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Memorandum Date: January 27, 2010

TO: Board of County Commissioners
DEPARTMENT: Administration, Intergovernmental Relations
PRESENTED BY: Alex Cuyler, Intergovernmental Relations Manager
AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Partnership for Rural America Campaign (reauthorization of Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act)

I. MOTION

This packet is for informational purposes only, although the Board may wish to provide future direction to the County Administrator as a result of the options discussed in the staff presentation.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

The Partnership for Rural America Campaign (P-RAC) is the primary vehicle for the effort to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS). P-RAC is a project of the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition (NFCSC).

Lane County supports NFCSC indirectly, through funding to both the Association of Oregon Counties, and the Association of O & C Counties. Commissioner Faye Stewart is a member of the Board of Directors of the NFCSC.

P-RAC is being carried out by the natural resource consulting firm of Kelley-Wasem, of Santa Rosa, California.

The goal of the campaign is to identify and leverage key supporters of re-authorization and to create a level, ten year funding bill for county payments.

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

- On June 24, 2009 the Lane County Board of County Commissioners approved the 2009-2010 County Budget. Included in this funding plan was \$25,000 to the sub-committee on federal forest issues.
- On October 28, 2009 the Lane County Board of County Commissioners passed an order renewing their membership in the Association of O and C Counties, and included specific instruction to any Commissioner elected to the Board of Directors of the Association to seek prioritization of the reauthorization of SRS.
- On October 28, 2009 the Lane County Board of County Commissioners passed an order dedicating approximately \$40,000 be allocated from a reserve fund (Lane County Federal Advocacy Reserve) to federal lobbying efforts undertaken by the Association of O and C Counties during calendar year 2010.

- On January 25, 2010 the Board Chair signed a letter approved by the Board on January 12, 2010 to the federal delegation outlining preparations that Lane County is taking with regards to reauthorizing SRS.
- On January 21, 2010 the Board meeting agenda of the Association of O and C Counties included an update of the P-RAC.

B. Policy Issues

The policy issues related to the reauthorization of SRS have been widely discussed by the Board. For purposes of this packet, the Board may wish to discuss the need for third party oversight and involvement with the P-RAC.

The Administrator has received a proposal for such services from Anthony Bieda, the former Intergovernmental Relations Manager of Lane County, now based in Washington, DC. The services proposed by Mr. Bieda include planning and strategy development, coordination and communications maintenance, and message delivery.

C. Board Goals

The Board has previously stated that there is no higher priority for Lane County than the reauthorization of SRS.

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

- During the lead up to the 2008 reauthorization (beginning in July, 2006), Lane County spent approximately \$956,818 on related lobbying activities.
- The existing P-RAC effort is estimated to be a \$500,000 annual campaign. Funding for this effort is on-going, with key partnerships still being established. It is expected that the majority of this funding should originate in the Northwest (Oregon).
- Mr. Bieda is proposing a fee of \$55.00 per hour to provide related consulting services.

E. Analysis

The P-RAC is an effort that will serve to capitalize on the nationwide expansion of SRS payments per the 2008 Emergency Economic Stabilization Act which included SRS. The campaign analyzed the payment structures from across the country and compared those with power centers embodied in the US Congress. As a result, it is targeting Idaho, Arkansas, Colorado, and Mississippi as key areas for development of "coalition action teams".

It is also in the midst of developing important collaborations with key partners. For example, work to establish a partnership with AFSCME has been successful, with the P-RAC now able to leverage the union's 1.6 million members across the nation. It is continuing to work on the SRS issue with the Western Governor's Association, and expects a letter of support for SRS reauthorization to be forthcoming. It has an on-going partnership with the National Association of Counties.

The P-RAC is working on scheduling an oversight hearing in Washington, DC, in April, 2010. If this is successful, it will be important to ensure that committee and sub-committee Chair's are able to attend.

The most immediate effort being undertaken by the campaign is an attempt to place this issue in front of the administration's budget writing team. The urgency here is related to the transition payments under the bill for 2011. If the is successful in an examination of the 2011 payments, it is thought that the reauthorization discussion may be able to be moved up. The concept here is to fully avoid a discussion over the 2012 funding formula implementation.

F. Alternatives/Options

- 1.) Direct the County Administrator to pursue a contractual arrangement with Mr. Bieda to provide oversight of P-RAC efforts through regular written reports.
- 2.) Do nothing.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends option one. Mr. Bieda was fully involved with previous reauthorization efforts and maintains a wide network of individuals associated with those efforts. His insights to the work of P-RAC will be invaluable as the reauthorization effort intensifies.

V. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

The contract with Mr. Bieda can be developed immediately.

VI. FOLLOW-UP

Staff will continue to monitor the P-RAC and any related congressional developments.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

None.