

FOCUS

Analysis, Commentary and Updates on Legislative and Policy Issues that Affect California Cities

September 30, 2005
Issue #39-2005

Annual Conference,
October 5-8, 2005 -
San Francisco

**Priority Focus will
not publish on
Friday, October 7,
due to the League's
Annual Conference.**

Please visit the
League's website at
www.cacities.org, for
updates from the
conference.

**WANT MORE DETAILS
ON BILLS?**

Visit the League of
California Cities
website at
[www.cacities.org/
billsearch](http://www.cacities.org/billsearch).

107TH LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES ANNUAL CONFERENCE OPENS NEXT WEEK

You won't want to miss this one: the League's 107th Annual Conference, Wednesday, October 5, through Saturday, October 8, at the Moscone Center West in San Francisco! More than 2,300 of your colleagues from among California mayors, council members and other city officials will gather under the conference theme, "Stepping It Up," to spend 3.5 days sharing ideas about issues important to cities. *For more, see Page 2.*

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FEDERAL UPDATE: CONGRESS MOVES ON APPROPRIATIONS BILLS, HOMELAND SECURITY AND TANF

The House passed a continuing resolution (CR) that will maintain funding for the federal government once FY 2005 ends at midnight tonight, September 30. The Senate passed the spending extension measure this morning, with President Bush expected to sign it into law later in the day. *For more, see Page 4.*

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TWO LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS WILL DISCUSS REDEVELOPMENT REFORMS

The chairpersons of several Assembly and Senate committees are collaborating on two interim legislative hearings on redevelopment issues, with proposals discussed at these hearings likely to be introduced as legislation in January 2006. *For more, see Page 4.*

IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 3 U.S. EPA SPONSORS FREE BROWNFIELDS GRANT TRAINING
WORKSHOPS IN OCTOBER
2005 LATINO NEW URBANISM CONFERENCE SET FOR OCTOBER
YOUR CITY'S FRANCHISE FEES ARE AT RISK!

LEAGUE CONFERENCE from page 1

Not yet registered? While the deadline for online registration for the League's Annual Conference has passed, you can still register onsite at the Moscone Center West.

Featured speakers will include:

- **State Controller Steve Westly**
- **National League of Cities President and Washington D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams.**
- **Public Health Specialist Dr. Richard Jackson** of U.C. Berkeley's School of Public Health, speaking on the role of planning in creating healthy cities.
- **Dr. Steven D. Levitt**, an economist with the University of Chicago and author of the bestselling book, "**Freakonomics**."

SESSIONS FOCUSED ON KEY ISSUES

Conference sessions will address housing and infrastructure, telecommunications, city financing, effective management, leadership and government, and much more! Here are a few notable sessions to attend, focused on key League issues:

- Inclusionary Housing – Thursday, October 6, 3:45 p.m. to 5 p.m., Room 2003.
- Reopening of the Federal Telecommunications Act: What It Means to Cities – Thursday, October 6, 3:45 to 5 p.m., Room 2008.
- Ethics Best Practices and Tools for Local Officials – 1:45 p.m. to 3 p.m., Room 2014.

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES HELP EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Not all the learning takes place in conference session. The conference will offer many opportunities for attendees to make contact with officials from other cities, as well as exhibitors and League sponsors. Networking opportunities include:

- Host City Welcoming Reception, Wednesday, October 5, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., Moscone Center West, 3rd Level Lobby.

- Exhibitors & League Partners Reception, Thursday, October 6, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., Moscone Center West, Exposition Hall, First Floor.
- Asian Pacific Islander Reception/Karaoke, Thursday, October 6, 9 p.m. to midnight, Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel, Barcelona Ballroom.
- Networking Breakfast to discuss the potential establishment of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Caucus of the League of California Cities, Friday, October 7, 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m., Moscone Center West, Room 2018 Alcove.
- African-American Caucus Lunch, Friday, October 7, 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel, Barcelona Ballroom.
- Latino Caucus 15th Annual Gala Award Reception, Friday, October 7, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

'DEATH BY CHOCOLATE' RETURNS!

You also won't want to miss the League's very popular "**Death by Chocolate**" event, featuring a chocolate fountain and "everything chocolate." The event starts at 9:30 p.m., October 7, at the Parc 55 Renaissance Hotel. Shuttle buses will be available between conference hotels and the Parc 55 Renaissance Hotel. Thanks to Waste Management, Kinsell, Newsome, DeDios, Inc., MuniFinancial, NBS, Public Agency Retirement Service, and Willdan for underwriting this fun event!

To view a **draft** of the conference program, please visit the League's website at www.cacities.org/ac. **Please note that the final, most updated version of the program will be included in your materials when you sign in at the registration desk at the Moscone Center.**

For more information on this and other League issues, visit www.cacities.org.

