



February 4, 2011

The Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4 unanimously rejected the Brown Administration's proposed elimination of the \$10 million appropriation for the Williamson Act Subventions. Subcommittee Chair Joan Buchanan (D-San Ramon) led the charge to restore the funding along with Roger Dickinson (D-Sacramento) and Dan Logue (R-Linda). Farm Bureau and representatives from the Regional Council of Rural Counties, the California State Association of Counties, The Nature Conservancy, the Native Plant Society, and various other agricultural organizations testified in support of the program.

Inexplicably, the Department of Finance proposed to not only cut the \$10 million in a budget trailer bill, but also to repeal the programmatic provisions of SB 863 that was adopted last October. This was also rejected out-of-hand by the committee that sited the hard work of Assembly Member Nielsen and the broad coalition of stakeholders that helped secure passage of the measure.

On the Senate side, the Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 4 couldn't quite put the Williamson Act issue to rest by agreeing with the Assembly action. Despite strong support by all of the subcommittee members, that included Chairman Michael Rubio (D-Bakersfield), Senator Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa) and Senator Doug La Malfa (R-Richvale), the item was left "open" so that it would automatically go to the two-house Budget Conference Committee. Senator La Malfa moved to reject the governor's proposed elimination of the \$10 million appropriation for the current fiscal year, but Senators Rubio and Evans felt it deserved further discussion in the conference committee. The governor's proposals to repeal the programmatic provisions of SB 863 did not receive any attention and appeared to be summarily rejected as it was in the Assembly.