Force on Stateside Forensic Services, of unspecified membership and duties to review the current statewide system of providing forensic services for criminal justice purposes, and to provide recommendations.

The bill would appropriate an unspecified amount from the General Fund for the expenses of the task force.

The bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

Vote: 2/3. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

SECTION 1. There is hereby established the Task Force on Statewide Forensic Services. The task force shall review the current statewide system of providing forensic services for criminal justice purposes and shall provide recommendations to improve the system to the Governor and the Legislature for their consideration.

SEC. 2. The membership of the task force shall consist of . Appointments to the task force shall be made by the appointing bodies no later than _____. The task force shall meet on a regular basis and conduct public meetings in northern and southern California.

SEC. 3. In the course of its review of the statewide system for delivering forensic services, the task force shall, at a minimum, review the following areas: _____.

SEC. 4. The task force shall report on or before _____ to the Governor and the Legislature on recommendations to improve the system. The report shall, at a minimum, address all of the areas identified in Section 3.

SEC. 5. The sum of _____ dollars (\$_____) is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Justice for the purpose of supporting expenses related to the task force.

SEC. 6. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to provide for the preservation and enhancement of

the criminal justice system through the immediate review and timely recommendations to improve the quality of statewide forensic services, it is necessary for this act to take effect immediately.

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