U.S. EPA SPONSORS FREE BROWNFIELDS GRANT TRAINING WORKSHOPS IN OCTOBER

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will sponsor four free training workshops across the state next month, to help local government and other eligible quasi-governmental agencies learn how to apply for grants to clean up brownfield contamination.

The workshops will include a discussion of eligibility criteria for applicants and sites, application formatting, scoring criteria, and important points of emphasis.

The Northern California workshops will be held October 12 in Visalia, and October 19 in Pleasant Hill, at the following times and locations:

Wednesday, October 12

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Visalia Convention Center
San Joaquin C
303 East Acequia Ave.
Visalia, Calif.

Wednesday, October 19

9 a.m. - Noon

Pleasant Hill City Hall
100 Gregory Lane Council Chambers
Pleasant Hill, Calif.

The Southern California workshops will be held October 24 in Los Angeles, and October 26 in San Diego, at the following times and locations:

Monday, October 24

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

USEPA Southern California Field Office
600 Wilshire Boulevard at Grand, Suite 1460
Mike Schulz Conference Room
Los Angeles, Calif.

Wednesday, October 26

10 a.m. – Noon

San Diego Regional Water Quality Ctrl. Board
9174 Sky Park Court, Suite 100
Regional Board Meeting Room
San Diego, Calif.

For more information, contact U.S. EPA Southern California Brownfields Coordinator Noemi Emeric at (213) 244-1821. Emeric can also be reached via e-mail at emeric.noemi@epa.gov.

2005 LATINO NEW URBANISM CONFERENCE SET FOR OCTOBER

On Friday, October 21, California State University, Los Angeles will be home for the 2005 Latino New Urbanism Conference.

Taking place at the Golden Eagle Banquet Tower, featured speakers include Henry Cisneros, president and chief executive officer of American CityVista, and Los Angeles City Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. California State Assemblyman Fabian Nunez, speaking on "A Healthy California for Latino Families and Children," has also been invited.

A variety of informative panels on "Architecture & Urban Design," "Development," and "Health and Parks" will be presented at the conference. For more information, sponsorship details, and how to register, visit the Latino New Urbanism website at www.latinonewurbanism.org.

YOUR CITY'S FRANCHISE FEES ARE AT RISK!

Learn more at "Reopening of the Federal Telecommunications Act: What it Means to Cities," a session in the Transportation and Infrastructure Series at the League's Annual Conference. The session will take place on Thursday, October 6 from 3:45 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Room 2008 of the Moscone Center West.

Watch for a major story on telecommunications in *Western City* magazine in November!

LEG HEARINGS from page 1 FEDERAL UPDATE from page 1

It appears clear that concerns about the use of eminent domain raised in recent months have lead to a broader agenda in the Legislature on the use of redevelopment.

The first hearing is on the topic "Redevelopment and Blight," and will be held on Wednesday, October 26, from 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Weingart City Heights Library, 3795 Fairmount Ave., San Diego. Witnesses will be asked to present examples of successful redevelopment projects and examples of "abuse" of the current legal definition of blight. Eminent domain issues are also expected to be raised.

This will be a joint hearing of the Senate Local Government Committee (Christine Kehoe, chair), the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee (Tom Torlakson, chair), and the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee (Gene Mullin, chair).

The second hearing will examine the subject, "Redevelopment Reforms." It will be held Thursday, November 17, from 9:30 a.m. to noon in Room 4203 of the State Capitol. Various proposals for changing redevelopment law are expected to be discussed at this hearing. Eminent domain issues could also be part of this hearing.

Again, this will be a joint hearing of the same three committees named above plus the Assembly Local Government Committee (Simon Salinas, chair) and the Assembly Judiciary Committee (Dave Jones, chair).

It is likely that most of the witnesses at these hearings will be invited by the committee chairs. The California Redevelopment Association will submit suggestions of persons to testify.

The CR will maintain funding for all federal programs and projects through November 18, 2005. So far, only two of the FY 2006 appropriations bills have been signed into law: the Interior-Environment measure (PL 109-54) and the Legislative Branch appropriations (PL 109-55) bills. A third, the FY 2006 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, was approved in conference and is expected to reach the House and Senate floors for final passage next week.

The 49-day CR would set spending for all other government programs at the fiscal 2005 rate, the House-passed level for FY 2006 or the FY 2006 Senate-passed level, whichever was the lowest. House Appropriations Chairman Jerry Lewis (Calif.) organized the extension bill in this fashion in an attempt to encourage the Senate to finalize and pass its remaining FY 2006 spending measures individually, rather than combining them into an omnibus bill.

The House passed its versions of all twelve of the FY 2006 appropriations bills before the July 4 recess. The Senate, however, has passed only eight of its FY 2006 appropriations bills, and is working to complete today the floor debate on a ninth, the FY 2006 Defense Appropriations bill.

Despite the discrepancy between House- and Senate-passed FY 2006 spending measures and the outstanding workload that Congress must complete before it adjourns, House and Senate appropriators remain committed to passing all of the FY 2006 spending bills individually.

The House-passed CR has raised some issues for some senators, who have expressed an interest in amending it. One such amendment raised by Sen. Tom Harkin (Iowa) would have restored a 50 percent cut to the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program. The amendment failed by a vote of 39-53. The program, funded at \$673 million in FY 2005, was cut to \$320 million in the House for FY 2006. Passage of the amendment would have resulted in a government shutdown, because the House has

Continued on Page 5

FEDERAL UPDATE from page 4

already adjourned for the week, making it unlikely that lawmakers could meet to resolve the differences in time.

Sen. Ted Stevens (Alaska) offered an amendment to the FY 2006 Defense Appropriations bill that restores funding to the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program. The amendment was adopted by voice vote. The Senate is unlikely to conclude debate on the FY 2006 Defense spending measure today and will renew floor negotiations on bill next week.

Reconciliation. Congressional leaders still intend to comply with reconciliation instructions outlined in the FY 2006 Budget Resolution. While House and Senate authorizing committees were originally scheduled to report \$34.7 billion in spending cuts to their respective budget committees on September 16, that date was pushed back to the week of October 17 to permit lawmakers ample time to respond to Hurricane Katrina.

In the wake of providing disaster aid to the Gulf Coast region, House and Senate leaders have sought to encourage deeper cuts in federal programs to offset the high cost of providing relief and rebuilding the region. Meanwhile House and Senate moderate Republicans and Democrats contend that now is not the time to impose cuts to Medicaid, food stamps, and other programs for the poor that are likely targets of the reconciliation instructions.

Homeland Security. House-Senate conferees approved a \$31.9 billion FY 2006 Homeland Security Appropriations bill on Thursday, September 29. The conference report on the bill (H.R. 2360), which was approved by unanimous consent, is expect to come to the House floor sometime next week.

The bill includes \$30.8 billion for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), an increase of \$1.4 billion from the FY 2005 level. In a victory for high-risk/high-threat states (such as California) the bill would require that the 60 percent of "basic formula" funding that to date has been allocated

solely based on population instead be allocated according to risk factors. The bill will provide \$3.3 billion for grant programs directed toward state and local first responders, including nearly identical amounts from two pots: \$1.155 billion for risk- and threat-based grants for urban areas, and \$1.135 billion for grants that have historically used a federal funding formula that has been heavily skewed to favor small states over large states (and has provided more than six times as much money per capita to Wyoming, North Dakota and Vermont as it has to California, New York, or Texas).

As a result, California's current 8 percent share could increase to as much as 10-13 percent.

The \$1.155 billion for "high-density urban areas" includes \$765 million for traditional urban area grants, which DHS distributes according to risk and threat information, plus \$150 million for rail security, \$175 million for port security, and \$65 million for other infrastructure protection activities.

The formula funding portion includes \$550 million for basic formula grants, \$400 million for the state and local law enforcement terrorism prevention program (LETPP), and \$185 million for Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG). However, the conference report includes a change that could improve California's share of these formula funds considerably, by dividing a portion of funds (after large guarantees for small states have been extracted), in part according to risk and threat. In the past, these funds were distributed solely according to state population, with risk factors unaccounted for.

Also within the first responder funding account is \$655 million for firefighter grants. Traditionally focused on rural fire departments, the program limits any total grant to \$750,000, regardless of whether the recipient is a volunteer fire department in a town of 1,200 people, or a large city department, such as Los Angeles or San Francisco.

Continued on Page 6

FEDERAL UPDATE from page 5

The bill also provides \$6.3 billion for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), including \$2.5 billion for passenger and baggage screeners, \$443 for in-line explosive detection systems, \$1 billion for aviation direction and enforcement, and \$686 million for air marshals. The majority of the bill's funding, and 85 percent of the year-over-year increase, will be used to provide \$19.1 billion for border protection, immigration enforcement, and related activities.

TANF Extension. The Senate voted Thursday to pass legislation (S. 1778) that would extend the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for three months, though the House adjourned for the week without acting on the legislation. In addition to extending the program the bill would provide funding for six months of medical assistance to families making the transition from welfare to work. Under current law (PL 109-68), the TANF program will expire December 31. The bill, which would create the 12th extension of TANF, would continue the welfare program until March 31, 2006.

THE 2005 CITY HALL DIRECTORY IS NOW AVAILABLE

Don't miss this opportunity to get the League's most useful reference tool. This comprehensive California directory provides important contact information for mayors, council members and city department heads. The directory also features the League's staff directory, League partners, affiliate organizations and a wide variety of advertisers.

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